

Faiz Siddiqui

Lakota East HS

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The Be a Sports Journalist Program

When Dayton Dunbar flaunted its athleticism against Port Clinton, I was there. When Moeller High School was shut down by a superior Massillon Jackson team, I was there. When Dayton Jefferson upset the number-one ranked team in the state from Newport Catholic High School, I was there. Finally, When Lima Central Catholic High School Basketball Coach Bob Seggerson “Went out on top,” I was there.

The “Be a Sports Journalist” program put me there, and if I found a career in sports journalism, I could very frequently find myself in similar situations. The program showed me the real world of newspaper-style sports journalism. Because I am currently a sports editor for a newsmagazine, before I attended the “Be a Sports Journalist” program, I had not seen the true side of sports writing. With my publication, writers have about a month to produce stories ranging from 250 to 2500 words. The stories are not usually about single-games, rather the progress that teams have made over the month in which they are covered. The “Be a Sports Journalist” program showed me what most sports journalists do—predict. Before I attended the program, I did not understand how sports journalists produced stories on such short deadlines. After the event was over, I fully understood that throughout the course of the events that sports writers cover, they write the story, predicting the outcome.

In addition to enlightening me upon the process of sports writing, the “Be a Sports Journalist” program furthered my interest in the field. I have always had a passion for sports, and ever since my first Journalism-I class at the beginning of my sophomore year, I have had a passion for sports writing. During my tenure with Lakota East High School's Pacemaker Award Winning SPARK Newsmagazine, I have very frequently written for the sports section. I've covered all aspects of sports from a 5-17 girls' basketball team's turnaround to a girls' tennis team's historic season. My interest in sports writing led me to become a sports editor for the SPARK. The program furthered my interest in that it showed me the types of events that I had the opportunity to cover. Numerous journalists spoke of covering all levels of sports from state championships to professional level sports. The program showed me that unlike office professionals, sports journalists actually love what they do. Just as I do, they pride themselves on informing the public of sporting news. By attending the program, I realized that I shared the same love for sports journalism as the professionals.

My favorite part of the program by far was the post-game press conferences. I could feel the level of emotion in the room with every team that entered. I noticed that losing teams were less talkative, and less cordial. Winning teams were always jubilant, giving thorough and sometimes even comical quotes. I particularly enjoyed the press conference with the victorious Dayton Jefferson team, because, frankly, the team's players were hilarious. But for me, the defining moment of the program came early in the morning, immediately following Lima Central Catholic's victory over Orrville. I was glad to witness LCC head coach Bob Seggerson retire after his first state championship victory. Even though I was not familiar with Coach Seggerson, being present at his formal announcement of retirement was special to me. I realized that if I became a sports journalist, it would be my job to witness and report similar events. While I had seen coaches step down on television, nothing compared to actually witnessing it. Because of the fact that I never found myself bored during a press conference, I can definitely see myself becoming a sports journalist in the future.

As a result of attending the OHSAA state basketball championships as a sports journalist sitting behind press row, I am sincerely interested in pursuing a career in the field. The program showed me all of the sides of sports journalism, and frankly, I grew to admire all of them, from players crying at press conferences, to sports writers covering games on short deadlines and shouting profanities. The “Be a Sports Journalist” program certainly benefited me, and will benefit sports writers in the future. The program further established my interest in the field of sports journalism.