Bundesliga the world's first league to use automated audio mixing

Sportcast and Lawo launching new audio production – sound mixed on the basis of the players' tracking data, making it even more realistic

- As a driver of innovation, DFL is bringing together partners to combine match data and audio production.
- Sportcast and Lawo are developing the technology together, readying it for the market in a live test phase
- In use with all Bundesliga matches since the beginning of the current season

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Bundesliga TV viewers are able to enjoy a new sound experience in their living rooms. For this purpose, DFL subsidiary Sportcast, which produces all Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 matches, has launched a new audio production system. Live tracking data on the players is used to set the correct input levels for the microphones used to record what is going on in the field. This creates an entirely new and realistic audio experience for the viewer.

Image and video material, web links:

DFL subsidiary Sportcast coordinated the activities of the two service providers Lawo and ChyronHego and helped to ready the technology for the market in a two-year development and testing phase.

Lawo, an established provider of professional broadcasting products, developed the KICK software, which operates as the interface between the tracking data received and the digital mixing consoles used. ChyronHego, which is responsible for generating the official Bundesliga match data, provides the necessary tracking data for the automated system.

The quality of the official match data required for the technology is monitored by Sportcast subsidiary Sportec Solutions, thus ensuring problem-free operations. The company was established in 2016 with the purpose of offering innovative sports technology data and solutions related to Bundesliga. It has been involved in all Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 matches since the beginning of this season.

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The innovative approach taken by the new audio production systems lies in the networked utilisation of data as a basis for automatic audio mixing. This offers considerably better quality than manual audio mixing. The Lawo KICK software uses tracking data of the type that is now standard practice in professional football and has previously been mainly used for match statistics and graphic analyses. Camera-based technology generates real-time data in the stadium allowing the exact position of the 22 players, referees and the ball to be tracked.

Using the existing microphones, their positions on the edge of the field and their directional characteristics, the system determines which microphone can best capture what is happening on the field at any given time and automatically sends the necessary commands to the mixing console. The sound engineer sitting in the broadcast van can use the automated mixing of the field microphones in the overall mix and thus has more leeway for enhancing the aesthetics of the broadcast sound during the match.

Tim Achberger, Head of Innovation & Technology Management at Sportcast GmbH, is a fan of the new technology: “The new audio production system supplies consistent results of a uniformly high quality, giving viewers an entirely new sound experience.
Bundesliga is committed to ensuring an emotionally charged mix throughout the entire 90 minutes. Working with Lawo and ChyronHego, we have been able to develop a new and innovative system to achieve this.”

“The start of the Bundesliga 2017/2018 season marks a milestone in the quality of sport productions,” says Philipp Lawo, CEO of Lawo AG. “We have in DFL and Sportcast reliable partners by our side. They have assisted us in developing the system from the seed idea right through to the final product and given us the opportunity of testing the system under real production conditions. The result of this partnership is a new ground-breaking product that will redefined workflows in sports productions.”

Impressions:

KICK operating on Bundesliga matchday 9 (FC Augsburg vs Hannover 96)