

MLB Network Concludes Eventful 2012 With Studio K Debut

By: [Karen Hogan, Associate Editor](#) - Tuesday, December 18, 2012

MLB Network, two weeks shy of its fourth birthday, has tirelessly striven to enhance its on-air product since launching in 2009, a drive that has been particularly apparent these past 12 months.



Harold Reynolds (left) and Matt Vasgersian host MLB Network's morning show, Hot Stove, live from Studio K.

Earlier this year, MLB Network converted the balcony area of Studio 3 into a [dedicated social-media area](#), produced the first all-live-audio broadcast, and aired two Divisional Series contests. Before ringing in the New Year, however, MLB Network had one more innovation to unveil: Studio K.

Named for the denotation for strikeout (MLB Network's Studio 3 and Studio 42 are named for Babe Ruth and Jackie Robinson, respectively), Studio K is the home of the network's live morning show, Hot Stove.

"We're always looking to expand, always searching for new areas," says SVP, Operations, Susan Stone. "We're on the air for so many hours in season that we're always looking for a new look so that our viewers are constantly engaged and challenged and have something visually diverse to look at."

Reimagining the Space

Studio K occupies a 400-square-ft. space in MLB Network's Secaucus, NJ, headquarters that previously housed the facility's mailroom and storage cage. With just over two months to complete construction in time for the Nov. 12 relaunch of Hot Stove as a morning show, MLB Network had all hands on deck.

Director of Facilities Management Gary Fippinger oversaw the build-out, working closely with project managers Brad Cheney, director of engineering, and Karen Whritner, director of studio operations. Clickspring Design's Bryan Higgason, who envisioned the original MLB Network set as well as the social-media area, once again served as set designer, with contributions from original lighting designer Bruce Ferri, of Ferri Lighting Design Associates; original set fabricator blackwalnut; and AV Design Services.

"No matter how much time you have, it's never enough time, but everybody did a great job scrambling and getting this studio accomplished in an unbelievably short time," says Stone, "especially considering it was just a wide open space."

Lights, Camera, Creativity

Because of the size of Studio K, MLB Network turned to small Sony cameras with Canon lenses and Ross Video's FURIO robotic camera system. The studio exclusively uses three robotic cameras, which have the ability to dolly, elevate, pan, tilt, zoom, and focus. From the control room, one camera operator can program the robotic cameras to hit designated marks.



MLB Network chose a robotic camera system over a manned camera system in order to give Studio K more depth on-air.

"We can do really repeatable, precise moves," explains Mark Haden, VP, engineering and IT, MLB Network. "In a small space like that, I don't need a fast dolly, I need an accurate dolly."

Studio K also features green lighting technology. In an effort to reduce the amount of electricity and HVAC usually required in a television studio, all 70 lighting fixtures in the studio can be operated from two standard household circuits.

In the control room, Azzurro Group handled system integration while CP Communications built a subsystem that could tie an additional RF intercom, IFB, and microphones into the existing audio console.

"Of course, we had to put the control application on a few computers so we could drive those cameras from multiple locations, but it's been a pretty seamless integration," says Haden. "We're using our existing control rooms; we didn't have to retrofit much of anything, which helped speed up the process."

A Home for Hot Stove, Maybe More

Hot Stove broadcasts live on weekday mornings 9-11 a.m. ET, followed by a re-air at 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and a Best of Hot Stove show at 4 p.m. Hosted by Harold Reynolds and Matt Vasgersian, Hot Stove features regular contributions by Lauren Shehadi and Ken Rosenthal.

Looking forward to 2013, Stone expects Studio K to be used for additional programming: "It's just a fantastic space, and the more we use it, the more we get an idea of its potential and how we want to use it in the future. It's always better to have three studios than two, so I'm sure you'll see it."

[Click here](#) to check out pictures of MLB Network's Studio K construction.