

# MLSE

## Ready for Added Exposure

**T**he sports and media conglomerate has an impressive new management team. It has inked major new sponsorship deals. It's recently upgraded its broadcast facilities, and there are signs that the teams themselves are, well, undergoing changes, too.

What else could Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment hope for? 'A championship, of course' everyone replies!

The regular NHL season is underway, and in addition to a title or three, officials at MLSE are planning at the very least for exciting coverage from its TV production and broadcast outlets, LEAFS TV, NBA TV Canada and GOLTV Canada.

New broadcast production equipment is ready to capture and convey the anticipated excitement, including audio consoles, loudness monitors, real-time scoring and game status displays and audience engagement tools that integrate with popular social networks and mobile media devices.

MLSE worked with the Hughes Integration team, led by fibre optic project manager Chris Hermiz, to refurbish the main production control room with a new Solid State Logic audio console, a new monitor wall system and remote CCUs for control of the cameras at the Air Canada Centre; the HD upgrade of the in-house RF system; and the installation and termination of fibre in the ACC for broadcast signal transport over long distances in an arena of that size.

The SS C10 HD Compact Broadcast Console is used mostly for live pre- and post-game shows, as well as in-house productions that are pre-taped for later broadcast. C100 consoles have been used in OB vans hired for live game coverage, and the MLSE production and engineering team liked the familiar interface and feature set.

"On game days we share a lot of production assets (across fibre links) with the scoreboard, the control room, the mobile production trucks and the pre- and post-game show that we produce with the SSL console," described Ed Holmes, director of engineering for MLSE, at the time.

**“ MLSE is embracing new ways to enhance the game broadcasts, but it wants to enhance the fan experience, too. ”**

When time came for the transition to 5.1 audio, operators wanted a device that could not only analyze levels in 5.1 but also measure loudness, several TM7 touch screen audio monitors from RTW were chosen to help keep audio levels in check during live event coverage, in addition to monitoring broadcast feeds to and from locations around the world.

Again, familiarity with the equipment, gained when MLSE rented an OB van, was key to the decision, described Alain Siodlowski, MLSE's senior broadcast engineer

"The system is so user-friendly," he said. "You can move stuff around, you can set it up the way you want and if there is something you don't need, you just don't put it up or make it smaller. It's so easy to manoeuvre with the touch screen.

"In the control rooms, when we are mixing, we are basically in front of a blank canvas, saying, 'How do we want to create this?'" he continued. "There are certain sound-placement rules: You put your announcers here, your rink sound here and your audience here, but then you have to really work on how to create the mix and still make it sound good in stereo. And that is where RTW's vectorscope comes into play-it gives you nice visual feedback."

Sure, sports needs to sound good (and to meet



John Hunter, audio engineer, Maple Leaf Sports Network, using the RTW TM7 TouchMonitor.

new regulatory requirements), but surely visual displays of the score and game status are paramount.

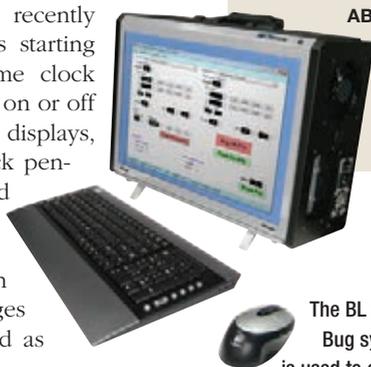
So MLSE has teamed up with Bannister Lake and NextComputing to acquire and utilize broadcast graphics workstations running BL Score Bug, a powerful real-time scoring and game status display system for live sports broadcasts.

MLSE is using the portable workstations to create and support its eye-catching HD graphic layouts, 3D animations and transitions, game titling elements, statistics, standings, scores, and on-screen time clocks.

All score bugs support remote operations over TCP/IP, allowing the score bug operator to control the score bug on an independent layer of the Ross XPression CG. With this workflow, another operator can be working on the same XPression unit but using the XPression interface to play out additional graphics.

Score Bug for hockey gives operators quick keys for most recently used activities such as starting and stopping the game clock and animating the bug on or off air. Oft-used graphic displays, such as those that track penalties, can be accessed through predefined 2 or 5 minute buttons, and one- or two man power play advantages can be easily displayed as required.

There are many types of coverage going on at MLSE, and so Bannister Lake hardware, which can be configured for multiple sports, was an easy choice to make. The systems also connect to third-party scoreboard controllers and automated sports update services like Whiteway, Daktronics and OES, among others.



The BL Score Bug system is used to create animations, transitions and on-screen displays.



Photo courtesy CNW Group/FGL Sports Ltd.

## NEW SPONSORS IN THE LINE-UP AT MLSE

Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has announced important new sponsorship deals, including a significant ten year partnership with Canadian Tire and its brands, such as SportChek and Mark's warehouse. In addition to extensive branding opportunities on-ice and elsewhere, the retail giant gets digital and media content rights, a new sporting and apparel store in Maple Leaf Square, exclusive consumer promotions, and, for the 2014-15 season, it will provide official uniforms for MLSE event staff at Air Canada Centre.

BlackBerry will become the official mobile computing partner of MLSE, and it intends to release fan applications for its BlackBerry 10 smart phones, and to develop a BBM Messenger channel hosted by Leafs and Raptors personalities.

Recruitment and HR services company Randstad will see its logo and advertisements appear on rink boards, LED signage and the penalty box during Maple Leafs games as part of its sponsorship, while students from the University of Windsor will get placement and co-op opportunities at MLSE under terms of their new agreement.

**ABOVE:** When Canadian Tire Corp and MLSE announced a long-term partnership deal, athletes, celebrities and senior executives were on hand, including Danny Koeveermans, TFC; Dave Poulin, Marlies; Tim Leiweke, President and CEO, MLSE; Michael Medline, President of Canadian Tire Sports; Masai Ujiri and Jamaal Magloire, Raptors; Wendel Clark and Darryl Sittler, Maple Leafs (L-R).

So MLSE is embracing new ways to enhance the game broadcasts, but it wants to enhance the fan experience, too, be they at home or in stadium.

New Bannister Lake technology helps MLSE in the Twitter-sphere, with social media tools that integrate affiliated accounts, such as @Raptors or #gamenight, while offering followers instant updates, team promotions and special prizes.

The system also moves an approved social media playlist onto the main video board at ACC, and it can simplify content reuse across broadcast CG platforms.

MLSE also hopes to capture and increase fan interest by expanding Twitter coverage across additional MLSE accounts, including Fan Services, Ticket Sales & Service, Team Up, and Community.