The National Football League

The National Football League (NFL) consists of 32 teams, over 3,700 employees, with stadiums and facilities in almost every major city in the United States. It also has offices in Canada, China, London, Mexico, and the United States.

Its global security operations center (GSOC) is responsible for protecting the NFL's people and assets, including stadiums, training facilities, players, and coaches—both domestically and globally.

The NFL’s GSOC is split in two: intelligence and cyber. The intelligence team has a total of seven people, led by Robert Gummer, Global Security Operation Center Director. Gummer and his colleagues rely on Dataminr Pulse to identify potential risks in real-time, and as they unfold, often within minutes or even seconds of an event occurrence. This has allowed the GSOC team to make split-second decisions, and has made the alerts what Gummer calls “absolutely crucial to our workflow.”

“We don’t have a ton of folks. Dataminr gives us the ability to have eyes on all of our assets without having to look through millions of sources all the time,” says Gummer. “Dataminr actually makes us seem bigger than what we are.”

As with many companies, 2020 was an unprecedented year for the NFL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gummer and his team had to pivot and alter their usual workflow by working from home, and outside of their traditional GSOC.

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With the latest technology, Gummer and the NFL GSOC team could be at home and have just as much visibility on events taking place across the world, as if they were sitting inside their actual GSOC.

“The greatest value the GSOC provides is global awareness, and Dataminr is critical for establishing that for the league.”

When a real-time alert comes into the GSOC that requires action, Gummer and his team use Dataminr Pulse to get an on-the-ground look at what’s happening, which he then reports to key stakeholders.

For example, on December 25, 2020, a bomb placed in a recreational vehicle (RV) detonated a mile from the NFL’s Nissan Stadium in downtown Nashville, Tennessee, injuring eight people and damaging numerous buildings in the surrounding area.
“Dataminr was the first platform to really bring this awareness to our team,” said Gummer.

Gummer and the entire GSOC team were able to use Dataminr Pulse alerts to gain an early line of sight into the potential risks and inform key stakeholders on the events that were taking place close to Nissan Stadium.

The ease of accessing and using Dataminr Pulse outside of his GSOC office was vital in Gummer and his colleagues’ handling of the bombing. “It was a holiday so we didn’t have folks in the office. Even without staffing, we can provide true 24/7 awareness using Dataminr Pulse alerts, via the mobile app and emails.”

Dataminr Pulse has become one of the NFL’s key assets for maintaining awareness of events in real time, globally as well as domestically. “Dataminr is once again center stage for maintaining eyes and ears across the globe,” said Gummer.

For example, Gummer and his team are currently planning for the NFL London Games, which take place October 2021. Before arriving in London, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its ever-changing landscape, the NFL International Director relied on Dataminr Pulse to give him an on-the-ground view of what was happening.

If Dataminr Pulse alerts the GSOC team of a potential issue related to the London Games, they can immediately notify the International Director. Dataminr Pulse allows Gummer and his team to assess alerts in the surrounding area of the London Games, and look at trends or issues that could have a direct impact on their operations, allowing them to make necessary adjustments.

Dataminr’s real-time alerts on emerging risks worldwide allow the NFL’s GSOC to “see everything globally which extends beyond what our resources could achieve,” said Gummer.

Dataminr Pulse is a crucial tool inside hundreds of the world’s leading security operations centers. Learn more at dataminr.com/pulse.