

SPORTS STORYTELLING

Tips for writing about sports in your yearbook.

Show, don't tell.

- Use the details of a situation or moment in a game to tell the story. Don't tell the reader how great it was, let them draw that conclusion through your storytelling. (P.S. This applies to all yearbook writing, not just sports!)

Avoid summarizing the season.

- That's what the scoreboard does. Instead, focus on some spectacular, memorable events of a game — and it doesn't have to be the play that sealed the state tournament, as long as it helps tell the story of the year.

Keep opinion out of it.

- It's hard with sports. You're excited for a great play and bummed by a miss, but your job is not to share your opinion. Facts are your friends.

Vary your coverage.

- Focus on a variety of players on the team (not just the quarterback or captain) and go into depth with each of them. A detail about a specific match-up or play can find itself in a photo caption or a feature story. Cover as many players as you can fit on the spread.

Use active, vibrant verbs.

- Here's your chance. Use strong verbs, but watch out for editorializing with verbs. Did your team really dominate? Did they squash the opponent? Is that fact or opinion?

Know the sport.

- Make sure you know the rules of the game. Study the terminology; each sport has its own lingo. Don't feel obligated to use jargon, though. Make your story understandable to any reader, whether they know a lot about the sport or not.

Study the stats.

- Find out who the leading scorers are. Who provided the most assists? There may be a story you're missing. Stats can also be a great add-on for captions.

Get there early and stay until it's over.

- You can't cover a game if you leave at halftime. Observe and take notes throughout the contest. If possible, introduce yourself to the coach well ahead of the game so he or she knows why you're there.

SPORTS CAPTIONS

- Use jersey numbers to identify players (your team and the opposing player in a photo.) Collect game programs or rosters and keep them in your camera bag or next to your computer. Try to identify as many players as possible.
- Don't state the obvious. Provide information that the reader wouldn't know.
- Give the outcome of the play. If the photo shows a ball being caught, tell the reader what happened next. Don't repeat information found elsewhere on the spread, though.
- Use lead-ins to your advantage. The first three or four words of a caption can set the scene and show the action. Play with prepositional phrases and gerunds, but don't get stuck using just one type of lead-in. Ex: With two seconds left... Watching the clock ... In jeopardy of fouling out ...