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Ravens Ring Ceremony Includes Second-Half Blackout



OWINGS MILLS, MD — R&R Events turned to Excel Lighting Services and LD Mike Lurz for the lighting design for the June 7 ceremony at the Under Armour Performance Center here where the NFL champion Ravens received their Super Bowl rings. The event, like the game, had a "second-half blackout," but in this case, it was a fully planned part of the show.

More details from Mike Lurz and Excel Lighting Services (www.excellightingservices.com):

SuperBowl XLVII was unforgettable in many aspects; from brothers as opposing head coaches to the famous 'blackout' during the second half, the game (and season) was a rich experience for SuperBowl Champion Baltimore Ravens. When the Ravens' players, coaches and family gathered at the team's training facility for the SuperBowl Ring unveiling ceremony, nobody in the organization could anticipate what was going to happen, but the last thing they expected was another blackout!



Event Producer R & R Events was contracted to spearhead the gig, and in turn partnered with Excel Lighting Services of Baltimore to handle lighting production for the ring ceremony and the evening's festivities. In turn, Excel Lighting picked veteran lighting designer Mike Lurz to create the visual atmosphere needed for the celebratory event. Excel Lighting's President Frank Serruto and Mario Serruto developed the initial design, one that would be universal to the various segments of the evening, and then brought in Lurz to fine-tune the show.

Frank explains, "Excel does quite a bit of work with The Ravens through R & R Events, and we typically bring Mike in when we get into heavier programming of large scale events. There were a lot of initial ideas that were culled through to produce the final product. This was the first time The Ravens done any event of this scale in their training facility, so nobody was sure what we could hang. With no approvals from any engineers, we spent several weeks getting the go-ahead for the hanging of our equipment from the ceiling."



Lurz comments, "As a huge Ravens fan, this turned out to be one of my most memorable shows, and it literally fell in my lap. I was doing a corporate awards show tour, and Excel called asking me to design and program, which I was thrilled to accept. I arrived at programming wearing a Ravens shirt and Ravens socks, so my loyalties were fairly evident from the start!"

Not surprisingly, the lighting system had to perform multifunctional duties during the evening, starting with a dramatic walk-in look and through the more subdued presentation and dinner portions of the evening. Serruto says, "We were going for a party atmosphere mixed with a corporate environment for the ceremony - with the ability to pinspot 60 tables for the all-important ring portion of the evening."

Written by Frank Hammel
Wednesday, 11 September 2013 14:05

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To accommodate the different atmospheres, Excel and Lurz used 60 Clay Paky Sharpys, 40 Martin MAC Vipers and 50 Color Force LED strips, the latter staying in purple throughout the evening for obvious reasons. Serruto says the Clay Paky fixtures played an integral role in the climax of the event. "The ability to switch gears in the middle from a corporate pinspot look to a party atmosphere - we felt the Sharpys were the right answer. The MAC Vipers were another big part of the show; we were looking for a unit with a little more output than a MAC 700, something that

could cut through the color in the room and give us some texture and movement, and the Viper was the best fixture for that application."

Following video presentations of season highlights, it was time to unveil the rings to the SuperBowl Champions. Lurz explains, "We used a Sharpy over each table, which worked perfectly. Anybody that's ever done a corporate event with pin spots over the tables should know the decorator's tendency to move the tables around a dozen times. For this show we had a secret weapon; as the Sharpys were on moving yokes they couldn't get away from it!"

Mirroring the events of the actual game, the lighting team used a 'second half blackout' to set up the ring reveal. "Following the season highlights and a huge video presentation," says Lurz, "we went to a full blackout - it was probably the simplest but most effective lighting cue I've ever done. The Sharpys pinstotted each table while Mr. Bisciotti asked the players to reach down and open the crystal cubes hidden in the tables' centerpieces, so it was a very dramatic presentation of the rings."

"Going into this gig, I had the idea that the Sharpys were going to be pin spots sitting over the tables all the time, but it didn't work that way. We only hit the tables twice, the first time being the restore after the blackout. I created a cue that had a 'spark up' to simulate the stadium lights re-igniting."

After the ring ceremony, the atmosphere turned into a dance party with a performance by Jacoby Jones, players and family dancing into the night, and Lurz getting to exercise some of his rock n' roll lighting chops. He used the Vipers to create ambient lighting looks and breakups, moving constantly throughout the room. "People say they want the corporate look and feel," Mike laughs, "but the first time you pull out a rock n roll lighting trick - especially with that many moving lights - they love it. One of my personal highlights was witnessing Ray Lewis singing 'Purple Rain' as the caterers pulled tablecloths off the tables!"

Lurz programmed and operated the show on his trusty MA Lighting GrandMA console, and Mario served as crew chief for the event. Excel also brought in freelance production manager Alicia Lin as Excel's Event Manager to coordinate the team's efforts. Lin says, "Once the design was in place, I was hired to oversee crew schedules and coordinate with R & R Events for timing, equipment and other details. There were a lot of details that were refined; my role was to keep that line of communication open with the client, and make sure our team has everything they need to get the job done. I was really blown away by this one, just seeing what Mike was able to do, it was just amazing. The client was blown away as well. The Ravens' management observed the whole process with a lot of interest - it took us a week to get in and programmed, and they were really amazed watching it go up. It didn't feel like an indoor practice facility that night; they were excited and impressed with the professionalism and the gear we brought in."

For more information on Excel Lighting Services, visit www.excellightingservices.com.

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