



CASE STUDY



"Collaborating with BitFire to produce coverage of the 2020 NHL Draft was an extremely rewarding experience. BitFire provided a robust and efficient IP transmission system, which was vital in presenting this world-class virtual experience for one of the NHL's tentpole events."

Susan Stone
SVP Operations & Engineering,
MLB Network



CHALLENGE

- Due to COVID-19, the NHL had to cancel their planned live, in-person 2020 NHL Draft set to take place in Montreal, Canada.
- Unlike other professional sports drafts where the commissioner announces the first-round picks, The NHL has a longstanding tradition of allowing a representative from each of the 31 clubs to come to the podium to announce their pick.
- Not only did The NHL Network and partner MLB Network need to remotely accommodate clubs in 31 disparate locations, simultaneously they also needed to access over 40 potential first-round prospects located in either the United States, Canada, or Europe.
- In addition to MLB Network's production of the World Feed, The NHL needed a reliable broadcast partner that could orchestrate more than 100 live feeds in and out of their home facility in Secaucus, NJ, to support the league's national broadcast partners, NBC Sports in the US, and Rogers Sportsnet and TVA in Canada.



SOLUTION

- BitFire provided MLB Network with 31 servers to deploy to each team in order to utilize the BitFire Transport Network, responsible for transmitting live feeds to and from The NHL Network's control center in Secaucus.
- BitFire also provided over 40 draft prospects from around the world with links to the browser-based FireBridge platform, enabling audio and video contribution back to the control center in Secaucus. No special equipment was needed, and contribution was orchestrated via a standard browser on the players' mobile, desktop, or laptop computer.
- BitFire's NOC in Boston was operated by dedicated personnel for more than a week of rehearsals. During the two-day live event, BitFire's personnel oversaw more than 100 feeds, including a custom built 31-box Multiviewer.



RESULTS

- The 2020 NHL Draft was unique in that only two Americans were selected in the first round, with the remaining 29 prospects coming out of Canada and Europe. Because of this, the event demanded an even higher level of calm, professionalism, and can-do attitude by BitFire to deliver on The NHL's expectations for a live, broadcast-quality experience on an international stage covering a wide span of international time zones.
- BitFire delivered its "best in class" IP transmission while expertly manning broadcast engineering support of three national broadcast partners.
- In the absence of BitFire's solutions, The NHL was looking at a much more expensive, traditional production model with multiple production trucks from multiple locations, which, given the tight timeline, provided a challenge to offering a COVID-safe environment for all production and technical personnel.
- The NHL was ecstatic with the flawless, responsive, and professional execution of BitFire in the face of unforeseeable challenges.
- The NHL and MLB Networks are already in talks with BitFire about future collaborations.

