

## ANC Sports' big score – installing scoreboards

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Matthew Brown/The Journal News

Jerry Cifarelli is president and CEO of ANC Sports Enterprises LLC, which has installed scoreboards or signs in more than 150 stadiums or arenas around the country, including Yankee Stadium, Shea Stadium and Giants Stadium. He is photographed at his Purchase office.

Jerry Cifarelli was a lot more than a casual basketball fan when he watched the NBA Finals between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the San Antonio Spurs in June.

His company, ANC Sports Enterprises LLC of Purchase, had designed and installed the three-story, 60,000-pound scoreboard above the center court of Cleveland's Quicken Loans Arena, the home of the Cavaliers.

The scoreboard, with its entertaining displays of video, graphics and statistics,

rarely malfunctioned. But during the Finals, as millions of Americans watched, a software bug caused problems with the clock, leading to a delay of the game.

It was a stressful moment for Cifarelli, who was watching from his home in Rye.

"Ultimately, my phone is ringing at home," recalled Cifarelli, the president and chief executive officer of ANC. "The president of the team is calling me to ask what is going on. Sure enough, after a few minutes, they figured it out and fixed it."

For Cifarelli, the incident was a precautionary reminder to be prepared.

"We have a staff working around the clock all night long to respond to any issues that might come up," he said. "It is vital to stay on top of the technology side of it to make sure that these games go off and nothing impacts the game itself. ... We'd like to think that every night should be a perfect night. While it is not always perfect, our track record of being perfect is pretty damn good."

Also exceptional is ANC's record of penetrating America's biggest sporting venues.

The company said that it has relationships with more than 150 stadiums-arenas around the country, including 15 venues in Major League Baseball, 16 in the National Basketball Association, 11 in the National Hockey League and 10 in the National Football League.



ANC Sports installed a new scoreboard at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia. The arena is home to the National Hockey League's flyers and the National Basketball Association's 76ers.

give them a good experience. So when you go to a stadium and see these products, it changes the complexion of the game experience for you. It also gives the teams and stadiums the flexibility to sell a lot of different advertising and really be creative with the sponsorship package."

ANC's revenues have doubled to \$50 million this year as the company landed business from new professional stadiums under construction nationally. In Washington, ANC is about 70 percent complete, with the installation of a giant scoreboard that is 40 feet tall and 120 feet wide. The scoreboard will be in the new stadium for the Washington Nationals baseball club. The hardware for the scoreboard is manufactured by Mitsubishi under a contract with ANC.

ANC also is bidding on contracts for the new venues that will host the Mets and Yankees.

"There are so many facilities and stadiums out there - so much work to be done," Cifarelli said. "We have a lot of jobs on our desk. We sort of pick and choose what we can respond to and can't respond to."

ANC has landed additional business from retrofitting older arenas such as the 11-year-old Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, home to the 76ers basketball team and Flyers hockey club. ANC installed a new scoreboard over center court and signage at the arena, which is owned by Comcast-Spectator.

ANC's services include scoreboard installation, operation and maintenance; rotational signage found behind home plate in baseball and courtside in the NBA; and sports marketing and consultation.

In the New York area, ANC signage can be found at Yankee Stadium, Shea Stadium and Giants Stadium.

"Fans are coming to stadiums and paying a lot of money to be there," Cifarelli said. "There's an obligation of the owners to

"They took the time to visit with us and knew what it would take to ultimately entertain our fans," said Peter Luukko, president and chief operating officer of Comcast-Spectator. "The product they delivered for us in Philly is perfect for us and we're extremely happy with it."

Beyond pro sports, Cifarelli sees potential for selling the high-tech scoreboards or signs to colleges, high schools - and even shopping malls.

"We are coming out of a record breaking year in 2007, and really putting ourselves in a position to expand or grow our business," Cifarelli said. "Really the focus of where we are going in the next 10 years is to create more partnerships, expanding the business beyond sports and really trying to take ANC to the level of being a \$100 million company."

Cifarelli, a Yankees fan as a child, played on the baseball team while attending Iona College in New Rochelle during the 1970s. But Cifarelli, 52, would make his name off the field rather than on it. As a sports marketing executive in the 1980s and 1990s, he said he took the concept of rotational signs from the soccer fields of Europe to professional basketball and baseball.

In 1997, Cifarelli left the marketing company where he was then working to start ANC with Alan N. Cohen, the former owner of the Boston Celtics.

ANC has grown from three to 60 employees during its 10-year history.

I have basically lived and died this business for 20 years," Cifarelli said. "Every project is different. You can't use a cookie cutter approach. ... It is exciting to go to various stadiums and see your products have so much to do with the fan experience."

Cifarelli travels two to three days a week to cities where ANC is involved in projects or negotiating deals.

"In this business, it is not a nine-to-five job obviously," he said. "On normal days, you come into work at 7:30 a.m. and you go home at 8:30 p.m. And then when you are at home, your phone is ringing because there might be something going on at a particular stadium."



ANC Sports came up with the idea to put signage on the framework of basketball backboards. The signs they created for State Farm are behind the backboards of 15 NBA teams this season.

Take a recent evening when the New York Knicks were playing on the road at the Phoenix Suns. Cifarelli wasn't at the game. He was watching from home. And he wasn't happy. The graphics along the court at the Phoenix arena - another ANC client - didn't meet Cifarelli's expectations. He quickly fired off an e-mail to ANC's client services division noting that the graphics didn't look right.

"When I'm watching a game, I usually am focusing on the behind-the-scenes stuff that is the key to our business," he said.

Cifarelli said he stresses the same no-nonsense style to ANC employees whose job is to keep the arenas and their scoreboards operating rather than fraternizing with players or getting caught up in on-the-field distractions.

"We're not here to shake hands with Derek Jeter and hang out with players," he said. "The focus needs to be about their job and the game. And if they are mingling with players or doing things that they shouldn't be doing, they won't be working here."