



Columbus Clippers Baseball

CASE STUDY

CUSTOMER

Columbus Clippers Baseball, US
www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t445
www.huntingtonparkcolumbus.com

CHALLENGE

To produce baseball telecasts to support five different program platforms

SOLUTION

LDX Flex cameras, GV Director nonlinear live production center, K2 Dyno Replay System with ChannelFlex, NVISION 8500 router, Kaleido-MX multiviewers

BENEFIT

Minimal training time, with the ability to produce a major league telecast while still in the minor league

Background

On game day for the Columbus Clippers baseball team (the minor league Triple-A “farm” team for the Cleveland Indians), the ballpark buzzes to life with the smells of popcorn, fresh cut grass and hot dogs — the only things that make sense at a baseball game. This is Huntington Park, where the Clippers will play their 72 home games for their Columbus, Ohio fans.

While the stands fill with enthusiastic Minor League Baseball (MiLB) fans, the game-day crew of 18 professionals consisting of staff, freelancers and interns are poised to deliver games to in-house patrons, on-demand via MiLB.TV, and across television sports networks and radio — with game highlights captured and replayed on social media and for local TV news sports segments. This means delivering the best images possible with the most efficient workflow is critical, so viewers can experience the excitement of the game.

Until 2015, Clippers games were produced in SD, using tape. With five different program platforms supported – an in-house feed, a scoreboard show, Internet, broadcast/cable television and a radio show simulcast – a better way to work the game had to be found. And that “better” had to include HD.

When the Clippers were ready to upgrade, the responsibility fell on to Clippers Director of Multimedia and Telecast Productions, Larry Mitchell along with his predecessor Josh Glenn, to find an HD system that could meet their expansive content distribution needs with the best workflow.



Challenges

Producing five distinctly different shows based on tape was nothing less than painful.

“In the tape-based SD world, we would literally have to walk a flash drive over to one person for social media and then to someone else to send game highlights to one of our broadcast partners. It was highly inefficient” said Mitchell. “We needed a system that would allow the staff to quickly adjust formats for immediate distribution and deliver the high-quality content our fans and the broadcast communities have come to expect.”

“Building highlight packages while footage is being recorded means we can get it to the viewers faster, to tell our game story in real time.”

Larry Mitchell
Director of Multimedia and Telecast Productions,
Columbus Clippers



Solution

Producing live sports events for more than 20 years, Mitchell had an idea of what he wanted his new HD system to deliver. He also had a long history with Grass Valley, a Belden Brand, so that was the first place he looked. “I’ve been in broadcast a long time. I know Grass Valley gear and have seen how ‘the big boys’ use it in the Majors, so for me, it was the right partnership with all of the pieces in one place” according to Mitchell.

The system spec’d out for the Clippers would give them the quality they needed, the efficiency they longed for, with the reliability and flexibility that management demanded.

“It sounds like a corny ‘triple-play’ but it was really a ‘home run,’” boasted Mitchell. “We got cameras, replay, switching, graphics, multiviewer and routing.”

Four LDX 80 Flex 1080i cameras made the first initial impact. “Just going from SD to HD was joyous, but being able to short-term license additional formats as needed for different broadcast partners meant that we knew we had the right cameras that could handle any HD production need,” said Mitchell.



While the LDX 80 Flex camera is ordered as a single-format 1080i or 720p camera, it can be upgraded on a 7-day or perpetual basis with any of the production formats in the LDX 80 series, up to 3G 1080p60.

For the most efficient switching, GV Director was selected, as it can handle video, audio, graphics and clip playback. “It’s simple to use and it works. We’ve used GV Director for our 72 games this past season and it remains consistent no matter what we throw at it [graphics, animations and interstitials]. Combined with K2 Dyno, it’s a real game-changer,” said Mitchell.

The K2 Dyno Replay System was a no brainer for the Clippers, with its ease of use and short learning curve for instant replays, input switching, fast playlist creation, shot box and previewing. “We can now quickly capture and replay center field catches at the wall – we’ve never been able to do this before. It’s made our productions a thousand times better, and the fans appreciate it,” said Mitchell.

The system includes K2 Dyno’s ChannelFlex option for additional flexibility in system configuration, effectively doubling the server’s four channels to eight. With ChannelFlex, the Clippers staff uses six input channels for recording and two for playout, which provides immediate access to all camera angles for use in replay and highlight creation.

“We can also ‘edit-in-place’ which was something we were not expecting,” said Mitchell. “Building highlight packages while footage is being recorded means we can get it to the viewers faster, to tell our game story in real-time. In the past, our replay operators had too many tasks that took their focus away from the game. With the ability to edit-in-place, access clips, share and transfer files, our replay operators can now focus on delivering exciting highlights and never miss a moment of the game.”

For multiviewer monitoring, the Clippers selected two Kaleido-MX multiviewers and can now easily turn a single screen into multiple virtual screens at the push of a button. “Kaleido is a surprising piece of gear for us in terms of its flexibility,” said Mitchell. “The clarity is really impressive and makes an impact when people walk into the control room, especially when we can change the layout on-the-fly.” Using the 8x1 and 16x2 video input configurations of the Kaleido-MX, the Clippers take advantage of seamless control and rich integration with their router and GV Director. Every Kaleido multiviewer is designed to expand and interoperate seamlessly into any workflow, saving space and lowering overall costs – an appealing factor to the team.

“I’ve been in broadcast a long time. I know Grass Valley gear and have seen how ‘the big boys’ use it in the Majors, so for me, it was the right partnership with all of the pieces in one place.”

Larry Mitchell
Director of Multimedia and Telecast Productions,
Columbus Clippers

At the heart of every facility is the router. For the Clippers control room, an NVISION Compact router was chosen with integrated audio processing and simplified cable management. “I was thrilled when the NVISION was delivered – I knew that we would never have to worry about routing. It’s so powerful, we could bring a show to air with just the K2 Dyno and the NVISION router – it wouldn’t be pretty, but we could do it. That’s a good feeling – to have the capability, even if we never have to use it.”

Benefits

Training is typically a time-consuming issue when implementing new technology, but the Clippers staff embraced the new technology almost immediately. And, seeing how quickly his staff got up to speed with the new system, Mitchell saw an opportunity to help out other content providers with training.

The Clippers staff now trains people from broadcast schools, larger broadcast facilities and mobile truck companies on K2 Dyno and GV Director. The hands-on training for outside operators has been a major positive for the organization.

“This is great because people can learn the equipment in a low pressure environment. Some people come in at the beginning of the season, very green, and by the end of the season they are either hired on to freelance with us or are working with other content producers.”

The Clippers control room and the set up at Huntington Park have come a long way in a relatively short time. Moving from SD to HD has allowed the Clippers to play in the big leagues while Grass Valley’s product flexibility means they can stay nimble and ready to adjust quickly to meet changing business needs. The new system is having a profound impact on everything the staff does, providing a level of reliability that they didn’t have before and a workflow that allows them to operate better and provide a higher quality product. “Today, our broadcast partners proudly show our game highlights and really like the content we produce — this is a tremendous improvement for us and we are ecstatic.”



“K2 Dyno is really the star of the show.”

Larry Mitchell
Director of Multimedia and Telecast Productions,
Columbus Clippers



GVB-1-0562B-EN-CS



WWW.GRASSVALLEY.COM

Join the Conversation at [GrassValleyLive](#) on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and [Grass Valley - A Belden Brand](#) on LinkedIn.



www.grassvalley.com/blog

This product may be protected by one or more patents. For further information, please visit: www.grassvalley.com/patents.

Belden®, Belden Sending All The Right Signals®, the Belden logo, Grass Valley® and the Grass Valley logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Belden Inc. or its affiliated companies in the United States and other jurisdictions. Grass Valley products listed above are trademarks or registered trademarks of Belden Inc., GVBB Holdings S.A.R.L. or Grass Valley Canada. Belden Inc., GVBB Holdings S.A.R.L., Grass Valley Canada and other parties may also have trademark rights in other terms used herein.

Copyright © 2016, 2019 Grass Valley Canada. All rights reserved. Specifications subject to change without notice.