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Robe BMFLs for NCAA March Madness Basketball

Products Involved

BMFL™ Spot **BMFL™ Blade**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) 2021 “March Madness” tournament is a single-elimination college basketball tournament played each spring with 68 teams competing for the national championship. It has been lit – seven courts across six venues in total – for the last three years (preceding 2020 which was canceled due to Covid-19) by renowned broadcast live events specialist, Bill Brennan.

The 2021 Final Four was staged at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Bill specified 60 x Robe BMFLs – a combination of BMFL Spots and BMFL Blades – for the supplemental rig this year, which were supplied, together with other lights, by Nashville-based Pulse Lighting, whose Paul Hoffman was also the event’s lead lighting programmer.

Pulse has been working with Bill since 2007 on a diversity of sporting events. Naturally, everyone was delighted to be back working at this year’s March Madness after the many challenges of 2020.

Bill’s main consideration for lighting the Lucas Oil Stadium was to successfully transform it from a professional football venue to a premium basketball court, as well as to satisfy the needs of multiple media organizations as the event attracts intense coverage.

To assist with this, in addition to the stadium’s in-house lighting rig he needed a serious number of high-powered fixtures and chose the BMFL Spots.

The biggest challenges were balancing the backgrounds and properly managing the daylight spill from the venue, which has a retractable roof and a large retractable window at one end, allowing play both indoors and outdoors!

The BMFL Spots were positioned around the field of play and the pitch perimeter and along the team benches, to add ambient ‘fallout’ light for the matches, and for a performance by

Miley Cyrus staged during the men's Final Four section, where she entertained an audience of socially-distanced frontline workers with a succession of rock 'n roll classics.

It was for their "brightness, predictability, cold consistency and uniform flat beam field" that Bill chose the BMFL Spots.

He has used Robe products numerous times in his work, and comments that their "exceptional performance and reliability" keeps the brand at the top of his go-to list!

Lighting was programmed by Paul Hoffman using a grandMA2.

Pulse lighting has around 250 Robe fixtures in its rental inventory including BMFLs, MegaPointes, Spikies and PATTs.

The BMFL continues to be a steady workhorse fixture. "They are solidly designed and built, frequently requested by designers and the support from Robe North America is good," he stated.

Paul was one of seven lighting crew working on the NCAA event. Joining him at the Lucas Oil Stadium were crew chief Andrew Smith plus Dan Grabus and Ryan Chesney. Pulse also supplied equipment for another venue, the Indiana Farmer's Coliseum, which was crew chiefed by Alex "Herm" Schneider who was also the programmer / operator, working alongside Joel Surbe and Shane Beasley.

As basketball fans themselves, to work with the NCAA on the Final Four is "always an honor" Paul enthused, but apart from that, this particular year they were thrilled and felt a huge sense of pride and accomplishment in being one of a very small number of lighting companies to supply a sizeable project.

"Not only was it critical to our bottom line, but it was just fabulous to be able to call up some crew and offer them work!" he concluded.

Photo Credits: Paul Hoffman, Bill Brennan



