



40 Acres of Innovation:

Emerge's Technology Partnership with the Cincinnati Open

When more than 285,000 tennis fans descended on the Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason, Ohio, for the 2025 Cincinnati Open, they experienced something remarkable. The tournament--which was named the ATP Masters 1000 *and* the WTA 1000 "Tournament of the Year" for the first time in event history--offered seamless Wi-Fi connectivity, crystal-clear video displays, and flawless point-of-sale transactions. But behind this polished fan experience was a massive technological undertaking, and EmERGE played a pivotal role in making it possible.

The challenge was considerable. The Cincinnati Open had just completed a \$260 million transformation, astonishingly in less than one year, doubling the facility from 20 to 40 acres and upgrading nearly every aspect of the venue. With five permanent stadiums, 31 courts, and world-class player and fan amenities, the tournament needed an IT infrastructure capable of supporting one of the most demanding events in professional sports while maintaining the reliability required by world-class tennis.

A Forward-Thinking Partnership

Robert Nichols, Principal Technical Architect at BEEMOK Capital, the owners of Cincinnati Tennis LLC since 2022, knew from the start that this project would require technology partners willing to think differently. When EmERGE

entered the picture, they brought not just technical expertise but a willingness to challenge convention.

"First and foremost was an insistence on reliability and redundancy," Nichols explained. "That's what everybody thinks about. But what set EmERGE apart was their willingness to be nimble and not necessarily go down a tried and trusted path that has been around for decades."

That nimbleness proved crucial. While initial considerations focused on traditional Cisco DNA architecture, Nichols had a different vision: a cloud-based approach using Meraki from start to finish. Some vendors pushed back, but EmERGE's team wholeheartedly embraced the challenge.

"They were very clear about what the challenges would be, but they were open to these possibilities and willing to adjust their tool set to accommodate the vision I wanted," Nichols said. "It pushed against the grain in some ways, and I appreciated them supporting me on this tech journey."

John Murphy, EmERGE's Account Manager and Team Lead, emphasized the human element of the partnership. "Successful technical partnerships require clear and transparent communications between all the involved parties, and Robert ensured that was the case," Murphy noted.

“He had a clear vision yet remained open to new ideas and approaches.”

Murphy added that Emerge had an on-site team during the tournament to ensure real-time monitoring and rapid response to any issues. “This sort of customer support is central to our approach at Emerge,” said Murphy. “Their concerns and challenges are our concerns and challenges.”

Building a Network That Could Handle Anything

The scope of Emerge’s work was substantial. The team helped design and implement a core Meraki network that would need to handle extraordinary demands simultaneously: multicast for both IPTV and Dante Audio systems, robust public and private Wi-Fi platforms, and seamless connectivity for vendors, media, and fans alike.

The infrastructure numbers tell the story of a significant technological undertaking. Emerge provisioned over 95 Meraki switches and more than 315 Meraki indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi access points, blanketing the 40-acre campus.

The physical infrastructure supporting this technology was equally impressive. Working with partners CTS and Cabling Specialists, the project involved laying approximately 40 miles of underground conduit, 17 miles of single-mode fiber, and 90 miles of copper cable throughout the campus. This massive cabling effort created the backbone that would carry data, video, and audio signals to every corner of the venue.

Emerge’s involvement extended beyond networking equipment. They sourced and helped deploy 620 televisions, a mix of Samsung hospitality-grade TVs and LG set-top boxes, all connected through a multicast IPTV distribution system running over the Meraki switches. Many of these displays were installed by Apachi Networks, demonstrating the project’s collaborative nature.

The scale of the project required careful coordination. Emerge worked closely with the Cincinnati Tennis IT team in a co-management model, ensuring that the network could be maintained effectively both during and between events. This flexibility proved essential as the facility transitioned from a seasonal venue to a year-round destination.

Innovative Solutions for Complex Challenges

Beyond basic connectivity, Emerge helped implement sophisticated systems that enhanced the fan experience. Emerge sourced two 9-TV and one 4-TV video walls using Samsung video wall TVs in the clubhouse, creating captivating visual displays for players and VIP guests.

During the tournament, the network sustained approximately 1.5 to 2.5 gigabits per second of internet through-

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— Robert Nichols, Principal Technical Architect at BEEMOK Capital



put peak times. Even more impressively, it set records in the sporting industry for media and social content upload performance. A social media team working the event achieved their fastest-ever upload time: just 28 seconds from capturing an image to having it published online.

Creating Experiences That Matter

The technology infrastructure Emerge helped build directly translated into better experiences for everyone at the tournament. For fans, one wireless network name provided seamless connectivity across the entire 40-acre campus, particularly important for international visitors who relied on Wi-Fi rather than expensive cellular roaming.

“We were the highest rated Wi-Fi for both tours,” Nichols said. “The tours love coming here from that standpoint because it works, and we make it easy and seamless for them.”

For vendors, the rock-solid network meant zero tolerance for the revenue losses that many events factor into their budgets. Point-of-sale systems, all connected via hard-wire through the Meraki backbone, processed transactions at a rapid pace without interruption. “These retailers typically build into their cost a loss of transactions due to things going offline,” Nichols explained. “We don’t have those issues here. All the transactions go through, and at a rapid pace.”

Navigating Complex Challenges

Running a network at a major sporting event presents unique challenges. Unlike typical enterprise environments, the Cincinnati Open must accommodate equip-

ment from dozens of vendors, many of whom plug in devices at the last moment without advance notice. ATP Media, Gravity Media, and numerous contractors all bring their own gear, creating unpredictable network loads.

“Most network managers just can’t deal with the fact that you can’t control the type of stuff getting plugged into your network,” Nichols said. “But it is the reality of our business and the reality of the event, and Emerge and our other partners helped ensure we were ready for contingencies.” When issues arose, as they inevitably do with such complexity, Emerge’s team responded quickly. During one match, some vendor equipment caused internet issues. Emerge quickly diagnosed and resolved the problem, preventing future occurrences.

Recognition and Results

The Cincinnati Open’s double recognition as both ATP Masters 1000 and WTA 1000 “Tournament of the Year” for 2025 validated the massive investment in infrastructure. Tournament champion Iga Swiatek praised the event as “truly one of the best,” citing the comfortable player amenities and amazing fan experience.

The network’s performance during the 2025 tournament, which drew a record crowd, demonstrated that the forward-thinking approach had paid off. Players from around the world, from Carlos Alcaraz to Daniil Medvedev, praised the facility as approaching “fifth Grand Slam” status, putting it in elite company with the Indian Wells and Miami tournaments.

For a facility that hosts one of only five ATP Masters 1000 and WTA 1000 combined events worldwide, the technology needed to match the prestige. Emerge’s contributions proved essential. “I so value what Emerge brings to the table and consider them a smart, reliable, and trustworthy partner,” Nichols said.

“We couldn’t be prouder of our contributions to the Cincinnati Open, given its undisputable worldwide prestige and its recognition as one of Cincinnati’s most esteemed events and venues,” said Jesse Kegley, Chief Revenue Officer of Emerge. “While the indisputable success of the Cincinnati Open goes far beyond tech, of course, the tech has a major impact on it, and we’re so pleased to have played a role.”

All Year Long

As the Cincinnati Open transitions to year-round operations, Emerge’s partnership continues to evolve. The newly opened Cincinnati Open Sporting Club features six indoor tennis courts, six pickleball courts, and two padel courts, all requiring network connectivity. A new restaurant serves golfers and tennis players seven days a week, corporate events fill the Clubhouse, and the Cincinnati Tennis Foundation runs youth and adult racquet programming.

“The future for everything going on here requires the network to perform year-round,” Nichols explained. “Emerge helped us gear up for the Open, which has put us in a great position for year-round operations.”

A Model for the Future

The Cincinnati Open’s technology transformation represents more than just upgrading equipment. It demonstrates what’s possible when a forward-thinking customer partners with a technology provider willing to challenge conventional wisdom and embrace innovation.

As the Cincinnati Open continues to raise the bar for what a tennis tournament can be, Emerge’s role in enabling that vision through reliable, innovative technology remains important to the venue’s success. The partnership exemplifies how technology, when thoughtfully designed and expertly implemented, can enhance every aspect of a world-class sporting event, from the player experience to fan engagement to operational excellence.

“In an industry where even 15 seconds of downtime constitutes a problem, having a partner like Emerge who understands both the technical requirements and the unique pressures of live sports has proven invaluable,” said Nichols.

As the tournament enters its 127th year in 2026, the technology foundation that Emerge helped build will continue supporting the Cincinnati Open’s mission to deliver an unprecedented experience for fans, players, and media partners alike.

And that’s something everyone can love.

