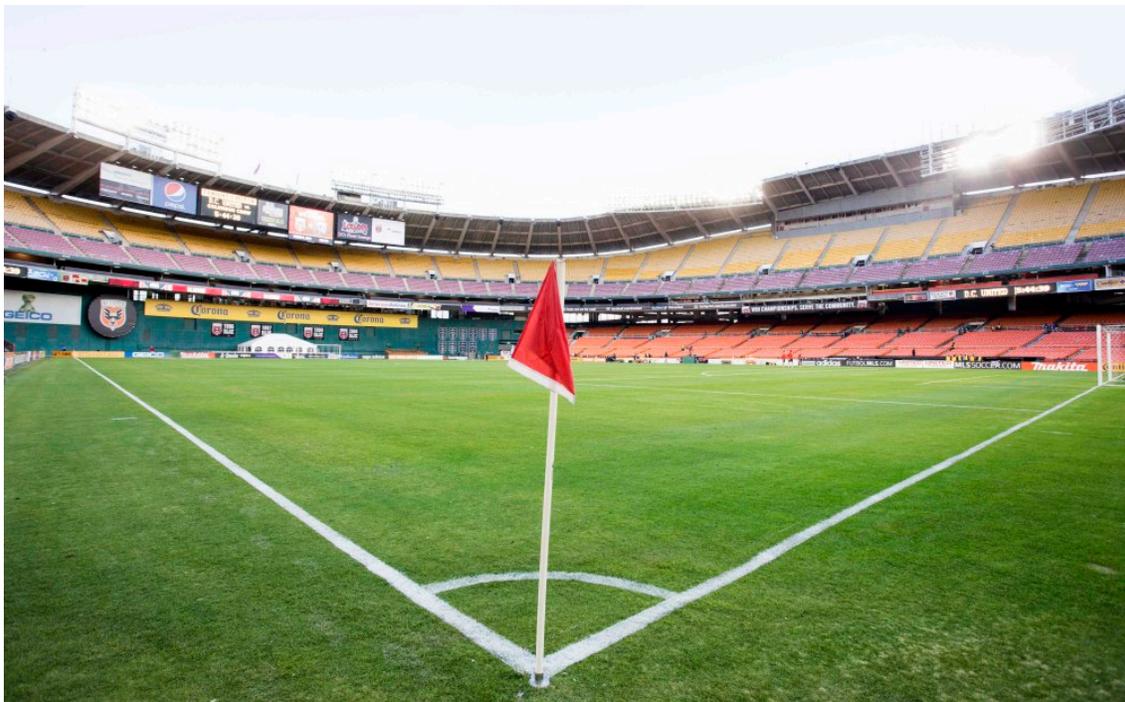


Why go to the stadium instead of watching at home? Food!

By [Nick Schwartz](#) March 12, 2014 5:51 pm ET



Paul Frederiksen/USA TODAY Sports

Why even go to a live sporting event anymore? With the rise of internet simulcasts and streaming in addition to round-the-clock sports networks on cable, it's easier than ever to catch every game you want in the comfort of your own home, without having to pay a premium for parking.

Centerplate — a hospitality company that handles concessions and fan services at third of NFL stadiums, in addition to MLS and MLB venues across the country — is tasked with making the prospect of a trip to the stadium more enticing than staying at home.

“We think of ourselves as the defender of the live event,” Centerplate chief marketing officer Bob Pascal told For The Win. “The content of the game can be perfectly replicated [on television], the difference-maker is what goes on around you.”

For Pascal and Centerplate, one of the main objectives is to modernize the fan experience and bring venues — even places like DC United’s ancient RFK Stadium — into the 21st century. A new mobile ordering system, still in the test phase, alleviates the need to get up in the middle of the game to grab food (an especially important innovation for soccer fans). Anyone with a phone can simply send their seat and order information to the concession stands, and a delivery within a few minutes. For newly constructed venues like the San Francisco 49ers’ Levi’s Stadium or Atletico Madrid’s upcoming stadium in 2016, architects designed fan areas with mobile ordering in mind, in the hopes that the process will eventually become second nature.



Fans line up at a food truck outside RFK Stadium.

Even if you’re sick of the usual hot-dog-and-hamburger fare inside the stadium, local food trucks are a fan-favorite outside the arena. At RFK, Centerplate director of sports operations Bobby Dichiaro shuffles between about 20 different food trucks to give fans a fresh selection each time they come. Dichiaro, who spends each game responding to radio calls from around the stadium to make sure things run smoothly, adjusts the offerings based on feedback from season-ticket holders.

American fans of the Premier League can even get a taste of typical grub across the pond while at an MLS game. In the last 12 months, Centerplate has forged partnerships with Premier League clubs Tottenham and Sunderland, and chefs from the United Kingdom have been brought to America to provide fans with traditional English pies.

Dichiaro says that the biggest complaints from DC United fans are that they missed a goal while they were heading for refreshments.

“I didn’t wait long in line, but I missed the goal.’ I’ll take complaints like that all day long.”