

Re: IBM Blade Center – FreeBSD on HS20 type MTM 8832/N1X

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/current/2006-01/msg00176.html>

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 - *Date:* Thu, 5 Jan 2006 14:42:37 -0800 (PST)
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Sorry for joining the thread late, but I'm an expert on this hardware. :-)

Note that the IBM BladeCenter HS series is identical to the Intel SBCE series blades; you might find more info looking for SBCE info since they're widely sold by whitebox resellers. I've also had the (mis)fortune of working with these extensively and know their quirks inside and out.

On Thu, 29 Dec 2005, Andrea Brancatelli wrote:

- > Here's the symptoms... when booting from CD the CD boots regularly, then
- > the "searching for Kernel" part comes in, the whirl starts spinning and
- > everything stop. I mean, it doesn't stop, it keeps spinning and spinning
- > and spinning and spinning, but without doing anything. If I take the CD
- > out of the drive it returns and error complaining it can't find the
- > Kernel and asking me where it should look for it.

The USB CDROM is very, very, VERY slow. As recommended later in the thread, installing via PXE is highly recommended.

<http://people.freebsd.org/~dwhite/pxeboot.html> has a quick and dirty framework for getting sysinstall up over PXE.

- > It's a dual xeon machine with 4gb of ram, 2 internal (S-ATA) drives
- > (40gb each), one (possibly deactivable) internal Raid controller
- > (deactivating this may be a good try, since Debian refuses to see the
- > drive as well with this turned on), a SCSI cdrom and a SCSI floppy
- > drive.

The older HS20s and the Intel SBXL52 are 2xPATA and the floppy/cdrom/front usb socket are connected by usb via the switchable media tray. They are probably showing up as "SCSI" to Linux since, like FreeBSD, USB media uses the SCSI subsystem. The SBX82 uses 2.5" SCSI disks, but also supports hyperthreading.

Your 8832-N1X appears to be what Intel calls an SBX82, based on the supported CPUs and the use of SCSI disks. The onboard RAID is provided by the mpt integrated mirroring feature and is supported on FreeBSD 6.0 and later.

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- > I don't have any fiber optic channel so the SAN/multipath and everything
- > else is not an issue. The keyboard is a PS/2 one, so the USB keyboard
- > isn't an issue as well (I'm writing this because I did some digging in
- > the archives for similar problems).

You will run into the infamous FreeBSD single keyboard quirk. Syscons will only listen to one keyboard at a time, and by default its the first one discovered ("kbd0"). Since these blades do not have atkbd keyboard controllers, usually the USB device that provides input from the Remote Console in the MM is the one that gets grabbed. Under certain circumstances you can get the system to grab a keyboard plugged into the front-panel USB port. The PS/2 ports on the MM will never ever become the console unless you explicitly select them using kbdcontrol. Hopefully kbdmux will become the default in a later release and this silliness will cease, but for now you need to be aware of what keyboard is the active one. At least it tends to default to the Remote Console so you can access stuff remotely.

For the record the SAN cards are Qlogic (QLA2310) and are fully supported by the isp driver. I even had freebsd talking to an Xserve RAID via a Brocade switch module before the switch committed suicide (firmware image corrupted or something).

I know a bunch of other stuff about these that might be useful. Drop me a message if you get stuck and I'll help you out.

—

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