AT&T Business



Primetime team golf league powered by technology

Business needs

Secure, business-grade connectivity to power gameplay, fan experience, operations, and broadcasting

Networking solution

AT&T Consulting and Professional Services, AT&T NetBond® Standard, AT&T Virtual Private Network (VPN), AT&T Global Video Solutions, and AT&T Business Wi-Fi connected to AT&T Dedicated Internet

Business value

Advanced connectivity expertise and solutions for reliable, high-speed data transmission; highly secure and direct cloud connections for scoring; virtual private network for remote staff; video services to streamline broadcasting; wireless connectivity and dedicated internet to help enhance fandom and operations

Industry focus

Sports and entertainment

Size

Over 100 TMRW Sports employees

About TMRW Sports and TGL

TMRW Sports (pronounced “tomorrow sports”) uses technology to deliver game-changing entertainment experiences. Its flagship property, TGL presented by SoFi, brings the excitement of professional golf indoors, where 3-person teams made up of PGA TOUR® stars compete head-to-head in a hybrid course environment only made possible through advanced connectivity.

The situation

Faced with building a highly technical arena in a short time, TMRW Sports needed a connectivity provider with the knowledge, skill, and capabilities to support the technology and services that make its team golf league possible.

Solution

AT&T Consulting and Professional Services worked with TMRW Sports to design a roadmap and connectivity solutions that would enable secure, reliable, high-speed data transmissions during TGL matches. Additional solutions throughout the arena heighten fan engagement across Wi-Fi®, streamline broadcast connections, and support everyday operations for staff on and off site.



Changing the game

Lights are flashing. Music is pumping. The players are mic'd up and ready to go.

All while 1,500 fans hang on the edge of their seats. Soaking up every swing. Every chip shot. Every putt.

When the team at TMRW Sports set out to bring the thrill of professional golf indoors, they knew they had their work cut out for them. Condensing a golf course onto a playing surface the size of a football field is no small feat.

With TGL's inaugural season fast approaching, the concept and venue had to come together quickly. Given the technology involved, it would also need to run on advanced connectivity to power everything from gameplay and scoring to the fan experience and operations—even broadcast services.

And because every match would be aired live, they couldn't risk the chance of an outage, no matter how small. One that could potentially bring play to a halt.

Ultimately, TMRW Sports found a provider that could meet their timeline, specialized requirements, and reliability and redundancy needs. They turned to AT&T Business, a leader in bringing to provide secure, dependable, high-speed connectivity and expertise to stadiums and venues all around the world.

Breaking new ground

TMRW Sports Chief Technology Officer Andrew Macaulay describes TGL as a sport where the technology is integrated into the competition itself.

"AT&T provided all the connectivity services," he said. "But before that they helped us design all the stadium communications capabilities in the first place. That was a huge critical component for us."

Prior to the venture, there was no blueprint for TGL's tech-infused concept. The stakes were high. Time was short. And the technology—very advanced. "Not having a network team on staff, AT&T became my team to do everything that we did," he said.

The knowledge and expertise of AT&T Consulting and Professional Services went a long way towards formulating solutions, working in parallel as the arena was being built and adapting to changes along the way.

"It all started with AT&T Consulting. I don't think we could've done any of it without their help upfront and throughout," said Macaulay. "They helped us design all the solutions that we needed. And then they helped drive the excellent resources from across all AT&T service areas to actually implement it and ultimately support it."

A one-of-a-kind sporting experience

To understand the technology and data that goes into every TGL match, you first need to understand how the game is played, watched, and enjoyed.

Every match is held at the first-of-its-kind, 1,500-seat SoFi Center and is broadcast live on ESPN in the U.S. and more than 150 countries worldwide. The TGL mobile app keeps fans up to date on stats, video clips, and information, including Matchup Live, a gamecast-style experience that updates matches in the moment, so fans never miss out.

TGL teams hit tee and fairway shots into a giant 64-by-53-foot simulator screen, the largest of its kind. Specialized cameras and sensors track shots as they fly, capturing attributes like ball speed, direction, and spin. High-speed connections and software transmit and analyze data in milliseconds so that the virtual balls projected on-screen act just as they would in the real world.

“The speed of the data capture is absolutely critical to make that experience lifelike,” said Macaulay. “If you don’t have fast, reliable connectivity in between all those components, it isn’t going to work. And that’s one of the key things AT&T provides to us.”

Once balls are within 50 yards of the pin, action shifts to a full-size green at the opposite end of the arena where teams finish out the hole. A 41-yard-wide turntable with more than 600 actuators beneath the surface enables competition staff to rotate and change the slope of the green, making each hole unique. In TGL, the goal is simple—win the hole, win a point. The team with the most points wins the match.

Secure connections to the cloud

Unlike many professional sports, nearly every aspect of the match runs on connectivity. With matches capped at two hours and fans watching live both in the arena and on television, delays simply cannot happen.

SoFi Center and TGL rely on a hybrid technology stack for gameplay and operations using on-premises servers for high-speed data transfer, leveraging the cloud for storage, processing, and applications.

“AT&T connects us on site locally, but we also use AT&T NetBond Standard to connect us directly to the cloud so we have extremely low latency and reliability,” Macaulay said.

Doing so enabled TGL to build their scoring system off-premises, knowing that it’s fast, secure, and reliable.

Solving for every variable

Aside from on-site personnel, TMRW Sports uses AT&T Virtual Private Network (VPN) so remote staff can connect to company applications and infrastructure. “It allows us to not have to fly in so many people,” said Macaulay. “And they can do their work securely from wherever they happen to be in the world.”

Because TGL hadn’t yet selected a broadcast partner during early construction, they took the advice of AT&T Business consultants, integrating AT&T Global Video Solutions into their infrastructure.

“AT&T was immensely helpful because it meant we could design and build our connectivity to Global Video Solutions. And because Global Video Solutions has connections to all the network partners providers that you could imagine needing, we knew we could do that later,” Macaulay said. “The transmission connections to ESPN as a result was a non-event, which is exactly what you want.”



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>
> **Andrew Macaulay, Chief Technology Officer, TMRW Sports**

Expanding reach with Wi-Fi®

While live sporting events remain as popular as ever, TMRW Sports recognized the need to drive engagement among mobile-first fans. The result was SoFi Center Wi-Fi presented by Farmers Insurance, developed and maintained by AT&T connected to an AT&T Dedicated Internet backbone.

“If you think about younger generations of sports fans, the way in which they consume or experience things, it’s in tandem with their mobile devices,” said TMRW Sports Chief Marketing Officer Peter Jung. “We want to make sure with their ability to share and engage, that connectivity is the driving force behind that.”

Wireless access points throughout the arena enable fans to share videos and photos over social media at will—transforming an audience of 1,500 into an army of influencers, driving brand awareness and interest across platforms.

“Through Wi-Fi, we’re able to reach millions of people on any given day that we have a match,” said Jung. “And that’s through the engagement and distribution of content and storytelling from all the people that come to visit SoFi Center during the season.”



Bringing the fans closer

TGL has further adapted the in-venue experience to appeal to unique fan interests, outfitting each player with a wireless microphone that captures everything from strategy conversations to good-natured smack talk.

Fans receive a complimentary set of earbuds upon entry that enable them to listen to both player and ESPN broadcast commentary using the Wi-Fi-connected app. The result is an engaging and immersive experience unlike any other, one Jung and the rest of TMRW Sports are continually refining with feedback from fans, players, and personnel.

“TGL takes what’s great about traditional sports and puts a modern slant on it, so the experience is adapted to future generations,” Jung said. “And AT&T is really the backbone enabling it.”

Learning and expanding

With the second season now in the books and another soon to follow, the success of TGL has spawned its first expansion with a women’s league and the debut of WTGL scheduled for later this year. Featuring teams of world-class players from the LPGA Tour, WTGL will also rely on AT&T connectivity and services at SoFi Center, utilzing the same secure, low-latency connections.

“TGL and WTGL are going to be an incredible force within professional sports, not to mention the professional golf industry,” said Jung. “I think it’s going to really have an impact on future generations of fandom and golf in general.”

For TMRW Sports, they continue to explore new and exciting tech-driven opportunities in sports, media, and entertainment. As the company continues to expand, Macaulay can attest to how well AT&T Business delivers. “You name a service or product we need, and we know AT&T has it,” he said.

For now, being part of the team that has introduced a new style of golf to millions is thrilling with every match bringing something special. “Whether it’s the fans, the players, the teams, the owners,” said Macaulay, “everyone has such a fun experience here.”

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