

Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States and the University of Virginia was no different from others in holding the view that keeping abreast with technological advancement meant staying competitive.

Lacrosse is a prime example of how the use of digital technology is becoming more prevalent across a broad range of sports – in both professional and amateur codes – and more particularly in the super competitive arena of college sport in the US.

“Video analysis is very prevalent in all levels of college lacrosse,” University of Virginia assistant team coach Marc Van Arsdale said. “Digital technology is coming to the forefront to replace VHS systems. At our level, all teams spend a great deal of time, particularly in season, on video analysis.”



The Virginia lacrosse programme has been using SportsCode since 2003 and Van Arsdale said the greatest single benefit of the product was its time-saving efficiency.

From the beginning, Van Arsdale said the ease of using the SportsCode system has been evident.

“It has proved to be very user friendly in all of the applications that we have tried,” he said. “The outstanding support from the company whenever any questions arise has helped our programme as well. The unlimited number of ways to categorize our video is a powerful tool that previous systems did not provide.”

With no specialist video analysts in lacrosse, the user friendly equipment offered by Sportstec has been pivotal for the coaching staff, who code the video information and manipulate the databases and movie organizers for team presentations.

Virginia competes in lacrosse at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) division one level -- the highest level competition offered in college sports. There are about 60 division one lacrosse teams in the US, which tends to be extremely competitive among the top 15-25 teams.

Van Arsdale is embarking on his 11th season as the top assistant coach at Virginia after serving five years as a head coach at the University of Pennsylvania.

Since the inception of the NCAA championship tournament in 1971, Virginia has won the title three times – 1971, 1999 and 2003. It was also runner-up in 1980, 1986, 1994 and 1996, all four times losing the championship game in sudden-death overtime.

The university’s women’s team also has a strong presence, winning the national championship in 2004.

“The main uses for SportsCode for our programme are the video analysis of our own performance -- both practice and games -- as well as in the scouting of our opponents,” Van Arsdale said. “We also use it in teaching our systems of play to our players.

“From the beginning of our use of SportsCode, the greatest benefit has been the ability to be more efficient in our time spent working with our video. We can organize presentations for our team so that we can give them the relevant information in a very concise manner. Given attention spans of 19-21 year-olds, this is a major asset.”

Another great benefit for Van Arsdale is the ability to be able to code games immediately after they are finished --even when traveling.

“This portability and instant access assists us well when we are traveling and have a quick turnaround for the next game,” he said.

“Also, the ability to access video from previous years is much better with this system than any we have previously used. In preparation for opponents who use simi-

lar patterns of play from year to year, we are able to easily draw on past video to help us prepare for future contests. We continue, as we become more familiar with the system's features and upgrades, to find ways to be better in our video presentations."



Virginia does not have enough coaches to make full use of SportsCode during a game, in terms of coding as the game is being played. But it is used in the most important weekends of their season – the conference championships and national championships.

"It means we are able to give our teams a quick review of our own game from the semifinals, as well as be able

to access the video of the opponent. Then present a concise presentation to the team, which is invaluable in these settings as we have such a short preparation time." Van Arsdale said.

"Each year we continue to discover more uses for SportsCode. The use of the movie organizer last spring was a good step for us to take. This year we intend to incorporate the power point features into scouting reports to combine both text and video on upcoming opponents. It certainly allows us to stay on the cutting edge of video analysis in our sport.

"It is important to do so not only because of how it better prepares and develops our team, but it also gives the impression to our players that we are using whatever methods possible to get better. We like them to see that we are going to continue to seek new ways to do what we do better.

"It also adds to our credibility with a generation of athletes that has grown up as technological consumers if we can use the best video tools available. We feel that SportsCode does that for us."

## **An example of a typical week's use of SportsCode for the Virginia lacrosse team:**

### **Saturday afternoon**

Virginia game is captured live into computer.

### **Saturday night**

Game is coded by assistant coach and database created.

### **Sunday**

Database is manipulated to create Movie Organizer of own game.

### **Monday**

Movie Organizer finalized for 15-20 minute presentation to team prior to practice. Finish coding upcoming opponent's game tapes that we have received. View own Movie Organizer with team.

Tuesday - Capture and code most recent game of upcoming opponent. Create scouting Movie Organizer on the personnel of upcoming opponent. View that movie (10-15 minutes) with team after practice.

Wednesday - Create scouting Movie Organizer on upcoming opponent's tactical strategies. View that movie (10-15 minutes) with team after practice.

### **Thursday**

Capture games received of future opponents. Prepare any specialty scouting or self-analysis movies for review with individuals or units.

### **Friday**

Begin coding following week's opponents' game videos.