

This camera has amateurs dreaming

A new technology makes broadcasting live footage a reality. The German Football Association, DFB, is planning more tests.

— By *Louis Reiss and Steven Jörgensen*

Spectators can barely tell the difference. A camera system has been installed above the centre line, beneath the roof of SV Lippstadt's stadium, and the former has been supplied by production company Wige. The system itself looks like a modern radar trap – and it could mark the beginning of a TV revolution in amateur football.

Live broadcasts tend to be rare in this area. Sport1 broadcasts 20 regional league matches each season. Other than that, they only show the highlights in a quick summary of the matches. This, however, might soon change.

During the friendly match between SV Lippstadt and FC Bayern on Saturday, the camera system was tested successfully. The camera covers the entire pitch and films permanently. Here is what makes it so special: "The camera can automatically follow what is happening on the pitch. This includes zooming in and out." Peter Lauterbach, the CEO of Wige said. "It is like having a cameraman."

ZOOM

During scenes in the penalty box the camera automatically focuses on what is happening there. Viewers can also zoom in or out as they please – on their tablet computers or on their smart phones.

The footage is transmitted online. There is no need for any of the technology and broadcasting vans involved in conventional TV productions.

The system offers live streams and summaries, for which the software automatically collects the most important moments of the match. This means that live broadcasts for the entire regional league become a possibility.

There is a dedicated camera mode that, at the touch of a viewer's finger, allows them to enlarge the image on their touch screen. "This can also be done with live streams." Lauterbach says. "In this viewers become cameramen. If your friend is the goalie, you can watch him up close."

This camera system has sparked interest among football associations and the German Olympic Sports Confederation. On the fringes of the test match involving FC Bayern negotiations have taken place with DFB representatives. The outcome of these negotiations is that the system is to be tested by clubs in the Lower Saxony and Bavaria.



TEST The new camera system filmed Franck Ribery (on the right) during the friendly match, in which FC Bayern and SV Lippstadt participated. On the left you can see Stefan Parensen.

"In principle, we are interested in this camera system, and we are having it demonstrated to us." DFB Vice President Rainer Koch said. "Videos make for attractive content and they offer amateur football and amateur clubs an opportunity to present themselves. This is why, in Bavaria, we have been using BFV.TV since 2008." BFV.TV is where people may watch summaries of amateur matches. If the matches were broadcast, clubs would have TV footage that they can then offer to television stations. This would make the clubs more attractive to sponsors.

The system may also be used for other sports, such as handball and ice hockey.



The system is made up of four cameras in a white casing. When it was tested, two units were used. However, one is enough for broadcasting.

