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FanVision Brings More Football to Fans at the Game

By [Kyle Stack](#)  September 22, 2010 | 4:17 pm | Categories: [Business](#), [Equipment](#), [Venues](#)



When New England Patriots receiver Randy Moss made a sensational touchdown catch last Sunday, most of the 78,535 fans at New Meadowlands Stadium in New Jersey could only look to one of the stadium's four, high-def video boards to relive the play.

But a smaller number of people had a more convenient way to watch Moss' one-handed snag against the New York Jets — along with their choice of replay angles.

Such is the power every sports fan has with FanVision. The [mobile handset](#), about the size of a GPS unit and weighing a few ounces, has been used for NASCAR races, Formula 1 races, and PGA Tour events. Now, FanVision has come to NFL football.

The device, which sports a 4.3-inch screen, gives fans the ability to watch the game they're attending in real-time from five angles. They're usually network broadcast feeds, but some derive from

stadium-only feeds.

More important is replaying the game's most recent play from three angles, some of which are available only through the handset. Two out-of-town games are also viewable live, and other features include real-time stat updates from all games, a customizable fantasy football roster widget, the NFL RedZone channel, audio from network and local stations — and even a cheerleader camera in select stadiums.

FanVision advisor Mike Weisman, who's won multiple Emmys as a TV sports producer, said it's practical for fans to track games on a handset while watching one on the field, considering there's roughly 15 to 17 minutes of actual football during the three-plus hours a game can last. "You have approximately two hours and 45 minutes to be distracted without missing any plays on the field," Weisman told Wired.com.

It works by generating a signal from a local UHF channel that broadcasts on its own intra-stadium network and throughout the surrounding parking lots. (Wi-Fi is used only for back channels.) This allows for uninterrupted, real-time feeds since the network is built to handle far more traffic than the stadium's tens of thousands of occupants can offer.

Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross has spearheaded the product's widespread implementation. Ross tried the device for all eight Dolphins home games during last season and was so impressed by its potential that last December he bought Kangaroo TV (the Canadian outfit that produced the unit) and renamed it FanVision. Then he proposed a deal to the other 31 NFL owners in which he would deliver them each 5,000 handsets and wire their stadium for the device — on his dime.

Eleven took him up on it: the Arizona Cardinals, Buffalo Bills, Chicago Bears, Cleveland Browns, Denver Broncos, Minnesota Vikings, New York Jets, Philadelphia Eagles, Seattle Seahawks, St. Louis Rams, and Washington Redskins. Additionally, the University of Michigan signed up its massive football stadium in Ann Arbor.

Fans can also [buy FanVision](#) for \$199, so you can take your own device to any of these venues. Weisman and FanVision VP Matt Lukens said that they eventually want to incorporate the device into other sports leagues, including the NBA, MLB, and NHL, so there may soon be enough participants where the price point becomes cost-effective for consumers.

Before that happens, expect more NFL teams to take up Ross on his offer. The NFL is determined to improve the fans' in-game experience and FanVision — with its more-than-enough six-hour battery life — is the best current option. And FanVision will still be present at other sporting events, such as golf's upcoming Ryder Cup in Newport, Wales.

FanVision CEO Robert Mimeault said the handset's true value isn't just in the TV-like experience it provides fans on the fly. It's in the customization: "The way you can personalize it is what the experience is all about."

Photo: Kyle Stack

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