

## PROFILE

**Name:** Michigan State University

**Location:** Lansing, MI  
www.msu.edu

## CHALLENGE

Make every minute of limited coaching and teaching time count to execute game-winning corrections and strategies.

## SOLUTION

Locker room installed interactive presentation system to support video and whiteboard practice and game-day adjustments.

# Breakaway

## BrightLink Pro Crucial to Strategy and Instruction at Michigan State Hockey

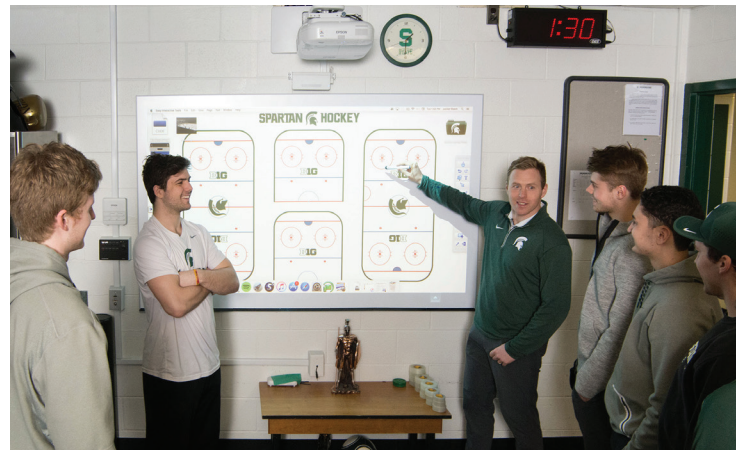
In their quest to outthink their opponents, the coaches at Michigan State University Hockey have a weapon that other teams don't: a new Epson BrightLink<sup>®</sup> Pro 1430wi interactive presentation system installed in their locker room. Brad Fast, Director of Hockey Operations, says the BrightLink Pro makes it easy for the coaches to show game film, mark up tendencies on the video, and sketch out plays. They use it constantly before practice, before games, and between periods during home games.

"Let's say we're playing a team and we have a feeling that they're forechecking in a certain way. It can be hard to tell what they're doing, but if the staff pulls up the video and shows it to the group, they can all see exactly what's going on. Then the players can adjust.

"The coaches always want to make sure they're getting the point they need to make across quickly," he adds. "The BrightLink Pro makes that nice and easy."

### Visual Instruction is Key

The new video system is part of a major remodeling of the Munn Ice Area in East Lansing, the much-loved home of Michigan State Spartans Hockey. Though the renovations will not be complete for at least another year, the team did not feel the technology upgrade could wait.



Jeff Imhoff, Senior Account Executive at BlueWater Technologies, led the effort to install the BrightLink Pro 1430 100" Interactive Display. It's connected to a dedicated Mac mini computer, laptop inputs, an Apple iPad loaded with upbeat music, a sound system, a satellite TV receiver, Blu-ray player and Crestron control.

Coaches can use the BrightLink Pro as a video projector, write or draw on the whiteboard with "digital ink" using an "electronic pen" or their fingers, mark up projected images, and control the computer from the whiteboard.

Fast, a former Spartan and professional hockey player, says that fans don't always understand that instruction is central to any sports program, even at the collegiate level. The coaches must take incoming high school graduates and teach them to play at a very high level, and they have to do it quickly.

***"The BrightLink Pro is one of our most important teaching tools."***

– BRAD FAST, DIRECTOR OF HOCKEY OPERATIONS,  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

“We have the same limits as any other Big Ten team, 20 hours per week during the season,” Fast explains. “Time is really precious. You don’t want to be sitting there trying to explain a concept for half an hour when you can show it in five minutes.” In consequence, the classroom portion of hockey instruction is highly visual, concentrating on game and practice film and on drawing diagrams of plays on screen. For that reason, Fast says “The BrightLink Pro is one of our most important teaching tools.”

Fast says players usually arrive for practice early, so they can warm up on the ice. Then coaches call them in to the locker room to review plans and systems while the ice is being resurfaced. They gather around the new BrightLink Pro and watch material appropriate for the day’s task. On average, coaches have just ten minutes to talk to the players before they begin skating drills.

For play diagrams, the team has preloaded the Mac mini and the coaches’ laptops with rink diagrams as backgrounds to the desktop. “You turn your computer on and that’s what comes up first. As quickly as you can connect to the BrightLink, you’re ready to diagram plays.”

The coaches also use SportsCode software to access game and practice film stored on an MSU server. Using SportsCode, staff flag footage as it’s being shot, adding keywords describing the play so they can call it up quickly. Since they’ve been using SportsCode for several seasons, they have tens of thousands of clips ready to illustrate almost any situation.

Because the BrightLink Pro acts like a giant touch screen computer, coaches can access plays without leaving the whiteboard—or, if they prefer, they can step back and a remote control. Either way, “we can play, pause, fast forward or reverse the video,” Fast explains. But unlike a standard display, they can use the BrightLink Pro to mark up the video on-screen to emphasize a point.

### Remarkable Value

Steven Jowett, MSU Manager of AV and IT Integration, says he looks for several things in the technology he installs, including

image quality, ease of use and rock-solid reliability. “The reason we’re here is because we love this place. Once you’re a Spartan, you’re a Spartan for life. I would hate to see the technology go down during a game and put the team at a disadvantage.”

For that reason, Imhoff says the BrightLink Pro is an ideal fit for Spartans Hockey. “I’ve worked with Epson for 24 years, and they build a fantastic product,” he explains. “Their people care about you as well. We support those companies who support us and our clients.”

Imhoff also likes the fact that users can write on the BrightLink Pro with just their fingers. “Hockey is an intimate sport,” he says. “There are just 25 guys and three coaches in the locker room, so to be able to just walk up to the board and begin using it, without even having to find a marker, makes it a really great tool.”

Cost effectiveness is an advantage as well. “Some athletic programs are installing touch-sensitive flat panels to do the same job,” Imhoff adds. “They’re very nice, but you would expect to spend almost \$40,000 for an 98" touch display. The BrightLink Pro with a 100" All-in-one White Board gives you the same functionality for less than a fifteenth of the price—a remarkable value.”

Fast says he and the Spartan coaches love the system. When the Munn Arena expansion is complete, he hopes and expects to continue to use a BrightLink Pro in the new locker room.

Though the Spartans suffered a heartbreaking overtime loss to Ohio State in the Big Ten tournament last year, Fast says it was a good season overall. “It was fun to watch the improvements going on...and it’s important that we’re right on the cutting edge with our technology.”

***“The BrightLink Pro with a 100" All-in-one White Board gives you the same functionality for less than a fifteenth of the price—a remarkable value.”***

– JEFF IMHOFF, SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE AT BLUEWATER TECHNOLOGIES