

# Head COACH

By Scott Leon

XOS TECHNOLOGIES FOUNDER DAN ATON



PHOTO BY PHELAN EBENHACK



Mention a coach reviewing game films to most sports fans and that likely sparks an image of Vince Lombardi sitting in a darkened room watching hours of footage on an old projector. In today's world of high def, high-tech, this scenario is hardly the case. Thanks to Central Florida-based XOS Technologies, Inc. (as in Xs and Os in a playbook), most professional teams analyze their games using methods that are every bit as cutting-edge as anything you'd find in a sophisticated digital lab.

Founded in 1999 by Dan Aton, XOS made its name by producing a system that allows coaches to scrutinize film almost any way they choose — and that's just the tip of what XOS does for professional and collegiate sports teams and leagues.

"We began by providing coaches the ability to effectively manage their video, data and teaching equipment, as well as

enhance team communication and preparation. Now we provide a full range of DVD, wireless, touch screen and telestration — like [the play illustration graphics] John Madden uses on TV — technologies. And, they can use this gear at the stadium, at the practice field and even on the road," says Alton. "But, we've expanded far beyond our Coaching Tools. XOS offers complete design and integration services for facilities, an online fan management platform and a new ticket management solution."

## PLAYBOOK BEGINNINGS

Aton, a big sports fan and an even bigger technology buff, began the company when he saw a need for advanced technologies while installing electronics at the RDV Sportsplex for the Orlando Magic. The team asked him to develop specific systems that would better suit their needs for gathering, producing and distributing multimedia information within their operations.

"I quickly became aware that there was a definite market for this kind of thing in the world of athletics. Coaches never watch an entire game in a linear fashion; instead they view cut-ups, or specific segments of certain kinds of plays," explains Aton. "We initially used software already in existence to allow them to do this. But by early 2001 we were designing our own with input from coaches everywhere and especially from XOS Executive Vice President Randy Eccker, who was a college coach for ten years and in the sports technology industry for more than 14 years. That was the birth of our Coaching Tools."

## EXPANDING THE PLAYING FIELD

Related to its Coaching Tools, XOS's Facilities Design and Integration program outfits a team with fully interfaced video rooms, satellite dishes, receivers, recording systems, data storage, inter-office connectivity, interactive video, remote cameras and XOS Smart Board telestrator technology. All while utilizing the space that's available as efficiently as possible.

Its newest programs are Network Online Fan Management and Total Ticketing.

"The ticketing platform is the first comprehensive, fully integrated, totally Web-based ticketing and donor management solution for sports organizations," says Director of Marketing Jay Moore.

The company's fastest-growing development, however, is its Online Fan Management, which allows any college, university, conference, league or team to completely control all aspects of its online activity.

"It provides a complete backend that allows the user to configure his Web site as desired, including options such as public or subscription services, streaming video of games or interviews, merchandise sales, online auctions, e-mail marketing, team statistics and more," says Moore.

This program, along with the other three services, has generated hundreds of clients from the NCAA alone, including area teams like the University of Florida.

"It basically allows them to keep up their fan base, no matter where they

are, and bring them all the information they want."

One additional program developed by XOS is the instant replay system adopted by the Big 12 and Pac 10 conferences in NCAA football.

"It's basically a very sophisticated version of a TiVo device with two screens — one shows the network broadcast of the game, while the other shows additional camera views," says Moore. "It's actually far more advanced than what is currently used by the NFL."

## HOME TEAM ADVANTAGE

Whether you want to call it a touchdown, goal, basket or home run, XOS is scoring. The company has nearly doubled in size every year since its inception and now provides services for more than 680 clients, including nearly every professional football, hockey, basketball and baseball team, several college football conferences and quite a few leagues.

As for hometown spirit, while some professional sports leagues may consider Central Florida a secondary market, Aton, who has lived here since his teens, feels the area is the prime location for XOS.

"Not only do I consider the area home and a great place to raise a family, but with the access the airport provides and the number of qualified programmers I have found locally, I believe Central Florida to be the best location I can think of," says Aton.

In reviewing XOS's winning game, Aton says he "never imagined this business would grow as large as it has."

His playbook, however, says it all. ❌