



Case study



DICK'S Sporting Goods Park Provides Rapid Security Screening with Evolv Technology

DICK'S Sporting Goods (DSG) Park

LOCATION: Commerce City, CO

HOME TEAM: Colorado Rapids

OPENED: 2007

CAPACITY: 19,734 for Soccer & 27,000 for concerts

ENTRANCES: 8

WEBSITE: www.dickssportinggoodspark.com

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Scale to support last-minute surges in fans and guests before the start of games and events
- Deliver frictionless security screening experience
- Provide security staff with a technology that enables them to do their jobs more efficiently
- Reduce security queues at entrances to eliminate soft targets at the park perimeter
- Deploy security screening technology that would withstand hard weather elements
- Provide the team with flexible security technology that could be moved between entrances at the park
- Leverage analytics for staffing and operational decisions and planning

Solution

People

- The Evolv Solutions Engineer worked with the DICK'S Sporting Goods Park and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment teams to configure the placement of each Express system
- The Evolv team provided onsite support for deployment and then ongoing technical support

Process

- Configured and deployed 9 Evolv Express systems
- Trained stadium security team on Evolv Express system operations and Evolv Insights analytics

Technology

- 2 Outdoor Evolv Express® Dual-lane Systems
- 7 Outdoor Evolv Express Single-lane Systems
- Evolv Insights®

Outcomes



Reduced security system footprint from 40 walkthrough metal detectors to 9 Evolv Express systems—a nearly 80% reduction



Greatly reduced security queues outside park entrances



Reallocated between 8 and 10 security staff per entrance to other areas of the park



Improved guest experience, as corroborated by regular guest surveys



Screened over 1,000 guests at one entrance in 15-minute timeframe



Increased concession and merchandise sales



Created a frictionless secondary screening experience for security staff and guests



Enabled security guards to focus on doing their job versus operating technology

A Park with a Fan-first Mission

DICK'S Sporting Goods Park opened in 2007, providing a new, state-of-the-art home for the MLS's Colorado Rapids and a great venue for other Denver events such as concerts.

Austin McKenna, the Executive Director of Safety and Security at Kroenke Sports and Entertainment, which manages safety and security operations at the park, explains that the team's "mission is to provide a safe, secure, and welcoming environment to everyone who comes to the park. We want our fans and guests to come to DICK'S Sporting Goods Park to enjoy a fantastic soccer game. We have everyone from families with kids to 80-year-old diehard soccer fans coming to the park for games. We want people, both guests and employees, to feel safe and comfortable and not to think about anything else beyond enjoying the game or event with their friends and family."

Limitations of Walkthrough Metal Detectors

For several years, DICK'S Sporting Goods Park relied on walkthrough metal detectors to screen guests and employees for weapons as they entered the park.

In early 2023, however, the Events team at DICK'S Sporting Goods Park and the Safety and Security team at Kroenke Sports and Entertainment, the Park's parent company, embarked on a search to upgrade the technology underlying their security ingress. Their mission was to improve the experience of fans and guests while maintaining a high level of security.

"The walkthrough metal detectors enabled our guests and employees to be safe and to feel safe," McKenna explains. "But the security ingress process was not an optimal experience. We screen upwards of three million fans, guests, and employees at the park annually and need a next-generation technology that can scale to our needs. In addition to security queues in front of our entrances, everyone had to empty all their pockets and, if they set off an alarm, pass through intrusive security screening. This was not the experience we wanted to afford them."

Late Guest Arrivals Were Cause for Concern

Part of the problem with traditional metal detectors relates to the majority of fans and guests arriving shortly before the start of a soccer match or event, causing lingering queues.

"We open our gates 60 minutes before most matches and events," says Phaidra Reed, the Senior Director of Event Management at DICK'S Sporting Goods Park. "We might open 90 minutes ahead of a few special events. That said, the reality is the majority of fans and guests arrive in the last 15 minutes. We get maybe 15% to 25% of them in the first 45 minutes, and the remainder in a rush right before the match or event begins. We needed a technology that would scale to handle the influx we got at this last minute without sacrificing our security."

The influx of fans and guests at the last minute created lengthy security lines before games and events started. Beyond negatively impacting customer experience, the security queues presented security concerns. "We didn't want the security queues outside of our entrances," McKenna says. "We wanted to get our guests and staff into the park quickly. Having a security queue outside of an entrance is a soft target we wanted to remove."

“

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– Austin McKenna, Exec. Director, Safety and Security, Kroenke Sports and Entertainment



Selecting Evolv Technology

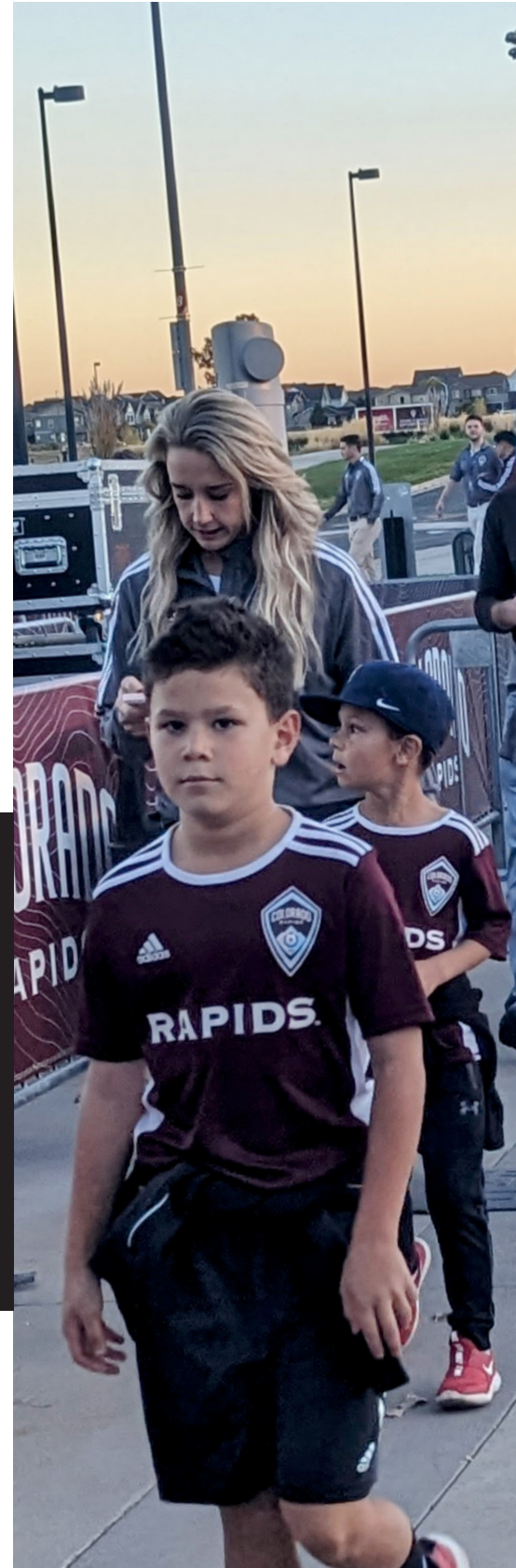
**“We’re always looking for new technologies,”
McKenna reports.**

“Not only ways to keep everyone safe, but to provide our guests with the best possible experience when they arrive at the park.”

At the top of the list of reasons the DICK'S and Kroenke teams turned to Evolv was the ability to provide security staff with a technology that would help them in their jobs. “With the walkthrough metal detectors, the technology did not aid our staff in doing their jobs at all,” McKenna explains. “With Evolv, the red box on the Evolv tablet tells them exactly where the potential threat is located on the person’s body or bag. It creates a frictionless process. Evolv supports them in doing their job. And when secondary screening is needed, the check for weapons is unintrusive; the interactions between security staff and our guests are much improved.”

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- Phaidra Reed, Sr. Dir., Event Management, DICK'S Sporting Goods Park



Setting Up the Evolv Express® Systems for Success

Being in Colorado, the weather can be unpredictable—whether wind, rain, snow, or sunlight.

For that reason, the two teams selected Ruggedized Evolv Express systems for deployment. “We needed a technology system that would withstand these adverse elements and not break down,” McKenna comments.

Six Evolv Express systems were deployed at six of the individual entrances. Two of them are dual-lane systems, which were installed at the two entrances that receive the most traffic. “We normally get between 40% and 50% of all our fans for a soccer match coming through those two gates,” Reed says. At four other gates, DICK'S Sporting Goods Park installed single-lane Express systems. “We typically use six of our eight entrances for soccer matches. For some concerts, we'll open up the other two gates and have three Express single-lane systems that we use at those gates. We can set up, tear down, and store the Express system quickly and easily is an attribute we particularly like. Over our previous environment, we have much greater flexibility with the Evolv technology.”

When it came to configuring the Evolv deployment, the Evolv Systems Engineer recommended that DICK'S Sporting Goods Park eliminate the queues—or snakes—they had in front of their entrances with the walkthrough metal detectors. “We had multiple switchbacks with the metal detectors to accommodate the lines that would form before the entrances,” Reed laughs. “I reached a compromise with the Evolv team and implemented a single switchback to prepare them to pass through the Express lane.”

As safety is a top concern for DICK'S Sporting Goods Park, Kroenke Sports and Entertainment maintains security screening at one entrance 24 hours a day. “Whether someone is here at 2 p.m. or 1 a.m., we want the environment to be safe and for them to feel comfortable, even if it is simply an employee of the park,” McKenna says.

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Launching Evolv at the Annual Phish Event

For the initial go-live date with Evolv, DICK'S Sporting Goods Park chose its annual Phish event, which features a series of concerts over three days.

"It can be a very intense environment," McKenna reports. "Two takeaways emerged after we implemented Evolv at all of our entrances. First, we were dumbfounded that there were no lines. This was never the case when we had the metal detectors in place. We initially weren't certain if people were not showing up. Guests were literally walking right up to the Express lane and walking

through and into the park. The second observation was the reaction from some of the guests. I had one of them stop me and express their concern about not being screened for security—this was after they had passed through the Express lane. When I described the technology to him, he called it 'alien' technology."



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Excited But Nervous at Initial Deployment

Erin Gaston, the Director of Guest Experience at Kroenke Sports and Entertainment, indicates the team was both excited and nervous on the first day they went live with Evolv.

"It's always difficult to imagine what a new technology is going to introduce when you deploy it," she explains. "We spent a lot of time in training our staff, so we were quite confident that it would be successful, but you always wonder until you actually see it in production."

Reed indicated she had the same feelings: "When it came time to deploy the Express systems, there was definitely some holding of breath. We had read all the documentation and seen the setup and test runs of the system. But actually seeing them up and running with guests streaming through them is a different experience. One of the areas that I was most interested to see was the gate where our season ticket holders go through. Our Season Ticket Holders give us the most feedback as they are attending almost every match. Their insights allow us to understand where we are excelling and where we are failing. The response from them was outstanding."

The response from the security staff was also very positive. "Our security staff had been using traditional metal detectors for a long time," Gaston reports. "This was a significant change for them and they were a bit uncertain as to how guests would respond. The change in interactions made a big impression on them. We want to focus on providing the safest environment possible and to concentrate on big safety things rather than things that don't matter. Evolv takes the guesswork out of the screening process, allowing guests to walk through without stopping."

“ We use the analytics in Evolv Insights to plan for upcoming matches or events or even for the upcoming year. The data helps us see areas of improvement at particular gates. We can also pinpoint instances where we didn't need all of the entrances and can reduce the number down for the next match or event.”

- Phaidra Reed, Sr. Dir., Event Management,
DICK'S Sporting Goods Park

Comprehensive Support from Evolv

The support from the Evolv team was critical to the successful deployment of the Express systems.

"We had a lot of support from our account team and customer support manager," McKenna says. "All of our staff went through online as well as in-person training on the Evolv technology before we went live. In addition, the Evolv team came onsite for our first few events to make sure everything went smoothly and that any of our questions were answered. Evolv also connected us with a few other Evolv clients who shared lessons learned and pain points from their deployments that we found very helpful."

Reed concurs with McKenna's assessment. "We have gotten really good support from the Evolv team," she conveys. "We've had a few instances where a system went down, and we were able to get things back up and running very quickly with Evolv support. Overall, we have built a relationship with Evolv for the long term. They listen to our requirements and work to ensure we are successful."

Leveraging Evolv Insights® Analytics

The teams from DICK'S Sporting Goods Park and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment find the analytics from Evolv Insights especially useful.

"We use the analytics in Evolv Insights to plan for upcoming matches or events or even for the upcoming year," Reed explains. "The data helps us see areas of improvement at particular gates. We can also pinpoint instances where we didn't need all of the entrances and can reduce the number for the next match or event. We also can analyze the traffic at each gate and the throughput and adjust staffing levels for the next match or event."

McKenna concurs with Reed's positive comments about Evolv Insights. "We use Insights after every event," he says. "We look at the throughput, the indication rates, what's being brought into the venue, and what's being stopped. Insights give us a snapshot of the entry points that we use to plan for future matches and events. We also use the data to pinpoint instances where security staff need more training on operating the Evolv technology."

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Our priority for guest entry is for them to feel safe. Beyond that, we want fans to have a fun and exciting time. We want our staff not only to do their job at the door and make sure they're safe but also can present and reflect a fun environment because that is why everyone is here at the end of the day."

- Erin Gaston, Dir., Guest Experience, Kroenke Sports and Entertainment



Faster Security Screening Evaporates Complaints

Evolv has helped DICK'S Sporting Goods Field to improve its fan and guest experience.

"Evolv enables us to deliver a better experience for our fans," Reed reports. "Many don't even realize they have passed through security screening when they walk through an Express lane. We can pump the fans right through security much faster with Evolv, getting them to their seats in time to see the start of a match or concert. Security screening with Evolv is much faster and we have virtually eliminated the lines into the park. Even if fans or guests show up right before the start of a game or event, we're able to get them into the park at a much faster pace than before." At one of the gates with a dual-lane Express system, Reed notes they screened over 1,000 guests in 15 minutes. "The Insights data confirms it," she adds.

In terms of feedback, the biggest outcome the two teams have seen is a big decline in negative feedback. "We see this as a big win," Gaston says. "The easier and faster that we can make security screening, the better. We also see a lot fewer bumpy interactions with guests—situations where security staff stop someone for something they thought is prohibited but really isn't. We've also seen an increase in positive feedback as well. Guests can get into the park much faster with Evolv as compared to the walkthrough metal detectors, and they appreciate the new experience. Our group is responsible for doing a lot of post-game and post-event survey analytics, and the results have been very positive."

“ Evolv makes a big difference. It now takes five minutes to get into the park compared to 30 minutes before. Guests can walk around the stadium and see what else is available. That pre-game time is especially important for soccer, which has a shorter window in the middle of a game than other sports.”

- Erin Gaston, Dir., Guest Experience,
Kroenke Sport and Entertainment

Security Staff Able to Do Their Jobs

While security staff were initially nervous about the Evolv rollout, they warmed very quickly to the technology.

"Our security staff are much happier with the Evolv systems," McKenna observes. "Not only do they feel safer and more secure, but they feel more at ease in their job because the technology actually supports them in doing their job."

Less Time in Security Screening

The security lines that would form before entrances before the start of soccer games and events were dramatically reduced with the Evolv rollout.

"With the metal detectors, we would have lines that were 50 to 100 people deep depending on the location," Reed says. "Now, with Evolv, we might have 25 at the very most."

As fans and guests no longer need to wait in security lines, they have a longer period to spend in concessions and merchandise shops before the start of games or events. "Getting guests into the park before the start of a soccer match or event provides them with a better experience while allowing us to sell them more concessions and merchandise," McKenna notes. "This gives them a chance to enjoy the environment for a longer period."

This has translated into an increase in concession and retail sales. "Evolv makes a big difference," Gaston says. "It now takes five minutes to get into the park compared to 30 minutes before. Guests can walk around the stadium and see what else is available. That pre-game time is especially important for soccer, which has a shorter window in the middle of a game than other sports."



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Reduced Footprint Requires Fewer Security Staff to Manage

Before migrating to Evolv, DICK'S Sporting Goods Park relied on 40 walkthrough metal detectors installed across eight entrances to the park.

With four to six metal detectors at each entrance, their footprint took up significant space at the entrances and required around 80 security staff to manage. This shrank to nine Express systems—a nearly 80% reduction in equipment to manage.

This eased staffing requirements for security ingress. “Initially, we retained the same number of staff,” Reed says. “But we soon realized that we could reallocate some of the staff to other areas in the park. Depending on the match or event, we are reallocating 8 to 10 staff, who would have

been needed to manage the walkthrough metal detectors, to other areas of the park. This improves our security and helps us deliver better service to our fans and guests.”

Another factor Reed likes about the Express systems is that they take up a lot less space than the metal detectors. “With the Evolv systems, we have more flexibility in terms of where to deploy them and the ability to reallocate some of the space that was taken up by the metal detectors,” she relates.



An Experience That Begins with Evolv

“When guests arrive at the park, there are a lot of things happening inside,” Gaston describes.

“It is almost sensory overload. There’s a lot of music playing and guests are shopping for food, drinks, and merchandise. The more time they spend in the building, the better their experience.”

Gaston notes that Evolv is a critical enabler of this experience. “Our priority for guest entry is for them

to feel safe,” she concludes. “Beyond that, we want fans to have a fun and exciting time. We want our staff not only to do their job at the door and make sure they’re safe but also can present and reflect a fun environment because that is why everyone is here at the end of the day.”

Where **Safety** Meets **Experience**

Contact us to learn more about helping to create
safer zones where you live, learn, work or play.

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