

# Aston Villa Football Club

Aston Villa deploys versatile Hanwell IceSpy temperature monitoring equipment to maintain and record food storage and pitch surface temperatures through their Building Management System (BMS)!



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*Josh Tooth*

*Maintenance Manager at Aston Villa*

Aston Villa Football Club is an English professional football club and a busy venue such as this encounters heavy demands in hosting, conferences, celebrations, banqueting, evening dinners, special events seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. But a venue this busy, this large, this complex, presents its managers with as many challenges as opportunities, starting with ensuring that both the food and that all-important perfect pitch are in tip top condition at all times.

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## Food Storage Monitoring

When managers came to review the hospitality aspects of the venue they naturally turned to Hanwell Solutions Ltd for advice on temperature monitoring. The Aston Villa conference centre and its facilities source local produce, taking advantage of seasonal stock rather than imported goods – and the venue even has its own allotment which produces fruit, vegetables and salad items for the restaurant, community kitchen and hospitality.

With events regularly taking place, the fridges across the site are often filled with food worth thousands of pounds, which could prove very costly if spoilt. Aston Villa installed the IceSpy temperature monitoring system to ensure that food is stored in the optimum conditions and a stable environment is maintained.

“Whenever food is involved, it’s critical we know of any potential problems in advance,” explains Josh. “Hanwell’s IceSpy system sends us alarms by email and text so there’s no need to manually check and log because the system does that automatically. Before we installed monitoring, loss of food stock was an issue and we needed to cut wastage.”

The venue has a total of 6 kitchens – all now with constantly monitored food storage facilities - and more than 70 fridges throughout the site – storage facilities, walk in fridges, kiosk fridges, main storage fridges, kitchen fridges and so on – and if just one of those has a door that’s not properly closed or one that goes down it means more than just waste. Monitoring the efficient running of cold storage allows them to avoid food hazards, inconvenience to customers, potential loss of reputation plus the time taken to check, clean and sanitise the fridge.

**Industry**  
Food

#### Situation

Food storage facilities across the site being left open or going down frequently caused food waste. The pitch also needed to be monitored at two additional levels to the under soil monitored by the BMS system for ground keeping purposes.

#### Company Profile

Aston Villa Football Club is an English professional football club and has played at Villa Park since 1897. With a seating capacity of 42,682, Villa Park is the eighth largest stadium in England.

#### Solution

The IceSpy temperature monitoring system was installed across the food storage facilities to ensure the fridges are running efficiently. An IceSpy sensor also monitors the leaf and top soil levels of the pitch for maintenance purposes.

#### Results

- Food wastage across the site has decreased
- Saved thousands of pounds from reducing food wastage
- On-going temperature monitoring solution
- Pitch is kept in optimum condition
- Records of the leaf and top soil levels of the pitch automatically stored

Villa staff receive email alerts if a fridge door has been left open or if the temperature has changed beyond set limits. The first alert is after 10 minutes and then another after 40 minutes to ensure everyone is aware there is a fault. By receiving two notifications false alarms are ruled out.

#### Versatility Allows Leveraged Use

With the advancement in Pitch Management and technology, the Ground staff at Villa Park are always looking at ways to further advance and improve their management skills.

The pitch already benefits from an undersoil heating system, monitored and recorded by sensors installed below the surface at a depth of 80 – 100mm and connected to the BMS. When temperatures at this depth fall to 5°C they are alerted by the BMS and the heating system automatically switches on to maintain temperatures, although this stops the rootzone from freezing it does not stop the leaf from freezing.

The Ground staff were requesting more accurate measurement of leaf and surface temperatures to assist in management and data recording, this is where the IceSpy technology was introduced. Through the introduction of the IceSpy device and monitoring through the BMS they are now able to record valuable data and implement management practices accordingly to assist in maintaining the high standards expected to produce the quality playing surface at Villa Park.



#### Very Satisfied With Service

Pitch-wise, the flexibility of wireless monitoring enables Aston Villa staff to move the sensor around the pitch to get readings from different points.

"We receive good signal from anywhere in the ground because we have four base stations and repeaters to boost signal strength. The system is easy to interpret and we have easily configured it so it works best for us. And we're not tied to a computer; staff have access anywhere there's an internet connection and the latest software even gives us WebView on our mobile phones! We were also very pleased to discover that Hanwell's new system still supported our existing legacy probes so we have been able to upgrade while incorporating the old probes via a hybrid base."

"We've never had a fault and Hanwell's technical support team is excellent. They respect the level of knowledge the maintenance staff at Aston Villa have and offer helpful advice. Looking at the food aspect of the new system, we recently had a compressor fault in one of our fridges and due to IceSpy monitoring we were alerted and were able to get to it and move all the food before it was damaged. We've saved thousands of pounds in total due to Hanwell's IceSpy monitoring."

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