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## [Fish]Eye in the Sky

*In his legendary career as a hockey photographer, Getty Images' Bruce Bennett has pushed the boundaries of creativity and innovation. For 40 years he has seen the sport from countless angles and vantage points. But there's always more to try, and always more to learn. In the Islanders' last season at the arena affectionately known as "The Barn," Bennett wanted a picture that had eluded him years before. He shares the story behind the shot:*

The last time I mounted a camera on the bottom of the Nassau Coliseum scoreboard was four years ago and I wasn't happy with the results. Even using a full frame camera with a Canon 15mm lens, it was tough to visualize how much of the ice surface would actually be captured in the frame. The resulting images hardly captured half the ice surface, and thus I shelved the thought for a few years.

Four years later, with the Islanders saying farewell to the Coliseum, I decided it was time to try it one more time. When the team moves to the Barclays Center next season, it will become impossible to recreate the vantage point because the scoreboard there is mounted off-center, sitting over one of the blue lines. This time I used the Canon 8-15mm lens and the Canon full frame 1DX camera. Fully racked out to 8mm, the lens produced not only an image that is 'fisheye' in appearance, but also masks out the remaining area in the frame in black, which helps accentuate the fisheye effect.



*Photo by Steven Ryan*

The installation required arriving three hours before game time so that the scoreboard could be lowered to the ice for installation. I had to take into consideration that the camera would need to operate throughout the game so the camera needed to turn itself off after a period of inactivity to preserve battery life. In addition, sufficient safety cabling had to be used to ease the minds of all parties involved. Remote frequencies were reserved so that the camera could be triggered by pushing a button from my rinkside position 100' away. All images were shot in both JPEG and RAW so I needed to make sure that the camera was loaded with large enough memory cards to store all the images.





My first try was at the final regular season game at the Coliseum. I shot available light and blasted away at several opportunities, including the opening faceoff which resulted in a very viable and worthwhile image. But I held back throughout the game as the key to getting the winning photograph for me in this instance would be the postgame celebration. The team had done this throughout the season – with sticks raised in the air while standing on the logo at center ice. The game went into overtime and then to a shootout where the Islanders ultimately lost the game and I was unable to get the shot I wanted.

So a week later when the Islanders played their first playoff game, I took another stab at it. Armed with the knowledge gained in the first game, I decided to utilize the arena strobes. These are flash lighting units that we have permanently installed in the catwalks and are synced to go off when our camera triggers. The gain here with strobes is the high quality, the lack of 'noise' in the image, and an increase in saturation and color. But it's also somewhat risky. With strobes, I was locked into a maximum of one frame every three seconds instead of ten frames per second. More worrisome was that the camera in the scoreboard needed one remote to trigger it and a separate remote to trigger the lights, meaning twice the possibility of failure. With all the surrounding metal and all the electronics in the scoreboard it was risky, but the potential increase in quality with strobe lighting was worth the risk. (For you photo geeks out there: 200iso, 320th second at f/8 using the Pocket Wizard mini on hypersync)

So at game time, with the building packed, all electronics on, all fans tweeting, facebooking and clogging the RF and airwaves, I triggered the camera, and when the strobes went off at that same moment I knew I was in business. Less than three hours later, when the game went to overtime, I knew I had some good game action and some face-offs. But when John Tavares scored the game-winner just 15

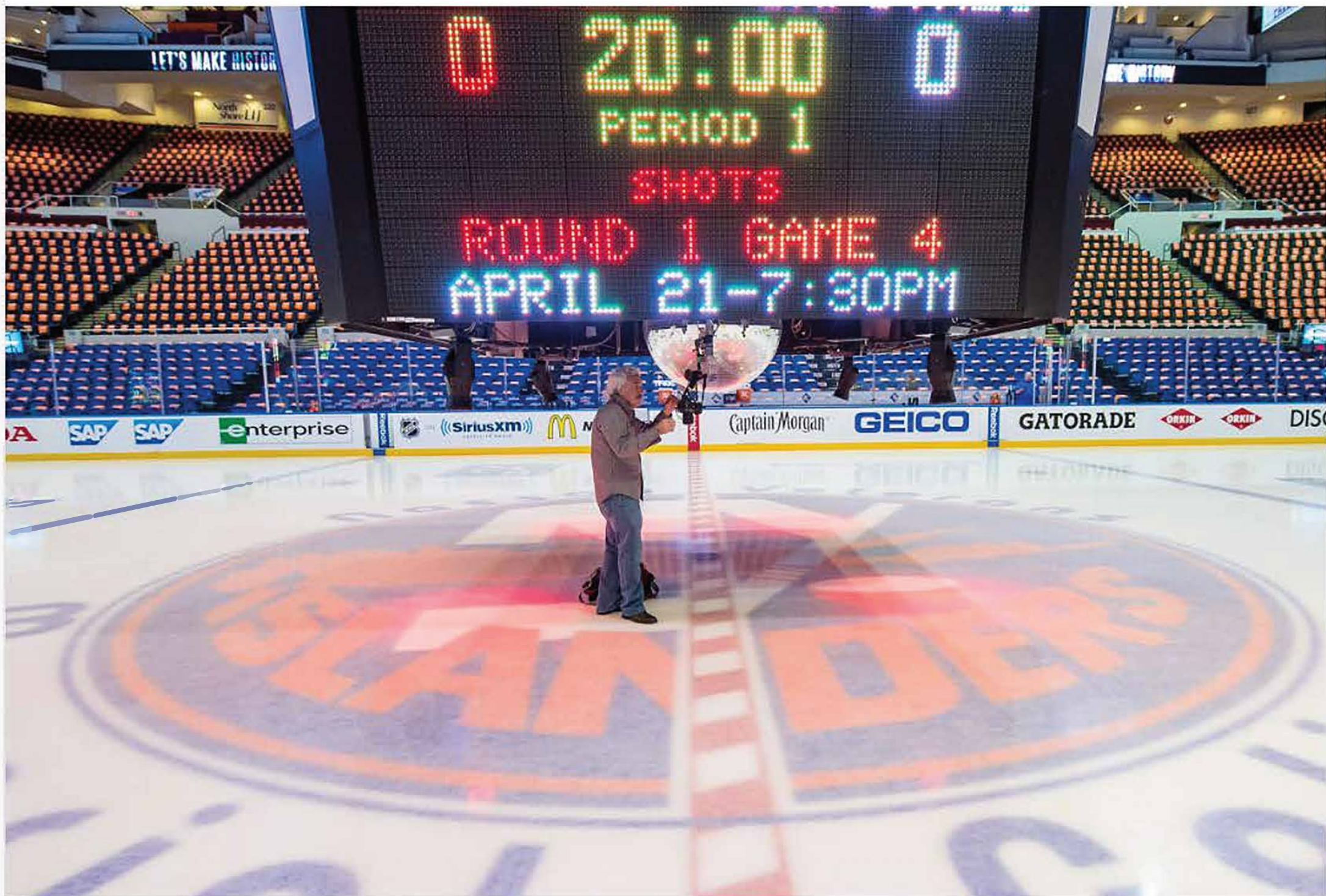
seconds into overtime, I knew I had the crown jewel. As they did all season, the team slowly glided over to the center ice logo where I was able to grab three frames before they moved on. About an hour later the final images were moved to the Getty Images site once I was able to retrieve the camera. My favorite frame is the overall view with full fisheye effect but I'm happy with all the results.

Memorable shots, in a building with no shortage of hockey memories.

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