

AT&T and Gallaudet University unveil a football helmet for deaf and hard of hearing quarterbacks

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This handout provided by AT&T shows a football helmet developed for quarterbacks who are deaf or hard of hearing, at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., Sept. 22, 2023. Credit: Matt Monath/AT&T via AP

AT&T and Gallaudet University have developed a football helmet for players who are deaf or hard of hearing and communicate using American Sign Language.

The company and Washington-based school for students who are deaf or hard of hearing unveiled the new technology Thursday.

It allows a coach to call a play on a tablet from the sideline that then shows up visually on a small display screen inside the quarterback's helmet. Gallaudet, which competes in Division III, was cleared by the NCAA to use the helmet in its game on Saturday at home against Hilbert.

Gallaudet coach Chuck Goldstein said he thinks the helmet "will change football."

"We work out the same way as every other college football program, we practice the same way, we compete the same way," Goldstein said. "The difference between coaching a hearing team compared to a Deaf team is first the communication."

The final product is the result of almost two years of communication between the team and AT&T, which came up with the concept as a way to close the inclusion gap for the Deaf community with its 5G network.

"We came up with ideas on how to make this helmet more effective (and) we'd interact with (players and coaches)," said Corey Anthony, AT&T senior VP of networking engineering and operations. "They would give us feedback. We'd go back, make changes, work on it. It's just a beautiful relationship that we have with that university."



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Anthony said the company also leaned on employees who are deaf or hard of hearing during the process.

"This is probably one of the more sort of exciting and enriching projects that we've worked on in a very long time," he said.

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