Grass Valley

CASE STUDY

Grass Valley and Miami HEAT Collaborate to Power New Age of Sports Production

The technology overhaul of the Kaseya Center, home of the Miami HEAT NBA basketball team, includes a new state-of-the-art broadcast facility powered by Grass Valley® systems and technology.

The HEAT Group owns and operates the Miami HEAT NBA professional basketball team. The team has made several playoff appearances, including the NBA Finals in 2023 and 2020, and has won championship titles in 2006, 2012 and 2013. Their home venue, the Kaseya Center, located in downtown Miami, Florida, recently underwent a substantial technology upgrade, which included the installation of a state-of-the-art broadcast facility and new center-hung scoreboard.

The HEATmap

The Miami HEAT sought to employ best-of-breed technology to enhance their in-venue broadcast production, leveraging an SMPTE ST 2110 IP core infrastructure. Grass Valley provided production switchers, broadcast cameras and professional services to support their needs, including one of the first deployments of the newly released flagship LDX® 150 cameras.

"Prior to our upgrade in 2023, we were working in a 1080i HD control room, which was launched in 2009 featuring a Sony switcher and cameras. We had a 22-year relationship with Sony," says Ed Filomia, Senior Director, Broadcast Services, at The HEAT Group.

With the new installation, Filomia and his team aimed to achieve higher-quality broadcasts and creative production capabilities to deliver a superior fan experience at Kaseya Center.

"Since 2021, we have been researching the development of Grass Valley's IP fabric led by its switcher and cameras. We believed its switcher/camera combination was the best fit with the intended design of our new IP control room."

Industry-Leading Technology

In addition to the hardware solutions, Grass Valley's contribution to the overall project included commissioning, training and event support. The deployment timeline was initially delayed due to the team's post-season run to the 2023 NBA Finals, pushing project commencement back by two months. To mitigate the impact, the team rented a production truck for the first six weeks of the 2023 regular season, while all vendors, including Grass Valley, worked to compress schedules to minimize delays.

"The delay was naturally a welcome one for the HEAT as they'd reached the NBA Finals, and we wanted to ensure a similar success story for them off the court by keeping the project on track," recalls Dave Herfert, Vice President of Sales, Grass Valley. "The added complexity brought new challenges that we were able to

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>
> Kurt Doster, Director of Arena Video Productions for The HEAT Group

overcome by compressing schedules to deliver a unique, tailored solution, which was extremely satisfying. It also represented the first use of Juniper switch fabric in an ST 2110 media core."

The Miami HEAT team, which included Senior Engineer Blake Engman, technical lead on the project, decided on Grass Valley for a number of reasons, not least its industry-leading technology, including the Kayenne® K-Frame™ switcher, which is among the most powerful production switchers available. The LDX 150 cameras were configured in Native IP format within an SMPTE ST 2110 IP core, ensuring cutting-edge broadcast capabilities.

A key factor in the selection process was Grass Valley's strong partnership with integrator Alpha, with whom it had previously executed a similar project with the Detroit Lions. Jeff Volk, EVP — Strategic Accounts, Sports and Live Events at Alpha, underscores the significance of this collaboration:

"The Miami HEAT project was a testament to the power of teamwork and technology coming together to elevate the fan experience. By integrating Grass Valley's cutting-edge solutions with our expertise in live sports production, we helped deliver a state-of-the-art control room that not only meets today's demands but is built to evolve with the industry." This seamless collaboration between Alpha, Grass Valley, and the Miami HEAT organization ensured the new facility was primed for success from day one.

Kurt Doster, Director of Arena Video Productions for The HEAT Group, explains the background to choosing Grass Valley as a core technical partner for the Kaseya Center.

"Grass Valley offered us the most forward-thinking, future-proof products on the market; the switcher giving us the I/O we desired, and the flexibility to have that I/O in higher resolutions with just a license provided peace of mind to accommodate future requests," he says. "The cameras' image quality and features again provided a flexibility that others could not offer. We know we have the product that will allow us to produce amazing imagery now and in the future."

He adds that Grass Valley's long-standing reputation for excellence was also a key consideration. "Grass Valley's heritage did play a role in us evaluating if these tools worked for us. Knowing that the GV products have been used in our local production trucks for years gave us comfort in the durability and quality of the equipment and solutions."

A Results Business

The resulting technology upgrade achieved the desired goal of significantly enhancing the fan experience with super-slo-mo capabilities and a powerful switcher system enabling superior live event production. Grass Valley provided additional training and resources to ensure a seamless integration despite the scheduling conflicts.

"The benefits are really all about flexibility. The learning curve on the Grass Valley products was small. In just a few days we were off and running, adding new features to our shows that we were previously unable to produce," says Doster in describing the benefits the Grass Valley solutions have brought to the team.

"The rich imagery produced by the HDR cameras really stands out on our large LED displays, and the ability to collaborate with developers to create and improve a better system for all sports productions is what I like most about our decision to go with Grass Valley.

Ed Filomia, Senior Director, Broadcast Services at The HEAT Group

"We have full control of external systems using AMP and Ross Talk, and the ability to trigger complex multi-operator actions into the macro system of the switcher is allowing us to create unique and dynamic moments with the push of a single button."

For Filomia, it's all about the performance. "That is the greatest benefit. The rich imagery produced by the HDR cameras really stands out on our large LED displays, and the ability to collaborate with developers to create and improve a better system for all sports productions is what I like most about our decision to go with Grass Valley."

As one of the key technology partners chosen by Miami HEAT to showcase their new facility, Grass Valley's contribution has been compelling. "The people at GV have been great," says Doster. "From all the additional training to conversations about upgrades and enhancements, the door has been opened by our friends at Grass Valley.

"Our partnership together is important to continue driving the technological needs of this ever-changing industry. Having this open dialogue during the install and since, I believe, has been beneficial to both groups."

A Case Study in Collaboration

Looking ahead, the team at the Miami HEAT is considering adding more LDX series cameras and wireless camera solutions, with a multiyear Service Agreement set to take effect in spring 2025. In 2024, the team completed a Phase 2 technology upgrade of their center-hung video board, featuring a unique 3D flaming basketball with content playback triggered using the Grass Valley Kayenne switcher. And there are more opportunities for collaboration further down the road.

"This project demonstrates that we're in a new era of live sports prod uction, with technologies that are changing the game for organizations around the world," concludes Alex Keighley, Senior VP of Sales, Americas at Grass Valley. "The capabilities we are able to deliver to our partners through the GV Media Universe are unmatched, and we're excited about our future partnership with Miami HEAT and the innovations our collaboration will inspire."

As Doster explained, the partnership between the organizations is helping to drive new production capabilities for live sports environments, strengthening Miami HEAT's position as a leading global sports powerhouse while reinforcing Grass Valley's leadership in broadcast production for live sports environments.

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