



Lots of people have thanked us the past five years for the work we've done with the Metro Sports Report website and wondered how they can help.

Now we have an answer.

[JOIN FRIENDS OF METRO SPORTS REPORT CLICK HERE](#)

The Metro Sports Report is proud to introduce the "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com," a new club for our readers who appreciate our efforts and would like to join the team.

As president of the Metro Sports Report, it's been my pleasure to lead our efforts in covering local sports in Cedar Rapids and Marion. It's truly been the most rewarding experience of my four decades as a sports journalist.

It's no secret, however, that we've been operating the MSR on a tight budget over the years, trying to cover your favorite teams while having to count every nickel and dime.

## Please join 'Friends of Metro Sports Report.com'

Written by Jim Ecker

Sunday, 04 October 2015 15:17 - Last Updated Wednesday, 14 October 2015 11:33

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We've survived with generous advertising revenues, a daily radio spot on KGYM, photo sales on our popular photo gallery, and reprint rights. Now we'd like to generate some additional revenue, quite frankly, with the "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" campaign.

We don't have a television station that we can sell for \$100 million to boost the bottom line. We're the OTHER guys, although I do have an old black-and-white TV set you can have for a modest price.

Here's how our "Friends" campaign works: If you'll join for the modest amount of \$25 per year, you'll get a "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" T-shirt and our undying gratitude. You'll also have your name listed on the new "Friends" page on our website.

It's not unlike a "Friends of the Library" campaign or a "Friends of Iowa Public Television" campaign, but we are not a non-profit and your \$25 contribution is not tax-deductible.

We know from our analytics that many of you like our website. As I write this article, we've had 4,888,629 pageviews since we launched the Metro Sports Report in January of 2011 and will reach 5 million in November.

Quite frankly, I never imagined we'd be this successful and this popular. Many thanks to our readers and everybody who contributes to the operation on a daily basis.

We've thought about making the MSR a paid subscription website, but we don't like that idea for many reasons. We began as a free website and we intend to remain a free website, at least as long as I'm calling the shots.

We'd rather ask our friends to contribute \$25 on a voluntary basis, as a show of support. That comes to less than 7 cents per day to read about your favorite teams in the Metro area. I don't think that's asking too much and hope you agree.

## Please join 'Friends of Metro Sports Report.com'

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It's very easy to join the club. You can [CLICK HERE ON THIS LINK](#) and go straight to the "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" website, where you'll find all the registration information you need.

Maybe some of you have already noticed the "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" advertisement in the upper right-hand corner of the main home page. You can click on that ad and get to the "Friends" page as well. We've placed the same ad on all of our pages for your convenience.

All you have to do is fill out the registration form and mail it to me along with the \$25 check, made payable to Metro Sports Report. We'll add your name to the "Friends" page and make arrangements to get you the T-shirt.

Also, you can always call me at (319) 390-4236 to sign up or send me an e-mail at [Jim.Ecker@MetroSportsReport.com](mailto:Jim.Ecker@MetroSportsReport.com) if you'd rather do it that way.

We've always listed my contact information on the main home page for all to see. You have to admit, it's rare for a company president to provide direct contact information like that, but we've always wanted to make it easy for people to get in touch.

And if you'd like, please say hello when you see me at a local sports event and make arrangements to join the club.

Many of you know that we began the MSR website in January of 2011 by covering the seven major high schools in the Metro area with stories about Jefferson, Kennedy, Linn-Mar, Marion, Prairie, Washington and Xavier. Then we added Cedar Valley Christian when the Huskies joined the IHSA and IGHSAA governing bodies.

Since then we've added extensive coverage of Kirkwood, Coe and Mount Mercy to bring the three local colleges into our format. And we also cover the Cedar Rapids Kernels and RoughRiders.

It's a lot of work for a small staff and keeps us hustling, but it's been great fun and we've met a lot of terrific people.

We try not to brag a whole lot, but I'm very proud of our efforts. We break our share of important stories and cover as much as we possible can on a daily basis.

Our main goal is to shine a positive light on the local teams, but we don't shy away from tough stories.

We broke the story this season about Nick Perkins being fired as an assistant football coach at Marion High School and head coach Tony Perkins being suspended for one game, just as we broke a string of stories about the problems Tony Lombardi had when he was the football coach at Washington.

We don't go looking for those stories, but we don't run away and hide either.

We were the only print journalists who covered the Kernels in their playoff games at West Michigan in the final round of the Midwest League playoffs this year. We are the guys who broke the story last week about Mount Mercy basketball coach Paul Gavin being a finalist for the athletic director's job at his school.

We broke the stories about Amanda Ollinger and Jared Printy transferring to Linn-Mar High School. We're the guys who run stories about Metro athletes committing to colleges, and not just the ones who are going to a Division I school. We write about all the athletes who commit to junior colleges, D2 schools, D3 schools and NAIA schools.

We had the story about the Bach siblings - Maddie and Myles - who have enjoyed great success with the Marion cross country teams this fall. We had a reporter in Epworth last Friday night when Xavier football coach Duane Schulte won the 150th game of his career. We had the most extensive report from Prairie High School Friday night when Jalen Rima, their star player,

suffered a knee injury.

We had the story about the Kennedy girls swim team winning the championship at the Cedar Falls Invitational on Saturday. We're telling you how Coe sophomore Brady Anderson, a Linn-Mar grad, is doing at the ITA regional tennis tournament in Minnesota. We have the story on our website right now about how three former Kernels are doing with the Minnesota Twins, thanks to Steve Buhr's reporting from Target Field in Minneapolis.

And it's not just our stories. Margaret O'Banion and Ken Gilchrist, our two primary photographers, have covered hundreds and hundreds of sports events, bringing you terrific action and reaction pictures from those venues. In addition, Margaret has done tremendous work with our Photo Gallery, which is her baby.

OK, that's enough bragging for now. We just enjoyed our best month of 2015 with 99,785 pageviews in September, so we know you're paying attention and coming back to the website on a regular basis.

We greatly appreciate all of our readers. Now we'd like to officially make you one of our special friends.

Please join the "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" and lend a hand.

Thanks very much.