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# Pitt/Big East Football

## Replay guru has ties to Pitt program

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By Paul Zeise, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NEWPORT, RI -- The Big East will use instant replay this season for the first time and the man in charge of making sure it is done correctly has ties to Pittsburgh and the Pitt program.

Brian Lowe, a Mt. Lebanon native and former graduate assistant at Pitt under Walt Harris, is the president of the company that has been hired to install the digital replay software in the conference's eight stadiums and will train the conference's officials to use it.

Lowe, who is the president of Green Tree-based DVSPORT, demonstrated the equipment over the weekend for coaches, media and athletic directors who were gathered for Big East media day.

"The response has been great," Lowe said. "We not only have the Big East, we have the ACC and SEC, so we have some work to do over the next few weeks in order to get all the equipment up and running. But it is exciting for us and for the conferences."

Lowe's system is quicker than the others used for replay because it has a series of touch screens that allows officials to see a play frame-by-frame without having to rewind and fast forward. The system, which will tap right into the cameras being used for television, will be monitored in the press box by a replay official and a technician.

As for the Big East's replay rules, they are very similar to the NFL's in terms of what plays are reviewable. The replay must also show indisputable evidence that the call on the field was incorrect or the official's call will not be overturned.

One major difference between the NFL and the Big East is that the coaches in the Big East will not be challenging the rulings. Instead, the replay official will review the plays and can challenge any call he deems worthy of a challenge.

There is no limit to the number of a challenges in any game, which some believe could make games last longer. Big East director of officials John Soffey doesn't think that it will be an issue.

"This isn't going to be every single close call getting challenged," Soffey said. "I think the officials will be discerning enough to realize a call that may have a chance to be reversed and one that is way too close to even consider. We want to correct wrongs and we don't want officials to decide or change the outcome of games. I don't anticipate that it will take that long or games will be lasting longer as a result of it."

Lowe said games that are televised will have a better chance to get plays reviewed because there will be eight to 12 camera angles to look at as opposed to only four for non-televised games.

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Lowe graduated from Mt. Lebanon High School in 1985 and played for Boston College as a place-kicker and punter. He left as Boston College's all-time leading scorer. He was in a few NFL camps and played a year in NFL Europe, but once it was clear his professional career was not going to materialize he tried to break into coaching.

Eventually he landed at Pitt, where he served as a graduate assistant under Walt Harris in 1997. It was in that position, while editing tapes, that he realized most of the technology and videotaping systems available for coaches were not well suited for producing coaching tapes.

"I was at a coaches conference and talked with a rep from Avid Sports, which was the company that was producing the system we were using at Pitt," Lowe said, "and I gave him some ideas on how I thought it could be made a little more coach-friendly. They must have liked my ideas because I was hired and I worked as a liaison between the company and coaches. That's really how I got my start."

Avid Sports became Pinnacle Sports and Lowe continued to work for the company until 2001, when he decided to try to produce his own digital video editing and game analysis software for coaches.

He started DVSport that year and the company has grown since. Today, the company has 10 employees and has its technology being used by Central Catholic and Mt. Lebanon high schools as well as colleges such as Pitt, West Virginia, Westminster, Washington & Jefferson and Thiel.

The price range for a system is \$2,000-\$6,000.

"The best thing about our software is high schools can afford it, yet it is good enough to meet the high standards of the NFL teams," Lowe said. "That's always been one of my goals and we've achieved it."

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