



MOLINEUX STADIUM

Wolverhampton, England

Above: Wolverhampton Wanderers home ground, Molineux Stadium.

Home to Wolverhampton Wanderers since 1889, Molineux Stadium is one of England's iconic grounds, having been the first stadium ever built for use by a Football League club.

In May 2010, plans were announced for a redevelopment programme at Molineux Stadium, which would see three sides of the ground rebuilt and linked, increasing the total capacity to 38,000. However, after the Stan Cullis Stand was completed as part of the first stage in 2012, the next two stages were put on hold, leaving the current capacity at 31,700.



Recently, there have been plenty of changes at Wolves, with Fosun International, a Chinese conglomerate and international investment company, taking over the club. It has enjoyed plenty of success on the pitch, earning promotion to the Premier League after finishing top of the EFL Championship, which has put the plans regarding expansion back on the table. Prior to that, though, the club made the decision to upgrade the audio system at Molineux Stadium, with a view to improve the match-day experience for the fans. T.G Baker were, once again, asked to assist with

a total revamp of the PA/VA system by Steve Sutton, Head of Operations at Wolves. The sound specialists carried out extensive work on the Stan Cullis Stand back in 2012. As part of that project, two new PA/VA racks were designed, manufactured and installed, connected to a bi-directional, dual redundant copper network, to link to the existing PA/VA racks in each of the other three stands. In addition, another 14 PA/VA zones were created within the new stand, covering two levels of concourses, home and away turnstiles, a museum, a megastore and extensive new hospitality areas, all with PA/VA

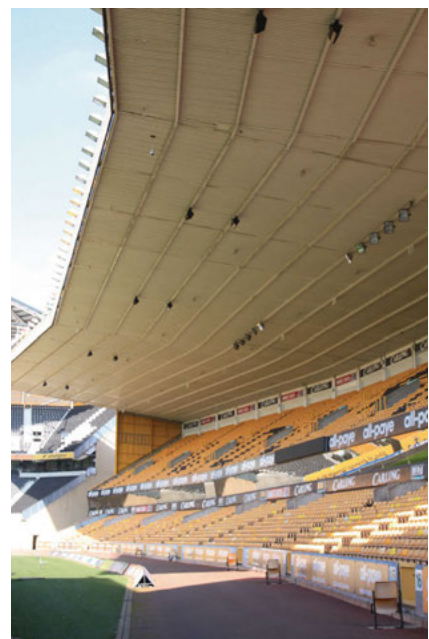
and AV integration.

"The driving force behind the decision was our change of ownership and, with that, came more availability in terms of budget, which we've not had before," explained Steve. "The system that was 24 years old, so the loudspeakers were way passed their recommended working life. "Primarily, the main improvement from a new system was going to come on the in-house entertainment side, as, from a safety perspective, the old system was certifying as suitable, satisfactory and compliant every year. But, on a match day, we were limited massively by the 🗣️



ability of the loudspeakers, especially when it came to music.”
With the plan in place, T.G Baker began work on finding the best option for the stadium based on the requirements from the club.
“So, once we made the decision to upgrade, we started exploring the various options we had. The guys from T.G Baker came down with a variety of different loudspeakers and equipment for us to listen to,” added Steve. “We had various demonstrations that involved our senior management team to decide on the speaker sound we liked the best.”
Andrew Plunkett, Regional General Manager at T.G Baker takes up the story: “What we decided

to do was sit them in the top tier of the Steve Bull Stand and set the loudspeaker options - around four or five different manufacturers - up on the pitch parameter.
“We then played them the songs they’ve been hearing at the match, the songs that they’re used to playing on match day. And that’s when they chose the best sound.”
The unanimous choice was the Nexo PS15-R2 loudspeakers, which offered intelligibility, even coverage and a great low-end. It was the perfect choice as Andrew had established that a full line array solution - although desirable for stadiums - did not fit with the budget for the project at Molineux Stadium, so a point-source solution



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

INSTALLERS- T.G Baker
BRANDS- Nexo
WEBSITE- www.tgbaker.com / www.nexo-sa.com



was the best option.

Induction loop systems were provided to all disabled viewing platforms and main banqueting areas, together with a Baldwin Boxall Omni-Care disabled refuge system across all levels of the new Stan Cullis Stand.

T.G Baker used 34 Nexo PS15-R2 cabinets, which were fixed to the roof of each stand, throwing over 20 to 25-metre distances, delivering even coverage with real clarity. To power the system, just six NXAMP4x4 amplifiers, distributed over three locations, were installed.

Since the install, the feedback has been hugely positive, with the club now able to offer the entertainment to improve the fan experience. "Crucially, it's that last five-minute build up towards kick off, where the crowd are filling the terraces bit by bit, that things start to ramp up," said Steve. "Lately, we've supplemented it with a pyro display as the players come out, so that's being synchronised into the new Nexo sound system.

"Two minutes before kick off, the players come

out of the tunnel, music is playing and the fireworks go in sync with the music - that's quite spectacular."

The new audio system has made a key difference in getting fans into the stadium earlier, too, with the club making the most of its ability to offer entertainment pre-match and at half time.

"We still get some late arrivals, but what we have noticed, because we're doing more on-pitch interviews, pyros and so on, fans are spending less time in the concourses - they make sure they're out a little bit earlier," added Steve.

The historic ground has certainly been given a new lease of life with the Nexo audio system in place. It's perfect timing, too, with Premier League football just around the corner for Wolves. One thing we can expect is an incredible atmosphere as the club look to make an impact at the top level once again. Should the success continue, we could see Molineux Stadium develop even further. It's definitely one to keep a close eye on, much like the team itself. ●

Above: The stands at Molineux Stadium.
Left: Andrew Plunkett of T.G Baker and Steve Sutton, Head of Operations at Wolves.
Right: The pyro display as the players enter the pitch