



Macs in Action: Pittsburg State University

Football Videos Go Dashboard to Desktop

Pittsburg, Kansas — When your football team's ten-year record is 108-18-2, you're obviously doing something right. For Pittsburg State University, it's all about the cut-ups. No, not would-be jokesters who attempt to disrupt classes during the week. Cut-ups are, in fact, video clips that document specific plays on the field each Saturday. And with the help of a mobile editing system based on PowerBook G3 laptops, the school now creates these desktop highlights on the road, helping further Pitt's winning strategy.

Long regarded as one of the brightest stars of the NCAA's Division II, Pitt State has a tradition of both academic and athletic prowess. During the 1990s the university produced more Academic All-Americans than any other Division II school, and a full 41.5 percent of Pitt's overall football team maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Clearly, athletes at Pitt take their studies seriously.

Such dedication extends to Pitt's coaching staff, which studiously analyzes the college's football team. As is the custom in Division I and Division II schools, videotapes of every game of the season are dissected, reviewed, and discussed with players ad infinitum ... then swapped with the next week's opponents. Historically, the coaches would spend countless hours taping, cataloging, shuttling through and recording footage, then creating a final tape to view with the team. Still more time was required to dub off a copy to deliver to upcoming opponents.

"With the old-fashioned systems, you'd review tapes, then manually hit 'pause,' 'record,' 'pause,' 'record,' hundreds of times," remembers Bill Kroenke, offensive line coach at Pitt State. "Then we went to a linear editing system, but you still had to stick the cassette in, and fast-forward through the tape until the computer found the start and end points. It used to take 150 hours to edit a season's worth of cut-ups! We could only work with one view, which wasn't really an efficient way to watch the plays. Plus, the video looked really grainy, because we could only record at 50 percent in order to save computer memory."



Crib Notes

Challenges

- Improve performance of collegiate athletes
- Create video clips of weekly football games
- Organize and archive clips according to play category
- Devise mobile system enabling editing on the fly

Solution

- Five [Power Mac G4](#) computers and two [PowerBook G3](#) laptops
- Apple [FireWire](#)
- Canon XL-1 and GL-1 digital camcorders*
- QuickScout Video Scout 2000 software

Benefits

- Immediate access to high-quality footage of any desired play
- System can be used on the road
- Faster, more effective performance by players
- Significant reduction in coaches' time commitment



*The mention of third-party products is for informational purposes only and constitutes neither an endorsement nor a recommendation.

Photos courtesy of Pittsburg State University Office of University Communications

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New Editing Players

A winning 1998 season found Pitt's athletic department flush with donations to the school's Football Letterman Fund. With the blessing of Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Oliver Hensley (and some additional assistance from Innovation Fellows Tom Matukewicz and Greg Warlop), Pitt State's coaching staff purchased five Power Mac G4 desktop computers, and a pair of PowerBook G3 laptops. The Macs supplemented the staff's Canon XL-1 and GL-1 digital camcorders, which are used to tape midfield and end zone views of each game.

Now, Kroenke says, the camcorders capture the on-field action each Saturday. When the final second on the clock has expired, Kroenke connects each camera to a PowerBook via FireWire, begins digitizing the footage using Final Cut Pro, and heads for the showers. By the time the last player and sportswriter have left the locker room, the digital footage is ready for "cutting up."

"Even if we're all not done showering, we just unplug the PowerBook from the wall, and it starts running off the battery," Kroenke notes. "Then we set it in the front seat of the car and let it finish recording from the camera (which is also running off of its battery), and boom ... the entire 50-minute game tape is now on the computer, and we can start editing as soon as we leave the stadium."

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Cut-ups in Record Time

Kroenke reports that the PowerBooks are employed to produce cut-ups of offensive, defensive, and special teams' plays, all using QuikScout's Video Scout 2000, a digital video database software system for cataloging and editing video footage.

Expressly designed for football coaches, Video Scout 2000 helps instantly create QuickTime cut-ups of specific combinations of plays, formations, and play results from a single game or multiple games. According to Kroenke, Video Scout makes short work of archiving and retrieving any desired plays.

Says Kroenke: "Video Scout 2000 lets us put the footage on the computer, mark the play offense, defense, or special teams, and then put them into the right categories: down and distance, formation, yards gained, etc. With the digital technology, you can go from play 1 to play 70 in zero seconds. So in a flash I can locate, for example, all plays in a game that gained over ten yards, without spending hours shuttling through the footage. Where it used to take 150 hours to cut up one season, using only one view, now I can cut up both views of the entire season's games in one day."



Meanwhile, Back at the Office ...

As soon as Kroenke and his coaching colleagues return to the Pitt State campus, the PowerBooks are connected to a media converter via FireWire. Then an S-VHS signal transmits the signal out to a VCR, where the just-created cut-ups can be reviewed with Pitt players. Once the final selection of plays is made, Kroenke lays them down onto videotape, which is then delivered to Pitt's upcoming opponent the next day. Coaches and players can also view the clips directly on the PowerBooks, or on the Power Mac G4 computers located in each of the coaches' offices.

"This system really is powerful," Kroenke says. "The video is high-quality, as there's no loss of generations with digital technology. And with the PowerBook, the editing's a breeze. A colleague from another school said 'you'll never be able to do video editing on the road ... no laptop can handle that.' Then he saw the footage, and said 'how do you get your tapes to look so good?' I personally think PowerBooks kick the butt of anything IBM has on the market. Our cut-ups are the best of any Division II school in our conference."

Macs Changing the Rules

In Kroenke's estimation, the use of the desktop movies is having a dramatic effect on collegiate as well as professional football. Now that players and coaches have so much visual information instantly (and affordably) at their disposal, it's literally a

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— **Bill Kroenke**

whole new ball game.

Says Kroenke: “The game of football is all about reacting quickly to things that happen. If you’ve watched what your opponent does in a third and short situation 50 times, by Saturday you’re going to react faster and better on the field. And, with the PowerBooks and Video Scout, our time commitment is now so much less. Any coach can immediately pull off all the information he needs, instead of having someone else do it for him. We’re doing three times the amount of work in the same amount of time ... and we’re having a winning season, so something’s working right!”

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