

MSR surpasses 3 million pageviews

Written by Jim Ecker

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When we began the Metro Sports Report a little less than three years ago, a former colleague asked me how long we planned to keep going with our little project.

Apparently, he thought the MSR was a cute little diversion that would flame out quickly and die like so many other dot.coms have through the years.

Quite honestly, his question irritated me a little. It still does. We didn't start the Metro Sports Report as a diversion or a hobby. We started the company to provide an alternative source of information about the sports world in Cedar Rapids and Marion.

We began on Jan. 3, 2011 by covering the seven major high schools in the Metro area. We felt those schools were being under-covered by the established local media outlets and thought there would be a market for extensive coverage of all 21 prep varsity sports, not just the "big" sports but everything across the board.

As it turned out, we think we were right. How else do you explain the fact that we've had more than 3 million pageviews, more than 1.1 million visits and more than 325,000 unique visitors in less than three years?

You have to admit, those are pretty big numbers for a website that's been dismissively described by some people as a "niche" product in a market that includes a daily newspaper, a weekly newspaper, four TV stations, numerous radio stations and several other sports websites.

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If consumers were entirely satisfied with all those other established media outlets, how do you explain our success?

We passed 3 million pageviews over the weekend. The official number was 3,010,763 as of noon on Sunday, and we got a nice bump last week from the Metro Sports Report Classic basketball event that we held at Kirkwood Community College Nov. 30.

We received many nice compliments about the MSR Classic from fans and coaches, who liked seeing all eight Metro boys basketball teams in the same event. We plan to hold another Classic next year and plan to add a comparable girls event next November as well.

As most of you know by now, we've grown tremendously during our first three years in business. We added Cedar Valley Christian to our lineup in August of 2011, putting all eight Metro schools on our website for the community to follow.

We added Kirkwood in November of 2012, feeling strongly that it was time for a local media outlet to give the Eagles the attention they richly deserve.

We added the Cedar Rapids Kernels this past March, feeling strongly it was time for deeper coverage of the local minor league team. That included covering all the "commuter" road games in Clinton, Davenport and Burlington, as well as all the home games at Veterans Memorial Stadium. None of the other media outlets are doing that, by the way.

We added the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders this season, and we're the only media outlet that's had a reporter at every single home game.

Some of you may feel I'm bragging a little too much, but that's OK. Facts are facts. Other media outlets toot their own horns all the time with TV commercials, billboards, promotional advertisements and the like, so it's not like we invented it.

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The Metro Sports Report will celebrate its third anniversary on Jan. 3, 2014. If all goes according to plan, we'll be expanding again in 2014 with more teams added to our lineup, but we're not ready to make an official announcement quite yet.

Stay tuned. Keep reading. And if you have not done so already, check out the MSR Photo Gallery and our new customized magazine covers that feature local athletes. We introduced the new feature last week and have already had thousands of views.

On behalf of Mike Koolbeck, my partner with the Metro Sports Report, we'd like to thank everyone for your support and all the nice compliments. It's been a labor of love.