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# Learning the Wide World of Sports

Media camp aims to turn fans into journalists

ALL OF THE GROWTH AND ATTENTION TO OSU ATHLETICS ARE GREAT FROM AN ATHLETIC RECRUITING PERSPECTIVE.

PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE OSU SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IS PULLING ITS WEIGHT IN THE SPORTS WORLD BY RECRUITING TOP STUDENTS THROUGH ITS ANNUAL SPORTS MEDIA CAMP.

CONTINUES



Since 2007, the OSU sports media camp has allowed high school students to get hands-on experience in sports broadcasting and journalism. Many of these campers later return to OSU as students in its sports media program.

Dave Hunziker, or as many know him, “The Voice of the Cowboys,” has been the camp’s director since it began. He acknowledges the impact the camp has had on the sports media program.

“A high percentage of the best students in our program have been to this camp,” Hunziker says. “This has been a tremendous recruiting tool.”

OSU began offering its sports media degree in 2006, and members of the sports media faculty decided they needed to hit the ground running on recruitment. The following year, they held the first sports media camp.

The camp hosted eight campers its first year and was a great learning opportunity for both campers and faculty. The camper limit usually hovers around 18-20, but this year, the camp expanded its roster to 24.

Adam Hildebrandt, a 2012 sports media graduate, was one of those first eight campers at the first OSU sports media camp. He attended the camp twice before coming to OSU as a freshman in the sports media program.

Hildebrandt now works for a group of media stations in Moberly, Mo., doing play-by-play and analysis for local sports teams as well as contributing to the daily news programming.

“Everything that I’m doing now was born from this camp,” says Hildebrandt. “All the things I learned at the camps I use in some form of my work. The amount of well-rounded preparation you get from the camp I don’t think you’ll find anywhere else.”

The sports media camp gives campers the opportunity to experience multiple aspects of the sports media industry. John McGuire, OSU sports media professor and camp faculty member, says one of the camp’s goals is to turn sports fans into sports journalists.

“You’ve got to make the progression from being just a sports fan to being somebody that understands what’s involved in reporting, and writing, and telling a story,” McGuire says. “And these concepts are introduced to students at this camp.”

McGuire and Hunziker, with their combined professional and academic experience in broadcast and play-by-play calling, teach the campers how to be “on the air.” They work on vocal projection and conversational skills, vocabulary and research in sports broadcasting.

The campers take the skills they develop to record podcasts, do on-camera stand ups and conduct play-by-play coverage.

One of the camp’s highlights involves a trip to a minor-league ballgame, where the campers sit in a press box and record live play-by-play coverage. This year, the campers called an Oklahoma Redhawks game in which the Redhawks made an explosive sixth-inning rally, helping them defeat the Omaha Stormchasers 8-5.



While the baseball game is perhaps one of the most exciting parts of the camp, the faculty, counselors and previous campers stress enough how the camp develops important journalism skills.

That's where Ray Murray steps up to the plate. Murray, an OSU sports media professor, works with the campers on print stories and instructs them how to do research in order to be prepared to ask the tough questions.

The campers put their research to the test at a mock press conference with an OSU coach or athlete. In the past, campers have held "press conferences" with OSU football head coach Mike Gundy, OSU women's basketball head coach Kurt Budke and former OSU golfer turned pro, Chris Tidland.

Murray says the camp helps end misperceptions that a career in the industry involves sitting around watching ESPN's *SportsCenter* and eating hot dogs at the ballpark by exposing campers to many sides of the sports media industry.

"In addition to writing talent, you have to research," says Murray. "It's highly competitive. You have to know what you're talking about. You have to ask the tough questions, and you've got to be observant."

Nathan Ruiz, a sports media sophomore from Sparks, Nev., attended the camp the year they held a press conference with Tidland. Murray says Ruiz's story was so good that it ended up running on the front page of the OSU student newspaper, *The Daily O'Collegian*.

With OSU offering one of the few sports media degrees in the country, Ruiz already had a strong desire to attend OSU, and the camp was an added bonus. He says that getting to experience a little taste of college life is a great way to draw students to the program.

"Being on OSU's campus makes you fall in love with it," Ruiz says. "I did feel a little more prepared going into my freshman year simply because of being at the sports media camp. It benefited me during my first year and will keep benefiting me over the next three years."

It's a great time to be a sports media student at OSU, as Ruiz found out this year. He's an avid baseball fan and as a sportswriter for the *O'Colly*, was able to cover OSU's baseball team as they made their run for the College World Series, which came up short at the super regionals.

OStateTV, a digital media network that showcases OSU-related videos, launched two years ago. OStateTV will serve as a laboratory for OSU School of Media and Strategic Communications students, who will provide content, including a regular student-produced sports show.

Orange Power Studios, which produces original and exclusive content for the OSU athletics department and assists in production efforts with Cowboy Sports Properties and Fox Sports Net, is making its debut this fall.

The OSU sports media camp and its state-of-the-art training resources are designed to give a hands-on experience to those students looking to be successful in the sports media and broadcasting industry, and it's hard to argue with the camp's results.

"Every one of those kids won some type of award while they were in college," McGuire says. "So I don't know if there's cause and effect there, but there you go." 📸

Jamie Hadwin

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Campers at the 2014 version of the OSU sports media camp gather outside the Paul Miller Building.

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