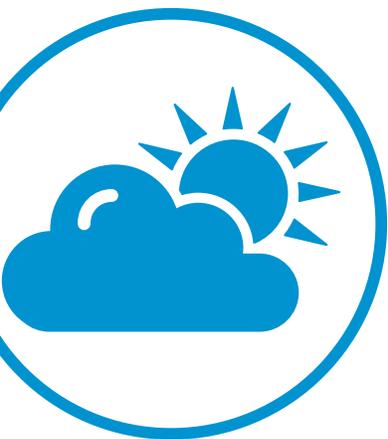# University uses accurate weather insights to protect the safety of athletes and fans

University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana

> "Having the ability to zoom in on the display is critical, along with the ability to overlap and animate the radar, lightning strikes, and time stamps.
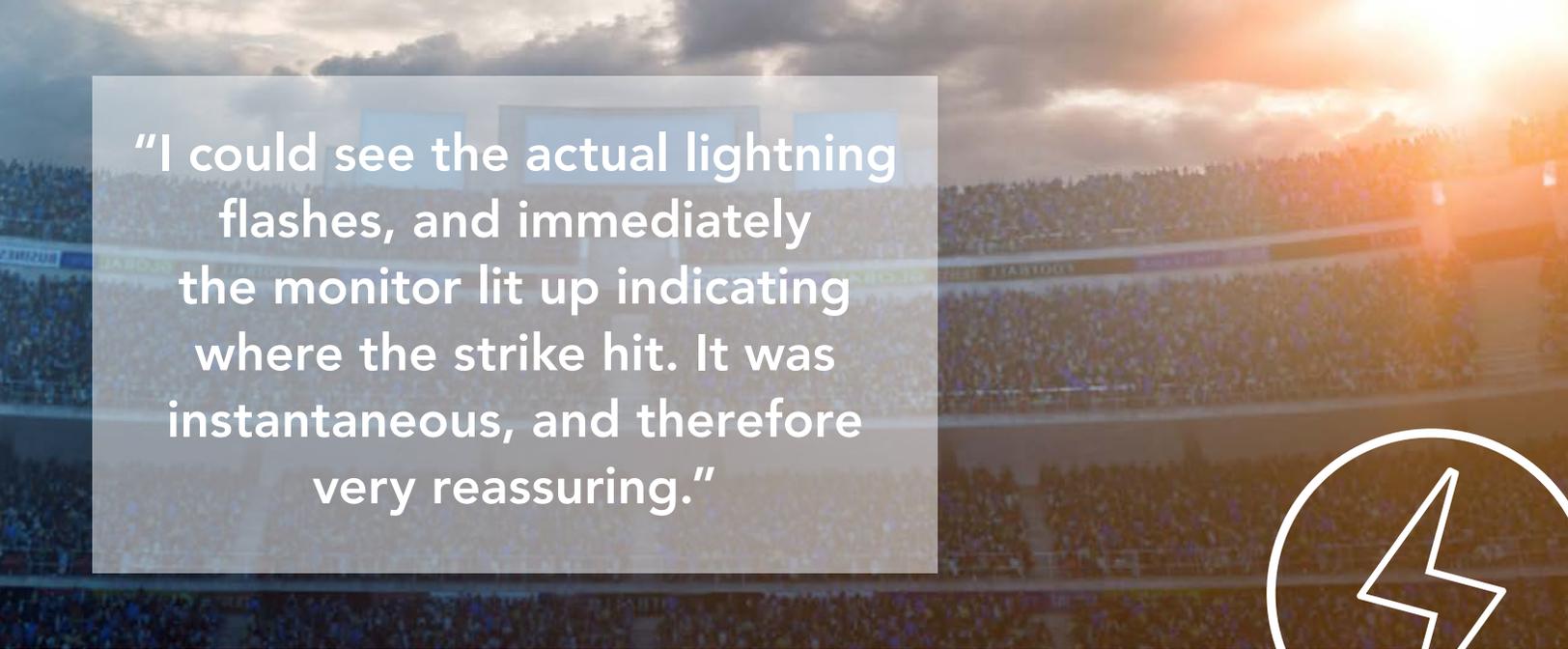>
> University of Notre Dame

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish is one of the most

well-known sports programs in the National College Athletic Association (NCAA). Notre Dame is a leading scholastic institution in the United States, but might best be known for its NCAA Division I football team. Notre Dame plays home games in one of the most renowned football stadiums in the country, which holds more than 80,000 raucous fans on each game day.

> "I could see the actual lightning flashes, and immediately the monitor lit up indicating where the strike hit. It was instantaneous, and therefore very reassuring."

WHAT THEY WERE UP AGAINST

Notre Dame Stadium is an open-air stadium, meaning games are susceptible to interruption by severe weather. Although most severe storms in the Midwest happen during the spring and summer, damaging storms are still likely in early fall, bringing dangerous lightning, damaging hail, and strong wind. Notre Dame officials needed an accurate weather solution to help them make quick decisions in the name of public safety.

WHAT WE DID TO HELP

Notre Dame University chose DTN's WeatherSentry Online® Turf Edition professional package for all its game day weather information needs. Notre Dame is fortunate to have a team meteorologist on staff who uses the solution to keep a watchful eye on weather before and during football games. The university chose to subscribe to real-time lightning detection, mobile accessibility, customizable weather alerts, and the ability to consult with DTN's expert meteorologists for added safety.

WHAT THE IMPACT WAS

The university's team meteorologist now has more insight into weather conditions than ever before, all in one easy-to-use and customizable interface. The configurable software allows the university to mark locations of interest on the system's high-resolution map and overlay it with the weather conditions most important to the football stadium's location.

The system provided great value in 2011 at the season opener football game when it delivered real-time lightning strike displays that put student-athletes and fans in danger. University officials suspended the game twice, then when the storm headed directly toward the stadium, the service sent alerts to officials' phones that fans should seek safety.

From WeatherSentry's insights, officials decided to evacuate the stadium for the first time in its history. Officials utilized the campus address system, text messaging, and emails to alert staff to move all 80,000 spectators into the concourses. As fans were safely indoors, team officials could see lightning strikes happen in real-time around the stadium, further supporting their decision to evacuate.

Notre Dame has since had more close calls with lightning during football games, and each time WeatherSentry has been there to help it make the tough decision to suspend play and get spectators to safety. WeatherSentry provides the advance warning the university needs to make smart, informed decisions for the safety of the athletes and fans.