

Pro soccer squad secures stadium despite troubled times

Barracuda, Natrix ensure continuity of coverage for valued customer



Protecting networks, applications, and data

In 2016, when Roger Miron was hired as Director of Information Technology at Club de Foot Montréal (CF Montréal)—a professional soccer team then known as Montreal Impact—the organization already had several Barracuda solutions in place for network security and data protection. “When I joined, we were using three Barracuda products,” says Miron. “We had several CloudGen Firewall appliances to secure our network and internet connectivity across our two main sites—Saputo Stadium, our home field, and a practice facility about four kilometers away from the stadium. We also had two Barracuda Backup appliances to protect our data against accidental loss or attacks such as ransomware. And we had recently installed a Web Application Firewall to secure traffic to and from our online applications.”

The CloudGen Firewall appliances were installed at each of the team’s locations, which were connected via a dedicated 10-gigabit connection. “Each location has its own internet breakout,” says Miron, “and each one can serve as a failover connection if the other goes down. Especially during a match, it’s important that we maintain connectivity at the stadium, and this gives us a robust, redundant system without having to double up on appliances.”

Similarly, the team’s Backup appliances provide mutual redundancy to ensure that no data can be lost even in a worst-case scenario. “I actually love the idea of replicating backup files to the cloud, that’s a great feature of Barracuda Backup,” says Eric Rivest, VP of Business Development at Natrix, CF Montréal’s technology provider. “But in this case it’s not needed. We have a Backup appliance at the stadium and another one at the practice facility, and each of them fully replicates the other. So again, that’s an elegant way to get a very dependable, disaster-proof solution in place.”

Profile

- Founded in 1992 as Impact de Montréal FC
- Joined Major League Soccer in 2012, competing in the Eastern Conference

Challenges

- Provide secure Wi-Fi connection for up to 20,000 match attendees
- Establish secure internet connections for fans and staff at two locations
- Securely and redundantly back up all business-critical data

Solution

- Barracuda Web Application Firewall
- Barracuda CloudGen Firewall
- Barracuda Backup

Results

- Enhanced in-match experience for fans and increased revenue
- Reliable internet connections with failover capability
- Robust, redundant backup infrastructure

Miron's current project is to add Web Application Firewall capacity in order to securely extend Wi-Fi connectivity for all match attendees in the stadium. "We want to provide a much richer experience for fans while also driving incremental revenue," he says. "We can do this by connecting them to online apps that let them share on social media, pre-order refreshments, purchase team merchandise, view statistics and schedules, and book tickets to future matches, among other things. But with nearly 20,000 seats, that is a lot of data traffic to secure. The Barracuda Web Application Firewalls give us that security against all sorts of application-layer attacks."

"When we got in a jam, [Barracuda] could have been part of the problem, but instead they took it on as their problem too, and along with Natrix they provided a solution. That means a lot to me."

Roger Miron, Director of Information Technology,
Club de Foot Montréal

Flexibility for difficult times

The pandemic closures were a serious blow to CF Montréal. "There are some teams out there with deep pockets and diverse sources of revenue, but as a fairly recent addition to the league, we're not one of them," says Miron. "So when we shut down our stadium last year, we had no revenue coming in, which put us in a pretty tight spot. And at the same time, our Barracuda licenses came up for renewal. Not only that, but our Backup appliances were at capacity and had to be upgraded."

Miron called Rivest at Natrix, and Rivest called his rep at Barracuda. "I wasn't surprised, but I was very pleased that Barracuda was so willing to help out," says Rivest. "They bent over backward to help us keep CF Montréal's security and data protection fully operative as they went through a challenging time. I don't think that would have happened with a huge technology vendor like Cisco, for example."

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Eric Rivest, Director of Business Development,
Natrix Technologies

This gets to one of the two key reasons that Natrix uses Barracuda as their default technology provider. "The quality of Barracuda's products, their ease of use and reliability, is one key reason we stick with them," says Rivest. "The other reason is the extremely responsive, attentive way they care for customers. In fact, we actually won't provide managed services for any customers who don't use Barracuda firewalls—there's just too much risk and hassle involved."

Miron seconds that opinion. "When I came on I wanted to make sure we were on the right track in terms of technology," he says. "I quickly found that working with Eric and Natrix was very satisfying—I can always get him on the phone with any concerns, and he'll respond right away. And if he needs to bring in Barracuda support, it's the same story. There is just a level of responsiveness and care that you can't expect from most technology vendors."

Miron sums it up this way: "Lots of vendors say they want to be your partner, but most don't really mean it. With Barracuda it's true. When we had a problem, they took it on as their problem too, and along with Natrix they provided a solution. That means a lot to me."

Learn more about Barracuda CloudGen Firewall, Barracuda Backup, and Barracuda Web Application Firewall

barracuda.com/products/cloudgenfirewall

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