

SPORTS TALK

Some thoughts on covering the athletic world at your school

As the fall sports season is now in full swing and the winter sports season is just around the corner, you are probably thinking of getting that sports section off the ground. Here are some quick items to think about as you plan your sports section.

Sports Fact #1 Too much sports?

For most schools, the sports section is the hardest to control. You won't like this (especially if yours is a sports-oriented school), but accord-



most high school sports programs. Even the smallest

of schools that field sports teams have at least one sport, per sex, per season (football and volleyball in the fall, basketball for men and women in the winter and baseball/softball in the spring). Many have more. And most of those sports have both a varsity team and a junior varsity team.

When you have this many teams competing, you will probably need to break the 18% rule just to cover all their seasons. But please try to use restraint when deciding on the amount of coverage to give sports.



One way small-school books can hold down the number of sports pages is to have JV or sophomore teams from the same season share a double-page spread.

One last note about allotting space to sports. Under current non-discrimination laws, you need to make very sure that both genders receive equal coverage.

Sports Fact #2 Missing sports

Another real problem in many sports sections is that most yearbooks cover only the people who compete in school-sponsored team

athletics and miss those who may put in the same amount or even more time in an individual or club sport.



Skateboarders, mountain bikers, horseback riders, hikers, boaters and others all deserve coverage in your yearbook. Maybe not to the same extent as the football or baseball team, but they do deserve it.

Sports Fact #3 It's more than just the games and matches

Coverage of sports needs to be more than just coverage



of contests. If you ask any ex-football player what he remembers most about high school football, he will probably say it was "Hell Week" or "Daily Doubles." That week at the start of the season when they have two practices a day in the hot August sun. Yet 85% of yearbooks don't cover practice. They don't cover half-times. They don't cover

tryouts. They don't cover pep talks. They don't cover fans. They don't cover road trips. They don't cover injuries. All they usually do is re-hash the season. You can accomplish that with a good scoreboard. You need more.

Consider featuring your sports section.



This means that you cover it all. Look for different angles when planning the section. Take some time and really plan for the right photos to show what the sport was really like.

The photos on this page should be a great inspiration for photo ideas. All are from our Jostens/Wolfe's Camera's annual student photo contest. You can find even more of these great photos to inspire your staff photographers on Yearbook Avenue. Just click Contests.

For more ideas on making your sports section different, check out the Sports Ideas poster on the centerfold spread. There you'll see some of the best ideas from 2007 books.



ing to the national scholastic press associations, your sports section should comprise no more than 18% of your yearbook. Most of you probably think that this number is too low, but remember that if yours is like most schools, only 35-40% of your student body is involved in athletics in some way, shape or form.

Of course, the problem of growing sports sections has to do with the plethora of teams that abound in



SPOTLIGHT ON SPORTS

Recently a yearbook adviser friend brought me this problem: "Our school is very sports-oriented. We seem to be adding new sports and more levels of them every day. Last year our ladder had almost 40% of the book devoted to sports. What can we do? If this keeps up, before long, we will have nothing in the book but sports.

So I offered to look over her ladder and make some suggestions. In the first column on the right is what the sports section looked like last year. Each Varsity Sport had a DPS and the JV and Frosh split a DPS in the major sports. Minor sports (and they have a ton of them) each got one DPS. There were a total of 50 pages. That may not seem like a lot if you are doing a 300-page book or more but this school has traditionally done only about 200 pages. That means that almost half of the book is sports. Yet when we checked, less than half the school was participating in sports and the school year is so much more than just sports. So, how do we change it?

2003 Yearbook Total 52 pages

Sports Divider
Sports Divider
Varsity Football
Varsity Football
JV Football
Frosh Football
Varsity Volleyball
Varsity Volleyball
JV Volleyball
Frosh Volleyball
Varsity Cross Country
Varsity Cross Country
JV Cross Country
Frosh Cross Country
Men's Crew
Men's Crew
Men's LaCrosse
Men's Lacrosse
Varsity Men's Basketball
Varsity Men's Basketball
JV Men's Basketball
C Squad Men's Basketball
Frosh Men's Basketball
Frosh Women's Basketball
C Squad Women's Basketball
JV Women's Basketball
Varsity Women's Basketball
Varsity Women's Basketball
Wrestling
Wrestling
Gymnastics
Gymnastics
Women's Lacrosse
Women's Lacrosse
Varsity Baseball
Varsity Baseball
JV Baseball
Frosh Baseball
Varsity Softball
Varsity Softball
JV Softball
Frosh Softball
Varsity Track
Varsity Track
Tennis
Tennis
Golf
Golf
Women's Crew
Women's Crew

We featurize it!

We switch from devoting a DPS for every sport to finding subjects that pertain to every sport and using them in a feature story format with pictures from a multitude of sports. For example, a feature on practices would have photos of different kinds of drills and skill lessons taught in a number of

2004 Yearbook Total 30 pages

Sports Divider
Sports Divider
Hell week-daily doubles
Fall Sports Groups and Scores
Parents as fans
Fall Sports Groups and Scores
Road trips
Fall Sports Groups and Scores
The cost of playing in monetary terms
Fall Sports Groups and Scores
Making varisty as a freshman
Wiinter Sports Groups and Scores
Uniforms—cool or uncool
Wiinter Sports Groups and Scores
Injuries
Wiinter Sports Groups and Scores
Practices
Wiinter Sports Groups and Scores
Half time pep talks
Wiinter Sports Groups and Scores
Playing with siblings
Spring Sports Groups and Scores
Embarrasing moments in sports
Spring Sports Groups and Scores
Emotion—the heart of sports
Spring Sports Groups and Scores
State and district champions
Spring Sports Groups and Scores
Individual Sports including
Horseback riding, surfing, skateboard, etc.

sports. It might also feature an infographic relating the amount of time each sport practiced at each level.

At the bottom of each DPS you would design a space for team group shots, scoreboards and possibly a quote box from a coach or player.

Check out how the new sports section looks for the 2004 book below. We think it solves the problem well.

Another thing this method of covering sports takes care of is the problem we see in many yearbooks: the overcoverage of football. Some schools give football even more coverage than they do any other sport when in reality there are probably more students involved in track or basketball on the whole.

This method also helps you balance your coverage of male and female sports.



And while you are at it, don't forget others who do not take part in organized sports and make sure leave room in the features and the group shots for the disabled. If you are covering the kids at your school that are in Special Olympics in any section other than sports...shame on you. They are just as much athletes competing at the top of their form as any others at your school.

Featurizing also makes the sports section so much more interesting because you cover more than the

