



Rugby World Cup 2015 and Toshiba

Rugby World Cup 2015 was the biggest Tournament in the competition's 28 year history. As an event, Rugby World Cup has continued to grow since the inaugural Tournament was held in Australia and New Zealand back in 1987, and central to the success every four years has been the technology involved.

The Tournament not only involves a greater number of teams than when it started, rising from 16 to 20 nations hailing from all corners of the globe, but as a result also attracts more viewers, participation and interest than ever before. Rugby World Cup is now the third largest international sports event by viewership, with 102 nations competing for qualification and an overall estimated match attendance of 2.2 million. With the world watching, one of the core objectives for the organisers was putting on a fantastic global spectacle and creating the most engaging experience yet for everyone involved – from the fans in the stadium, to the media at press conferences, to each and every armchair supporter, be they in Uruguay, South Africa or beyond.

The requirements

With all eyes on the Rugby World Cup 2015, the team had to ensure that they were committed to a solution that could provide the highest possible levels of flexibility and reliability. For example, Broadcasting is integral when it comes to sport – most obviously in showing live matches around the world, but equally in creating an engaging experience within stadia, and keeping fans, media and teams up-to-date with the latest news and action. This year's Tournament also witnessed the debut of the new multi-angle video replay system that could be used in conjunction with the Television Match Official (TMO). These dependencies brought technology to the forefront of the Tournament, having a direct impact on its overall success.

The challenges

Rugby World Cup 2015 matches took place in 13 locations across England and Wales, requiring close IT coordination between the different sites and versatile display equipment to account for this. Rugby World Cup 2015 also required products to be used across a variety of functions, be they operations, fans, or player focused. As well as powering the technology behind the new multi-angle replays, the final solution needed to enable Rugby World Cup 2015 staff to remain in touch and productive when travelling from one venue to another, or when constantly on their feet during busy matchdays.

The solution

To fulfil this need, the organising committee turned to long-term official sponsor Toshiba, who were supporting the Tournament for the third time. Toshiba supplied units for eleven stadia, from Twickenham to St. James' Park, as well as further displays at Web Ellis House.

As John Corbett, Head of IT at World Rugby, puts it: "It is crucial both our AV and PC technology is industry-leading, both in terms of quality and reliability. Toshiba knows what is required, having worked with us since 2007 as a main sponsor of Rugby World Cup. We have a strong relationship with the company – it has seen us through three Tournaments now during which both the sport and the Tournament have experienced tremendous growth and our IT demands have subsequently increased. The experience and support Toshiba provides made it the obvious choice for our technology needs."

At Twickenham, for example, the press conference room was kitted out to provide media with a more engaging pre- and post-match experience, while screens were also located within the back-office operations rooms, helping senior operations figures to ensure everything ran smoothly. Similarly, at Birmingham's Villa Park stadium, Toshiba displays were installed within the Changing Rooms to provide the playing squads with important and timely information throughout the Tournament. With the evolution of playing technology and the importance of the Television Match Official (TMO), Toshiba screens, supported by its laptops, were central to the new multi-angle video replay system that was in use for the first time at the Tournament. With this in mind, the team needed a reliable and highly versatile unit, and Toshiba's TD-E series fit that bill perfectly.

"When planning the professional display needs for the Tournament, it quickly became clear that Rugby World Cup 2015 required a product built on reliability, with an adaptability to function effectively in different scenarios, as well as being easy to use," explains Richard Padun, Senior Business Development Manager for AV, Toshiba Northern Europe. "Our TD-E series delivers this desired blend, featuring Full HD 1080p high quality images and flexibility through a range of connectivity options. As such, we decided to install the TD-E series throughout multiple venues, with 161 Toshiba screens in operation at Rugby World Cup 2015. The wide 178° viewing angle made it perfect for use in any location, including changing rooms and press areas."

On top of its signage needs, Toshiba also supplied the operational teams with a number of laptops, including the business-built Portégé Z30 and Tecra W50-A, which possess lightweight frames and a host of connectivity ports. "As a global event taking place across various host cities, managing Rugby World Cup 2015 presented daily challenges, and Toshiba's laptops helped our teams to succeed in such a fast-paced environment", says John Corbett.

2019 and beyond

This was Toshiba's third consecutive Rugby World Cup sponsorship, but with a strong heritage in rugby and the next Tournament taking place in its home nation of Japan, it is a partnership both parties hope will continue to 2019 and beyond.

"It isn't just the quality of Toshiba's products that have impressed us, but also the continued support the team has provided throughout both the planning and execution stages of the tournament," explains John Corbett. "From day one, it has been clear that Toshiba shares our passion and commitment to creating the best possible experience for everyone involved in Rugby World Cup 2015, from the fans and media to the players and coaches. This shared mentality, coupled with its innovative IT solutions, gave us complete peace of mind that our technological needs were being met, and so we hope to work together for future Tournaments."

