

From doinks to SpongeBob, technology to play a huge role in the CBS presentation of the Super Bowl

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Workers prepare the field outside Allegiant Stadium ahead of Super Bowl 58, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, in Las Vegas. Credit: AP Photo/Matt York

Inspiration sometimes happens, or in this case, doinks, at the most

opportune times.

CBS Sports' Jason Cohen and Mike Francis had end zone seats during last year's Super Bowl when Kansas City kicker [Harrison Butker had a 42-yard field goal attempt](#) that caromed off the left upright.

Cohen, the division's vice president of remote technical operations, immediately texted someone at the league's broadcasting department about placing cameras inside the uprights.

On Sunday, the doink camera will make its debut.

"We're excited. We're also not just reliant on a doink. Obviously, if we get one, I'll be very excited and probably high-five each other in the truck, but they can also get other shots from the field from that unique perspective," Cohen said.

The doink cam is one of many innovations that CBS will use during Sunday's game between Kansas City and San Francisco. It will be the 22nd time that CBS has carried the Super Bowl, which is the most among the four [broadcast networks](#).

While the Chiefs and 49ers get the opportunity every season to compete for a Super Bowl, networks will get their chance to carry the big game once every four years under the league's 11-year broadcasting contract, which started this season. ESPN/ABC are back in the rotation, but won't have the game until 2027 in Los Angeles.



Grounds crew prepare the field outside Allegiant Stadium ahead of the NFL Super Bowl 58 football game, early Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, in Las Vegas. Credit: AP Photo/Matt York

"There will be more technology than we've ever seen for a broadcast," said Harold Bryant, the executive producer and executive VP of production for CBS Sports.

There will be six 4K cameras in each goalpost—three in each upright. Two will face out to the field on a 45-degree angle, and the other lined up inward to get a photo of the ball going through. The cameras also have zoom and super slow-motion capabilities that could show how close a kick made it inside the uprights or straight down the middle.

CBS tested the cameras during a New York Jets preseason game at MetLife Stadium and a Las Vegas Raiders game in October at Allegiant Stadium. Cohen said CBS analyst Jay Feely, who kicked in the NFL for 14 seasons, also gave his input on where to position the cameras.

Since Super Bowls are usually testing grounds for ideas that eventually make their way into all NFL broadcasts, the doink camera could join the pylon cams as a standard part of the league's top games in future seasons.

Other than kicks, the cameras on the uprights can provide unique end zone angles, including on sneaks near the [goal line](#) or an aerial view near the pylon.

However, don't look for CBS to show angles from the doink cam just because they have it.



A security guard walks through light rain outside of Allegiant Stadium ahead of the Super Bowl football game, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is scheduled to host the Super Bowl 58 on Sunday, Feb. 11, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/John Locher

"We're not going to force in the elements. We're going to find out what works to help tell the story of the game and the moment," Bryant said.

The upright cameras are part of 165 cameras CBS has for Sunday. The network also has cameras throughout the Las Vegas strip, including one at the top of the Stratosphere.

There are also 23 augmented reality cameras that both CBS and Nickelodeon will use. The Nickelodeon broadcast will use the augmented reality cameras the most because it will appear that SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star will be on the set calling the game with Noah Eagle and Nate Burleson.

Tom Kenny and Bill Fagerbakke, who are the voices of SpongeBob and Patrick, will be in the booth and wearing green suits so that SpongeBob and Patrick can appear.

In all the years of the SpongeBob franchise, Kenny said this is the first time he can remember doing something live in character of this magnitude.

"We're in character a lot because we record many episodes of the shows during the week. The good thing is that there are plenty of times we ad-lib during the recordings because that is encouraged," Kenny said.



A worker walks in front of Allegiant Stadium in advance of Super Bowl 58, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024, in Las Vegas. Credit: AP Photo/Matt York

Fagerbakke did some commentary during the 2022 Christmas day game between the Denver Broncos and Los Angeles Rams, but that was done from the broadcast truck.

Fagerbakke said, "That's not what he wanted to cook" after Russell Wilson's second interception—a riff on "Let Russ Cook"—went viral on social media.

"Our show has been integrated with the development of social media itself. So it's just kind of a nice extension of that. I've watched Russell

Wilson play his entire career. I'm a big fan of his," Fagerbakke said.

While various bells and whistles, like AR, are nice, they also have to be used for the right reasons, which Cohen sees with the Nickelodeon broadcast.

"What I love about the Nickelodeon show is that I feel like it's the most perfect use case for augmented reality in a live broadcast. It's bringing in augmented reality in a way that has a meaningful purpose because it advances the storyline and helps the play on the field come to life, but in a unique perspective that has some flavor to it," Cohen said.

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