



"Baseball is unique in a variety of ways," said Big Block Media Executive Managing Editor Kenny Solomon in an email. "From the way it's consumed, the pacing, thought process, historical resonance and even the quiriness."

Part of the creative process involved highly-detailed logos that the BBCG team rendered in wool, wood, metal and leather looks meant to mimic the tools of baseball-hand stitched gloves, embroidered uniforms and so forth.

The initial concept actually came from the Worldwide Leader after they did some audience polling. But Doss says executives at the network were initially skeptical.

"It did take some convincing even though the initial idea came from them," Doss said. "They weren't sold on the idea that you could turn that into an entire package."

But Big Block's design group showed you absolutely could.

"Each team had all of their specific elements that made up the knolling concept," said Solomon. "From baseball elements to all the local fanfare that made up the package for each team. It wasn't just some cookie cutter template. There was a lot of thought process put into the design around each specific team, city and fanbase."

Big Block designed a series of team posters that give the ESPN production team multiple options to illustrate stats and trends. Each team got elements unique to the city and culture around it—a nod to baseball's intense regionalism. They also delivered thousands of various elements to give ESPN incredible flexibility within the knolling framework.

Big Block has worked with ESPN on multiple past projects including the redesign of Monday Night Football, but creatives say this project was more intensive given the sheer number of deliverable elements and the day-to-day nature of baseball.

One of the biggest assets to working with ESPN is how much time his team is given to develop an idea, Solomon said.

"They tend to bring us in on projects earlier and we act almost as an in-house, out-of-house creative think tank," he said.

The network brought Big Block in almost a year ago to start brainstorming concepts. Big Block spent more than a month just researching the history of MLB on ESPN. They checked in with their counterparts at the network about twice a week for three months during the initial design phase, then got to work

on delivering all the needed assets.

Baseball always walks a fine line between past and present. For a game so rich in historical context, the stories of yesteryear never feel too far behind. But those who work on how the game looks and feels on TV are weary of going too far into the history books, particularly as the pace of our world continues to speed forward and the audience that watches baseball gets older.

"[ESPN executives] were kind of concerned that the game was portrayed in a little bit of an older light," Doss said. "And viewership being down, they wanted to invigorate a younger audience."

Solomon agrees for the most part, but points out with baseball, the past is always present.

"We did it in a modern way," he said, "But we really gave a handshake to the past as well."