

AN UPSCALE CHICAGO SPORTS-CLUB  
INSTALLATION GIVES FANS A SCORE  
OF HIGH-DEF VIEWING OPTIONS

# Rooftop of Dreams

BY MIKE METTLER  
PHOTOS BY MATTHEW GILSON

Ah, sweet home Chicago. I remember partaking in a number of great local traditions when I used to call the Windy City my backyard: Going to Buddy Guy's Legends club for a late night of tasty blues. Seeing the Chicago River dyed green for St. Patrick's Day. Taking in a Chicago Cubs game in the bleachers at Wrigley Field. And sometimes imbibing in, er, watching a Cubs game from one of the nearby rooftops on Sheffield and Addison. "Man," I've often thought, "wouldn't it be cool to put the patented **5&V** spin on that rooftop experience and be able to both take in a game there *and* watch it in high-definition at the same time?" Well, thanks to Wrigley Rooftops and the installation prowess of Davis Audio & Video, that's exactly what I got to do during the Cubs' recent run for the pennant.

The tale unfolds like this. Last fall, the owners of a pair of Wrigley Field rooftop buildings contracted Davis to install high-end entertainment systems in both locations in time for Opening Day 2008. The system at the first location (a.k.a. the Wrigley Field Rooftop Club) would be built from scratch; the one next door to it (the Sheffield Baseball Club) would be a retrofit. For the Wrigley install, according to Davis co-founder David Davis, "The owners said, 'We want the coolest, greatest rooftop system anyone's ever seen. We want as many TVs as you can fit in there, and we want something that's simple to use.'" Adds his brother Zachary Davis, chief architect of the system design, "I drew up three scenarios: good, better, and best. They went with the best. And that's what we put in there."

The idea was that not only would

Four Men Looking Out: Before Wrigley Rooftops patrons file in for the first pitch (and first pitcher), the Brothers Davis (Zachary and David, left) and Brothers Mettler (Mat and Mike) scope out Wrigley Field in Chicago, with a pair of the install's nine Sharp 46-inch LCD screens on the wall supervising them.



Zachary  
& David Davis



Game faces: Zachary (left) and David Davis hunker down on two seatbacks in the bleachers at the Wrigley Rooftops location across the street from Wrigley Field. Davis Audio & Video, [davisaudio.com](http://davisaudio.com), 312-423-7938



patrons enjoy Cubs games, but they'd be able to access both rooftop clubs year-round to enjoy events like the Stanley Cup Playoffs, March Madness, and the Super Bowl. (A third location, the Ivy League Baseball Club, is undergoing renovation and is slated to be ready in time for Opening Day 2009; **SAV**, of course, will be there to cover it.)

### GEARING UP FOR OPENING DAY

With the architects, electricians, plumbers, and carpenters already hard at work getting the Wrigley Club up to code, the Davises had to dive in and choose TVs, stat. They went with nine Sharp Aquos 46-inch LCDs and seven Sharp Aquos 32-inch LCDs. The 46-inchers were delegated to the main room, and the 32-inchers were split between the respective bathrooms (nope, not even the call of nature will cause you to miss a minute of the action) and the outdoor bar area that leads to the actual rooftop. (The three SunBrite 46-inch LCDs in the rooftop zone were selected before the Davises were on the job; Zachary expects to upgrade them soon.)

"We had to be mindful of both the space that the architect had spec'ed and the custom carpentry work, so the Sharps made a lot of sense," explains Zachary. "We needed to go with LCD over plasma because of how bright this room gets. And we were able to move up in size from the initial idea of 42 inches to 46 inches for the main room's screens." Adds David, "The glass bezel around those Sharps is really nice-looking, and that went especially well with the overall club design."

An AMX AutoPatch 8x24 A/V matrix switcher in the equipment rack enables the bartender or general manager on duty to choose among eight sources and throw the various feeds to any of the TVs, independent of what the other sets are displaying. So if eight games or matches in multiple sports are concurrently underway on a busy Saturday afternoon, all of them can be shown, and no fan will feel slighted.

Control comes via the AMX 10-inch touchpad in a wall behind the bar. Another AutoPatch switcher in the rack sends



Around the horn: Behind the bar, Zachary shows David what's what on the all-powerful AMX touchpad (left). If you rent the place out for a corporate event, you can engage a Draper 119-inch retractable screen that drops down from the ceiling (top) and access an NEC DLP projector mounted in an Auton projector lift. Flanking the projector are two JBL in-ceiling speakers.

video to the touchpanel so that the bartender or GM can scroll through the channel guide on the panel itself rather than having to commandeer one of the screens to make selections.

The 7-foot-high equipment rack was originally slated for placement in the mechanical room, but circumstances dictated that it be moved into a closet behind the bar — and moved there a mere 20 hours before the club was slated to open, no less. "The rack had to go in before the bar taps went in," recalls Zachary. "Though the rack is on wheels, we couldn't just roll it around the bar because the countertop was already in place and immovable, and the clearance for anything to get behind the bar is only a few feet. It took 10 guys to move it." He pauses, then chuckles. "We should have videotaped that."

### PLAY HIGH-DEF BALL!

Naturally, the only way to properly evaluate the install at the Wrigley Rooftops Club was to do so when the Cubs were at home. I zeroed in on the first weekend in August, when the Pittsburgh Pirates came to town for a three-game stand. I then invited two locals with Iron City ties to join me: Kellyanne Gardienne, a sports manual therapist I've



In the dugout (left): The Davis crew needed 10 able bodies to lift the 7-foot-high equipment rack above and around the bar to get it into its proper home in the closet. "We should have videotaped that," chuckles Zachary Davis. Pirate's duty (above): "Here's the thing about watching double plays. . . ." Gardienne schools the Mettler Boys on experiencing base-a-ball in high-def.

### Gear List

- ⚡ (9) Sharp Aquos LC46D82U 46-inch LCD HDTVs
- ⚡ (7) Sharp Aquos LC32D43U 32-inch LCD HDTVs
- ⚡ (3) SunBrite 4600HD 46-inch all-weather outdoor LCD HDTVs
- ⚡ Sanus VMPL250 TV wall mounts
- ⚡ Peerless SA740P and SA760P articulating mounts
- ⚡ NEC NP4001 DLP projector with NEC NP07ZL zoom lens
- ⚡ Draper Access/Series V 119-inch retractable projection screen
- ⚡ Auton 1001-LCD projector lift
- ⚡ Onkyo DV-CP704B six-disc DVD changer
- ⚡ Teac TR-680RS AM/FM stereo tuner
- ⚡ Crown CDI 1000 2-channel, 800-watt amplifier
- ⚡ Tripp Lite HT3100PC power conditioner
- ⚡ AMX NI-3100 NetLinux integrated controller
- ⚡ AMX NXD-1000Vi Modero 10-inch touchpanel
- ⚡ (2) AMX AXC-VOL 2-channel volume-control cards
- ⚡ AMX AutoPatch Modula A/V matrix switcher
- ⚡ AMX AutoPatch PrecisLT composite-video/stereo-audio switcher
- ⚡ (3) Xantech RT16-10 IR routers
- ⚡ (5) JBL Control 26CT ceiling speakers
- ⚡ (2) JBL Control 24CT ceiling speakers
- ⚡ (2) JBL Control 28T-60 2-way indoor/outdoor speakers
- ⚡ (3) JBL Control 25T 2-way indoor/outdoor speakers

known ever since we went to grade school together in Pittsburgh, and my younger brother Mat, who was born there. Gardienne, a passionate sports fan and A/V enthusiast, relished the invite and promised to don a Pirates jersey for the occasion; I, in turn, couldn't promise her safety, but she held her own amid the Cubs faithful. Mat, a DVD fanatic partial to the crosstown rival Chicago White Sox, wisely decided not to stir the pot and remained attire-neutral.

For the first few innings, we hunkered down in a booth in the main room. As our sightline was a small window of real estate running down the first-base line, we spent most of the time watching the Comcast SportsNet HD broadcast of the game on one of the 46-inch Sharp screens across the room. My compatriots and I saw plenty of clear high-def detail: the lush, green crosshatched outfield grass, the orderly rows of raked dirt in the infield before it all got trampled under cleats, the shadows on and folds of the ivy on the outfield wall, and the light yellow outline that encircled sleeves and the black team logo on the Pirates' jersey fronts.

For the second half of the game, we went up to the rooftop and planted ourselves at a table in line with opposing SunBrites that also gave us a small window of daylight on the field between second and third base. Reacting to the 5-second broadcast delay was interesting; first we'd hear the roar of the crowd, then we'd turn around to catch the action on a SunBrite. We saw two great Pirate double plays that way, plus watched the Bucs' Jason Michaels jack a solo homer in the 6th to seal a 3-0 victory.

As an overall high-def social experience, our Wrigley Rooftops Club afternoon was hard to beat. I'm already counting down until the next Opening Day. Oh, take me back to the ball game. . . . **SAV**

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