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DFL and Vodafone to bring 5G to the Bundesliga

The DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga and Vodafone are bringing 5G into the stadium. For the start of the 2019-20 season, the telecommunications group and the DFL are starting a two-year 5G cooperation. In the future, the fifth generation of mobile communications will connect two worlds for football fans: the emotional live experience and the digital flow of information. For this purpose, Vodafone and the DFL are developing a real-time app that makes information and match data available to the fans in the stadium without delay on their smartphones via augmented reality – before, during and after the match. This innovative presentation of statistics has never before been available to spectators in the stadium in this way. For example, fans will now be able to look at a striker, who is sprinting towards the rival team’s goal, and find out how fast he is. For the upcoming season, the two partners will provide 5G infrastructure in a Bundesliga stadium for the first time and are thus enhancing the mobile communications capacity for fans.

50% more data in the stadium

Football fans are more and more frequently online in the stadium. Quickly checking the scores of other matches during the half-time break. Sharing a photo from the stands with friends after the home win. Or, after an offside whistle, checking on social media as to whether the goal really was invalid. During top Bundesliga matches, up to 500 gigabytes of data rushes in the stadium via the Vodafone network. The tendency is increasing: last year alone, this value increased by around 50%. This also presents increasing challenges to the mobile communications networks: the Bundesliga is a continuous spectator magnet with almost 43,000 fans per match on average.

Real-time information for statistics lovers

“Football lives on emotions. Data and analyses are also becoming increasingly important for many fans. So far, they have often been available at home on the TV only after the match,” according to Vodafone CEO Hannes Ametsreiter. “We are now bringing these worlds together. Our partnership with the DFL is the kick-off for 5G in the Bundesliga. With the new mobile communications technology, we are bringing real-time information to statistics fans in the stands, and we are increasing network capacity for football fans in the stadium.”

“New technologies concerning sport and media”

DFL CEO Christian Seifert: “Technologies are only as good as the application possibilities that emerge from them. As a leader of innovation, the DFL is continuously advancing new technologies concerning sport and media to provide additional possibilities to spectators in the stadium and in front of screens. We are doing this by connecting 5G and real-time information. A strong 5G infrastructure provides the ideal conditions for partners and clubs too.”

60% more mobile phone reception for football fans

In the new season, the digital partners will introduce the real-time network in a Bundesliga stadium for the first time: 5G will be available in the Volkswagen Arena of VfL Wolfsburg in the autumn – for the first time ever in professional football. For football fans, this increases the available network capacity in the stadium by more than 60%.

Official DFL match data on fans’ mobile phones in real time

With the start of the 5G network in the stadium, Vodafone and the DFL will also present the first functions of the new real-time app that the partners are developing together. The real-time app makes all additional information available to fans on their smartphones live and in real time via 5G and augmented reality, thus enhancing the stadium experience. The basis for the flow of information in real time is around 1,600 match events and 3.6 million positioning points, which the DFL gathers during a Bundesliga match.

Accurate real-time analysis instead of slow motion after the match

This changes with 5G and the real-time app: the data is analysed in real time and transmitted to smartphones without delay via 5G. The app presents the data visually and provides live graphs, statistics and analyses, which were otherwise available only after the match on TV. For statistics fans, this means: accurate real-time analysis instead of delayed slow motion after the match.

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