

Introducing the 'Tech Ball', by SapienNitro

The 'Tech Ball', created by SapienNitro, combines sports and camera technology to bring football fans the world over a new way of experiencing 'the beautiful game'.

Designed with a digital video camera and microphones embedded inside it, the Tech Ball is a fully interactive football that enables SapienNitro and its clients to capture the action, sound and emotion of the game from a totally new perspective – the 'Ball's eye view'. The ambition for the Tech Ball is to put into production a playable technology that becomes part of the visual lexicon of how the sport is experienced and presented.

In order to bring this vision to life, SapienNitro, working with sports technologists and some of the world's best footballers, had to develop a fully interactive ball that was weighted and balanced to behave like a FIFA-standard football – yet would withstand the significant physical and environmental challenges of the game.

It had to weigh no more than 450 grammes, its weight distribution had to be perfectly balanced to ensure correct movement in the air and it had to survive the punishing conditions of a match – each kick exerting on average 1200 pound-force of pressure per square inch.

SapienNitro spent many months developing, inventing, testing, failing and failing again before finally succeeding in developing an interactive ball that would behave like a football and survive a 90-minute match.

Formed from a sophisticated one-piece low-density expanded foam construction with single access-point, the Tech Ball houses a micro digital camera, secured behind a clear polycarbonate 'limpet' mounting and a wide field of view lens that incorporates anti-distortion technology. The 'limpet' mounting contains a microphone and micro USB port for downloading image files. The entire construction has balanced weight distribution to give players an expected sense of ball control.

The first-generation Tech Ball has been used by SapienNitro's client Standard Chartered Bank to bring to life its shirt sponsorship of Liverpool Football Club, and to help the bank to dramatise its passion for football in a way that adds value for fans. Standard Chartered's '90 seconds to Anfield' marketing campaign launched with footage of Liverpool star players including Steven Gerrard, Daniel Sturridge and Martin Skrtel training with the Tech Balls – and received more than 824,000 views within the first

month. As part of a '90 Seconds To Anfield' competition, the Tech Balls also went on tour in Standard Chartered's key Asian markets – capturing the imagination and passion of grassroots football fans and Liverpool FC's international supporters.

The Tech Ball 2.0 is now in development at SapienNitro, with the aim of adding micro-accelerometers and geo-location real-time tracking, using RFID technology. As well as being an advanced training tool for professionals, enthusiastic fans and amateurs will be able to track their own performance and improvement against that of their heroes, team mates and friends.

Malcolm Poynton, SapienNitro's Chief Creative Officer Europe, says: "The Tech Ball is SapienNitro's way of looking at football from an entirely new angle – bringing the experience and passion closer to fans, whether as part of the professional or recreational game.

Putting a camera inside a football was not as easy as it sounds – not even close. After a lot of idea engineering and testing, we're excited by the result and its potential – a fully interactive football that rides the wave of playable, wearable technology and quantifiable self. Tech Ball users, pros and amateurs, will be able to monitor and measure their own sporting performance as well as capture the action, sound and passion of their games."

Credits

Malcolm Poynton: Chief Creative Officer Europe

Ben Callis: Creative Director

Justin Barnes: Creative Director

Dan Beattie: Associate Director/Creative Technology

Omaid Hiwaizi: Planning Director

Kousha Forshami: Copywriter

Greg Young: Art Director

Mike Falconer: Account Manager

Stephen Worley: Director Of Moving Image

Mickael Charbonnel: Art Director

Charlotte Whatmough: Producer

Blac Ionica: Film Production Company

Flynn Design: Product Design Company