



How Rockdale Career Academy uses Wirecast to prepare high school students for careers in news and sports production



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-Tom White, Director of the Sports Broadcast Institute at Rockdale Career Academy

As a public charter school in Conyers, GA, Rockdale Career Academy (RCA) is focused on helping high school students learn valuable skills that prepare them for promising careers in our increasingly technology-infused society.

Through an innovative RCA program known as the Sports Broadcast Institute (SBI), 200 high school students get the opportunity to hone their video production skills by producing live, multi-camera sports and news programs.

The Initiative

One of the biggest productions they tackle is the "Game of the Week," which features live football, basketball or other sporting events at the three local high schools—Heritage, Salem and Rockdale—associated with RCA-SBI.

The games are produced using Wirecast, a live video production system from Telestream that integrates the essential switching and streaming capabilities they need to produce and stream high-quality live shows. Multi-camera switching, live graphics, text, video effects, recording and streaming are among the capabilities that can be controlled from a single, user-friendly interface.

"By producing and streaming hundreds of live events per year, our students get to apply what they've learned in the classroom to a real-world production environment," says Tom White, Director of the Sports Broadcast Institute at Rockdale Career Academy. "This experience fosters professional growth. Our goal is to create broadcasts that mirror the high production standards that

today's television viewers have come to expect. Wirecast has everything we need to meet this goal in one cost-efficient box."

The Challenges

During live shows, the students get hands on experience at every facet of production, both in front of and behind the cameras. But they also experience the pressure to deliver a technically flawless live show.

As the cameras are rolling, Wirecast is delivering the program in real-time to viewers watching on Rockdale-live.com and the nfhsnetwork.com (hosted by PlayOn! Sports). And video they produce of special events and activities streams live via the school's Facebook page or YouTube channel.

Rockdale Career Academy's SBI program relies on Wirecast for a streamlined, end-to-end workflow that includes:

- Ingesting four cameras, including one HDMI wireless field camera outfitted with an IDX CW-1 wireless HDMI transmitter system
- Interfacing with a digital audio mixer and other audio sources
- Switching live video from multiple cameras
- Generating digital video effects and text
- Playing out graphics and replays
- Playing out commercials, promos and other show elements
- Recording the program onto the hard drive



"On game days, we produce a live pre-game show, half-time show and post-game show, and Wirecast is the key to it all," says White. "Wirecast creates shows that look like massive undertakings with just a few cameras. We're running the whole show—while managing the back-end streaming and recording—all from one box. No other system we looked at gave us this much integrated functionality, flexibility and reliability."

"Wirecast is the most intuitive video production software we have found. While it is simple to use, its capabilities are endless. And because of its amazing creative flexibility and functionality, Wirecast is our go-to switcher."

- Tom White, Director of the Sports Broadcast Institute at Rockdale Career Academy

The Solution

Because Rockdale Career Academy's Sport Broadcast Institute relies upon sponsorships, advertising and other revenue sources, they're relatively budget conscious. Since Wirecast handles the lion's share of production demands, they are able to manage with a very cost-efficient configuration including:

- Telestream's Wirecast 7 integrated live production and streaming software
- Telestream Wirecast Desktop Presenter software
- Windows 10 PC with 8Gb of RAM on an i7 processor
- Blackmagic Design DeckLink capture card for 4-camera inputs
- Two Sony HDMI cameras
- Two Sony SDI cameras
- SuiteCG Multisport Scoreboard for creating customized score boards and specialized in-game graphics
- An IDX CW-1 wireless HDMI transmitter system used on a field camera
- Mackie VLX12 digital audio mixer
- Two Sony wireless microphones for studio-based pre-game, half-time and post-game shows
- Two Sennheiser headset microphones used by the play-by-play and color announcers
- One wireless Sennheiser microphone used by the sideline reporter

For football, Wirecast and the digital audio mixer are usually stationed in the press box near the on-air hosts and play-by-play announcers. One of the two Sony SDI cameras is set as the wide shot, capturing all 22 players on the field, while the other gets a tight shot of specific players, such as the running backs and line backers. A Sony HDMI camera provides a field level view, while a wireless Sony HDMI field camera gets shots from the sidelines and transmits them via an IDX CW-1 HDMI transmission system for real-time incorporation into the Wirecast live production.

Wirecast is also used to produce coaching footage that helps teams at each of the three local high schools, and the revenue from this service provides the program's main source of income.

Results/Benefits

Rockdale Career Academy's Sport Broadcast Institute is continually improving and upgrading the live streaming operation. Their recent upgrade to Wirecast 7.0 software brought expanded NewBlueFX graphics capabilities that the production team calls "amazing." NewBlueFX software includes 3D titling, lower thirds, motion bugs, sports templates and a scoreboard tool for managing game clocks and customized data fields.

And White added that by putting Wirecast on two systems, it's now possible for a replay producer to focus on pulling and sending replays to the main system. This took some processing strain off the main switcher while opening positions for more students to get hands-on production experience.

Find out more by visiting:

- Rockdale Career Academy Sports Broadcast Initiative games are streamed via www.RockdaleLive.com
- Games can also be seen on: www.nfhsnetwork.com (hosted by PlayOn! Sports)
- Telestream Wirecast:
<http://telestream.net/wirecast/overview.htm>

