

Covering a Sporting Event

Writing a game story

TSGW, Chpts 2,14

Quotation: From the *Sports Writing Handbook*, by Steven Wilstein

- ▶ “The sports writers’ challenge is to describe events with elegance and passion and wit, to make readers share their laughter or tears or rage, to entertain and inform . . . to impart a feeling for what it was like to be there in the stands or on the field or in the locker room, to give the event meaning and put it in perspective”

Writing a Game Story about a Sporting Event: Purposes

▶ Primary Purposes

- ▶ To describe events vividly (game summary-sensory details—put readers there)
- ▶ To analyze and evaluate the game so that it has meaning for readers [lead, stats, game summary (key plays, turning point), quotations]
- ▶ To entertain (imaginatively combine and integrate info—score, playing conditions, big plays, game summary)

▶ Secondary Purposes

- ▶ To inform (game summary, stats, bkgrd info)
- ▶ To persuade (You saw a live game, took notes, and conducted interviews.) You are credible/knowledgeable and your views are valid as a reporter, not a fan

Writer's role—you're not a fan but have a fan's passion. Also, you are NOT giving real-time play-by-play (announcing or speaking); you are writing. Different conventions for speaking and writing?

Audience

- ▶ Who are your readers? What are you assuming about your readers? Explain how these assumptions inform actual writing decisions you make. See Course Notes (audience sheet) for audience questions you will respond to and **turn in with your game story.** (You should also consult TSGW, p. 1, and your notes: Rhetorical Situation.)
- ▶ You might assume your game story would be published in a local newspaper? Assumptions you can make based on this?

Context, Occasion, Genre, Medium

- ▶ Length/Medium. Publish game story in a print newspaper sports section
 - ▶ Draft: 3-4 pages, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 pt font, Times New Roman
 - ▶ Final copy: Formatted in columns (two per page, 11 pt. font, single spaced, TNR)
- ▶ Heading: Name of Paper, Date you saw your game, Headline, Your Name
- ▶ Genre: Game story - sports journalism. Conventions? See Course Notes: Organizing a Game Story
- ▶ Time sensitive: assume published day after the game—relevance
- ▶ Context: Local sporting event/Significance of sports, nationally and locally, e.g., social gathering, e.g., Friday Night Lights phenomenon? City/Community identity? Competition? (WIAC, Div. II & III/high school)

Quotation: From the *Sports Writing Handbook*

- ▶ “Writing is not speaking. Writing is a whole other craft. If you don’t have a love of language, if you don’t get the little hairs up on the back of your neck when you read passages that soar, if you’re not a literary person, then you can’t be a great columnist [or writer of game stories]”
- ▶ Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*