

SUMMER 2018

# Gameday Security™

The Official Magazine of **NCS4**

National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security  
at The University of Southern Mississippi

## THE RACE IS ON

Why top sports security professionals  
from around the world are heading to  
Louisville for this year's NCS4 Conference

**PLUS**

**HOW TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE  
RETENTION AT YOUR VENUE**

**NEW SPORTS SECURITY  
RISK MODEL UNVEILED**

**INSIDE THE FUTURE OF UNMANNED  
AERIAL VEHICLE PROTECTION**

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## ON THE FLY

### Are sports security professionals truly prepared for the enormous threat unmanned aerial vehicles pose to all sporting events?

The era of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) has arrived. Today, more than one million UAVs are active in the U.S. alone, and by 2022, the Federal Aviation Administration is predicting there will be more than three million hovering over U.S. neighborhoods, highways and yes, even sporting events.

From recreational youth soccer games to the Super Bowl, no sporting event is immune to this increasing threat that some sports security professionals believe trails only active shooters and vehicular ramming as the top threats to sports security today.

David Waldman, a principal with strategic and technical consultancy firm, Cadmus, is an expert in incident management and emergency preparedness. Having worked for both the Bush and Obama administrations, Waldman provides counsel on everything from hurricanes and earthquakes to counterterrorism and active shooters. And yes, even UAVs.

“UAVs are definitely top threat that stadium and venue security operators need to worry about,” he says. “I think with other threats and issues, such as improvised explosive devices or vehicle ramming, we have really good plans and policies in place. But with UAVs, there doesn’t seem to be a unified answer on how to address this new threat.”

#### UNDERSTANDING THE UNKNOWN

The lack of a clear policy or direction can be partially attributed to legislators, law enforcement and security professionals failing to come to an agreement on that direction, but another reason might be the lack of visibility around this threat. In the security industry, tragedy tends to drive transformation. The Mandalay Bay outdoor music festival shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017, reiterated this fact. In the wake of the shooting, President Trump directed the Department of Justice to ban bump

stocks, which enabled the active shooter to use rifles as machine guns.

“Vegas-style incidents always raise the gun issue, but with UAVs, there have been some incidents in and around sporting stadiums and venues, but there’s been nothing major, no payloads being dropped and no deaths,” Waldman shares. “For the most part, we’ve mostly had hobbyists, but should we have a serious incident at a stadium or venue that’s highly publicized, then you’ll see a heightened focus and more dramatic action being taken.”

One of the most notable recent incidents occurred at a prominent venue in November 2017 at Levi’s Stadium, home to the NFL’s San Francisco 49ers. A UAV not only successfully penetrated the air space above the stadium, but dropped a payload on the more than 65,000 fans in attendance. Fortunately, the drone only dropped fliers.

“To me, that was the scariest incident we’ve had involving drones and sporting events as we know there are organizations that have figured out how to weaponize UAVs,” admits Waldman.

University of Kentucky Police Chief Joe Monroe has first-hand experience with a UAV threat. On September 5, 2015, a UAV entered Kroger Stadium at kickoff and crashed into the side of the stadium as it was exiting, nearly injuring a dozen spectators.

“The first thing we tried to do was identify where the operator could be, so we dispatched assets to that area of the parking lot to locate the individual responsible,” he says. Ultimately, it was discovered that it was a young college student simply trying to take pictures.

For Monroe, the moment that truly accentuated how impactful UAVs could be on sports security came when he viewed a YouTube video where a person placed a Glock handgun on a UAV and demonstrated how to remotely fire it.

## PLAN OF ATTACK

Industry best practices around UAVs remain a work in progress. Security measures can vary from state to state, with distance and timing being two of the core areas for discussion. Waldman acknowledges that there is no “one size fits all” solution, but there is one key area that all stadiums and operators can focus on to ensure its fans, athletes and staff are protected from UAVs – training.

“There’s a number of things you can do in terms of planning, training and running crisis simulations or exercises,” says Waldman. “Across the full preparedness spectrum, I see a lot of organizations investing in new technologies and hiring more staff, which is great, but there needs to be that same commitment to training that staff on what they would do if they actually saw a UAV, for example. Would they know what to do and then actually exercise that? Everyone has to know their roles and responsibilities in an event such as this.”

Monroe has also noticed an increasing number of technology options available to sports security professionals to combat this threat.

“Not only are these vendors pushing technology that detects these UAVs, but there are some that claim they can actually take control and safely land the UAV,” Monroe says. “The problem with that is that the United States government does not allow you to take control of an aircraft, so until some legislative changes are made in Washington, we can’t even use it.”

While technology has played a key role in detection and protection, it has also made security even more challenging. UAVs are getting cheaper and smaller, and they can fly faster for longer distances. As Waldman notes, stadiums could have a great detection system in place with a perimeter that can detect UAVs up to three miles away. But given the speed at which UAVs can move, the time to assess and address that threat over that three-mile window is rapidly decreasing.

“There’s a lot of things that need to happen in a short period of time. You have to decide quickly, is this just a hobbyist flying around or is there something more, such as a chemical or biological weapon that it is carrying, and if it is that larger threat, how are you going to stop it?” Waldman asks.

Monroe recognizes that UAV detection technology cannot keep up with UAV technology itself, and he wonders if creating an invisible mesh around a venue could ultimately prevent a UAV incident. “I think that’s the ideal situation, if you could create an invisible bubble over your venue using some kind of technology,” he shares.

But, Monroe acknowledges that this may not be an option at other sporting events that are also outdoors, such as golf or cross country.

Nonetheless, that type of thinking is exactly what the industry needs as it thinks outside the box in its UAV safety preparation. Part of thinking outside the box means also looking inward.

“I think most venue operators tend to think drones or

UAVs are for outdoor events, but we limit ourselves if we don’t think this could also be an indoor event issue as well,” shares Waldman. “We know the technology is getting smaller and it’s getting more agile, and it has the ability to be taken apart into smaller pieces.”

Fans also face the same threat entering an arena as they do a stadium. While tailgating isn’t the same concern with indoor sporting events – fans typically just want to head into the venue – there can be lengthy distances to walk from parking to the venue, as well as long lines to enter that venue. But the threat may not go away once fans enter the arena.

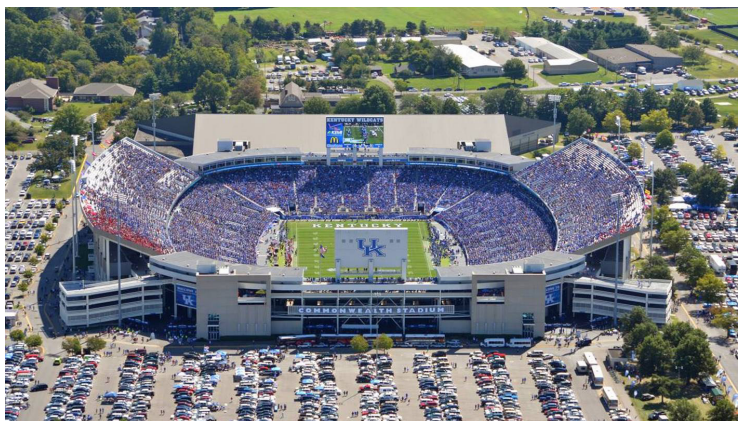
Waldman continues, “When you get a large number of people and you constrict them into a very constrained environment, and then whittle them down to security lines that can take some time, that’s a vulnerable time where someone looking to do harm could do a lot of damage if the proper security measures aren’t in place,” Waldman continues. “I don’t think this threat can be overlooked or dismissed.”

## A TEAM EFFORT

Looking ahead, the priority must be on properly preparing those responsible for stopping a UAV incident.

“I see a lot of funding going toward technology, but what is most consistently overlooked across the national preparedness spectrum is the failure to train your staff, and failure to test and validate your plans,” Waldman says.

**“I see a lot of funding going toward technology, but what is most consistently overlooked across the national preparedness spectrum is the failure to train your staff, and failure to test and validate your plans.” - David Waldman, Principal**



Waldman also advocates for more involvement from team owners and each respective league in supporting sports venue operators in their UAV preparedness efforts.



“It really takes an integrated whole community approach to ensure that each venue is prepared to respond to an incident. Sports venue operators must be coordinated with local, state and federal officials, as well as law enforcement, first responders – as well as engaging private sector organizations.”

Monroe agrees, “There has to be a partnership between the venue manager and public safety. They both have to recognize the potential threat and then work with officials to develop policy and procedures on how they’re going to respond to one. And then, it’s critical to have a good working relationship with the FAA.”

Monroe also takes it one step further, encourage venues to engage fans and educating them on saying something if they see something.

“That’s one of the things we learned from that 2015 incident; after the fact, there were a lot of people sending us pictures and video of the UAV flying around the stadium,” he says. “People knew it was there, they just didn’t know to report it.”

Today, UAVs have become more commonplace, with both hobbyist and terrorist posing a threat to sporting events.

**“When you talk about a drone incident at one of these events, it’s not a matter of if, it’s a matter of when.” - David Waldman, Principal**



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