



Case Study | Running Aces

RUNNING ACES DELIVERS VEGAS-LEVEL ENERGY WITH CURVED LED VIDEO WALL





ABOUT

The moment guests step through the doors of the newly remodeled Running Aces Casino, Hotel & Racetrack, they're greeted not just by the excitement of gaming and racing – but by an awe-inspiring centerpiece that transforms the entire atmosphere. Towering above the gaming floor, the new curved LED video wall bursts to life in brilliant color and motion, wrapping visitors in the thrill of the moment. It's more than a screen, it's a statement, setting the tone for a bold new era at Running Aces.

Visible from the parking lot, the video wall is the kind of visual centerpiece that makes people stop and take notice. And that was exactly the reaction leadership at Running Aces was hoping for.





Located in Columbus, Minnesota, Running Aces is a casino, hotel, and racetrack known for its live horse racing, gaming floor, and entertainment offerings. The venue attracts both locals and folks who drive in from the Twin Cities metro area.

CHALLENGE

Since opening in 2008, Running Aces has steadily expanded, adding a hotel in 2020 and upgrading its exterior design. By 2025, the focus turned inward to refresh the casino's bar and sports viewing area, a critical gathering space at the heart of the property.

The bar no longer reflected the type of guest experience the team wanted to provide. Elevated three steps above the main floor, it felt closed in by a low ceiling, and the oval bar in the center disrupted the space's flow. The AV setup, which was once practical for its time, had been stretched to its limits with scattered displays and improvised controls.

Rather than accept these limitations, Running Aces committed to a bold upgrade. The vision was to transform the bar into a modern, welcoming space where guests could gather for horse racing, major sporting events, or just a night out. The goal wasn't simply to replace technology, but to create a destination centerpiece that delivered impact while preserving the approachable, come-as-you-are atmosphere that defines Running Aces.

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Aaron Bedessem
Vice President of Marketing
& Operations
Running Aces



“This wall gives Running Aces the wow factor they wanted. The moment you walk through the door, it’s impossible to miss.”

Loren Sposito
Senior Account Manager
FORTÉ



“Our goal was to elevate the experience without losing our roots,” said Aaron Bedessem, VP of Marketing & Operations at Running Aces. “We wanted guests to have that same local welcome, come-as-you are feel, but also surround them with something truly world-class. The new video wall captures that balance perfectly. It creates high-end energy, and is still completely us.”

SOLUTION

Running Aces partnered with FORTÉ and LSE Architects to completely reimagine the bar and sports viewing area. At the center of the project was a curved 10-by-54-foot direct-view LED video wall.

“This wall gives Running Aces the wow factor they wanted. The moment you walk through the door, it’s impossible to miss,” said Loren Sposito, Senior Account Manager at FORTÉ.

Because the building wasn’t originally designed to house a display of this size, the team had to work through challenges like ceiling height, HVAC obstructions, and integration with existing systems.



FORTÉ played an advisory role throughout, helping the Running Aces team balance design aspirations, technical feasibility, and budget realities. The collaboration also extended to incumbent vendors who managed the casino's existing audio and distribution systems.

Design & technology highlights:

- **One of the largest video walls in Minnesota:** 10 feet high by 54 feet wide, with a 1.2mm pixel pitch for crisp resolution.
- **Curved design:** matched the architecture of the bar, improving sightlines for guests across the room.
- **Manufacturer:** Enlightened LED, chosen for both performance and extended warranty support.
- **Crestron control system:** replaced ad hoc controls with a centralized, Wi-Fi-enabled system accessible via a tablet at the bar.
- **Advanced windowing:** enabled more than 20 simultaneous feeds, allowing the wall to show horse races, pro sports, trivia nights, or even video games like Mario Kart.
- **Integration with existing systems:** tied into Running Aces' current audio and distribution infrastructure while adding soffit-mounted LED displays around the space.

Importantly, the entire renovation took place while Running Aces remained open 24/7. The bar was closed for a period, but the rest of the casino and racetrack never shut down. This required careful sequencing of work, coordination with contractors, and double-shift scheduling to minimize disruption.

RESULT AND HUMAN IMPACT

What began as a bold design idea quickly became the feature that now anchors the entire venue. When the tarps came down, guest reactions confirmed it. The wall instantly energized the space and delivered the kind of impact Running Aces had envisioned.

- **A destination feature:** Visible from the parking lot and impossible to miss upon entering, the video wall now defines the bar and sports viewing area. Guests walking in for the first time often stop in their tracks and drop their jaws. In fact, when asked what the guest reaction was, Bedessem said: "We heard 'holy sh*t' a lot."
- **Elevated guest experience:** The space is flexible enough to show horse races, pro sports, and even special events like trivia nights or video game competitions. Guests can watch multiple feeds simultaneously without feeling overwhelmed, thanks to the thoughtful layout and curved design.

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- **Employee engagement:** Employees, who had been patient through months of construction, suddenly felt reinvigorated when they saw the huge video wall come to life.
- **Operational ease:** Staff now control the system from a tablet, rather than juggling remotes. Bartenders quickly embraced the new Crestron touch-panel used for programming with minimal training, which meant the system was put to use immediately without disruption.

“They can actually control the whole system from a tablet at the bar. That’s a night-and-day difference from the way they used to operate,” said Anthony Omelian, the FORTÉ Technical Services Manager who led the day-to-day implementation.

- **Buzz without marketing:** Even before Running Aces launched formal promotions, word of mouth spread quickly.

- **Right-sized for every occasion:** On packed weekends, the bar flows naturally, with guests able to spread out while still seeing the screen clearly. On quiet weekday mornings, the display still feels inviting, not cavernous.

For Running Aces, the decision to renovate was about more than updating technology. It was about creating a space that matched the experience they wanted for their guests – modern, exciting, and inclusive, while still staying true to the property’s roots.

“The new video wall fits well within the whole property and is creating the exact experience we wanted. And we haven’t even marketed it yet. The buzz we’re getting is all word of mouth. People walk in, see the wall, and it speaks for itself,” said Bedessem.

