

## PRESS RELEASE / Issuing

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### **Wirecard and Fortress win Football Clubs Reading and Aston Villa as first clients**

- **Reading FC and Aston Villa FC are two large football clubs near London resp. Birmingham**
- **Entrance, payment and rewards combined in one digital card solution**

Aschheim (Munich). Wirecard and Fortress have won the Football Clubs Reading and Aston Villa, two large football clubs near London and Birmingham, as first clients to launch an innovative digital card program that gives fans the opportunity to earn cashback on purchases and additional points for e.g. Royals Rewards – the Reading Football Club’s new loyalty program. Thanks to the latest announced partnership between Wirecard and Fortress, Reading FC and Aston Villa FC decided to launch the new digital program to give fans the opportunity to use their stadium card as a payment and loyalty option – with both chip & pin and contactless functionality.

Initially, the cards can be used for merchandise purchases, both online and in-store. From now onwards have fans at Reading’s and Aston Villa’s stadiums – which have capacities for nearly 25,000 and over 42,000 fans – the possibility to acquire refreshments on the concourse and at the on-site hotels with just a tap on card reader. Furthermore, Reading FC is negotiating deals with local retailers and partners to sign up to the scheme. The Club intends to get a better understanding of their supporters’ buying behaviors through the payment data, with the aim to offer a variety of products that will be of benefit to its fans.

Fortress GB have launched the technology simultaneously with Reading and fellow client Aston Villa, with Development Consultant Duncan Martin welcoming the advancement in technology: “Fortress spent 18 months developing the new technology including the first dual interface chip. We also carried on an extensive search for an issuing partner that understood the strategic aims of the company, along with the challenges presented by working in a sports stadium environment. We are happy to have chosen Wirecard to partner us on this journey and look forward to rolling out the program to our other teams in 2018.”

Commercial Director of Reading FC, Adam Benson, added: “Offering our season ticket holders the best possible off field experience is extremely important to us and we are always looking at ways of utilizing new technology to achieve this. “The new payment technology on our Season Ticket cards along with the launch of the Royals Rewards platform provides a fantastic platform for supporters to interact with the club, and for us to reward them for doing so. As time goes by, we are very much looking forward to advancing the scheme.”

Brian Lawlor, Director of Sales and Business Development at Wirecard, said: “We’re delighted to be partnering with Fortress GB on enhancing the digital match-going experience for supporters allowing clubs to interact more with them such as providing them with offers, rewarding their loyalty and also reducing the time at point of sales purchasing of refreshments and club merchandise. This is just the beginning of Wirecard’s partnership with Fortress within the sporting stadium sector and we are looking forward to giving more football clubs the possibility of a seamless payment experience with added value.”

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## **About Wirecard:**

Wirecard AG is a global technology group that supports companies in accepting electronic payments from all sales channels. As a leading independent supplier, the Wirecard Group offers outsourcing and white label solutions for electronic payments. A global platform bundles international payment acceptances and methods with supplementary fraud prevention solutions. With regard to issuing own payment instruments in the form of cards or mobile payment solutions, the Wirecard Group provides companies with an end-to-end infrastructure, including the requisite licenses for card and account products. Wirecard AG is listed on the Frankfurt Securities Exchange (TecDAX, ISIN DE0007472060, WDI). For further information about Wirecard, please visit [www.wirecard.com](http://www.wirecard.com) or follow us on twitter @wirecard.

## **About Fortress GB:**

Fortress GB (FGB) is the global leader in Customer Management Solutions for stadiums and entertainment venues. Since 2003, FGB has enabled some of the world’s leading stadiums, entertainment venues and sports teams to implement intelligent ticketing, access, loyalty and payment programs. Our technology empowers clients to build their customer numbers and sales, enrich their knowledge of their customers, and enhance the event day experience for all. Proven in over 130 stadiums and venues worldwide, Smart Stadium today powers the customer operations and customer marketing strategies of many of the world’s leading sporting brands. On any given day millions of sports fans rely on FGB technology to enjoy their favorite sports team. We bring teams closer to their supporter base, boost operational performance and increase customer revenues. Based in Tavistock House, London, FGB has 48 UK and 50 European clients operating in the sport, leisure, entertainment and education sectors. Clients include FIFA, UEFA AND 65% of the EPL. The current card base is 7.5 million and all of these cards use the standard Mifare application. Over the past 24 months FGB has worked on a development program to launch a dual interface chip that runs on existing scheme rails, and offers the same RFID ticketing/access capabilities, whilst seamlessly integrating the new cards to the Affiliate Reward program.