

Welcome to our world at Metro Sports Report

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 03 January 2011 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 13 March 2016 08:09



Let me tell you about Mike Koolbeck, my partner with the Metro Sports Report. He knows a lot about sports. In fact, he's kind of a sports nut (in a good way).

I was writing a story the other day about Washington senior Ashley Piper signing to play basketball with Colorado Christian University, a Division II school that competes in the Rocky Mountain Conference, and just for fun challenged Mike to name the schools in that rather obscure league. I figured he'd whiff, but he pretty much nailed it, although I think he missed Colorado State-Pueblo.

This tells you two things. First of all, Mike really does know a lot about sports (some of it useful). And secondly, we care that Ashley Piper is going to play basketball at Colorado Christian.

Ashley cares, her family cares, her teammates care, her coaches care, her teachers care, her friends care, some of her neighbors probably care, and we care. We'll write stories about Ashley Piper signing with Colorado Christian, just like we wrote a story about Kennedy senior Olivia Meier signing with Upper Iowa.

Everybody had stories about Kiah Stokes signing with UCONN, Jarrod Uthoff signing with Wisconsin and Josh Oglesby signing with Iowa, and so did we. But we've also had stories about Ashley Piper, Olivia Meier and all the local baseball players who signed with Southeastern Community College.

If you followed us during our temporary home at wordpress this past fall and early winter, you

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know we've had lots of stories about all the terrific basketball players in the Metro area. But you also know we've had stories about all seven wrestling teams, all four boys swimming teams and all 14 bowling teams.

Our slogan is "Just For You," and we mean it. The Metro Sports Report is just for you. It's for all seven high schools in the Metro area, and it's for all 21 varsity sports ... winter, spring, summer and fall.

We'll have game stories, features, columns, stats, standings, schedules, breaking news and pictures. We'll cover football and tennis, basketball and cross country, baseball and golf. You name it.

You've already found us at www.MetroSportsReport.com , so welcome aboard. Stick around and take a tour. Kick the tires. Look under the hood. Give your mouse a workout.

You'll find an interesting column on this page by former Gazette sports editor Mark Dukes, who's one of our top writers. You'll also see an article by Koolbeck, but let's hope it's not a recitation of all 14 teams in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

You'll find all kinds of stories on the home page as time goes by. We'll try to keep you guessing, entertained and informed.

Now, look across the top of the home page. You'll see all seven of the Metro schools listed in alphabetical order, from left to right: Jefferson, Kennedy, Linn-Mar, Marion, Prairie, Washington and Xavier.

(Sorry, Saints. Somebody had to be last, but don't blame us. You picked a school that starts with 'X').

Now, click on your favorite school at the top of the page. That takes you to the school's home

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page, where you'll find stories that are specifically about that school, regardless of sport or topic.

Now click on the drop-down box on the school home page that says "Select a Team." All 21 varsity sports will appear, so you click on the one you want. That gets you to the team page, which is devoted to that particular team. It could be Washington swimming, or Prairie cross country, or Marion soccer. It doesn't matter, it's all there (or will be soon).

So that's how it works. You type in www.MetroSportsReport.com to get to the web site, although smart people say you don't need the "www" part anymore. And personally, I like using capital letters in MetroSportsReport because it's easier to read, but I digress.

Anyway, you type in www.MetroSportsReport.com to find us, then click on your favorite school, then click on your favorite team. We made it easy enough for yours truly to use, so it should be easy for everyone.

By the way, you won't find anything about Kennedy baseball right now. The Cougars won the Class 4A state title last summer, but we're not ready to write about baseball yet. Or softball or golf. It's coming, so please be patient.

We're starting today with the 39 winter sports teams at our seven schools. Quite frankly, that's enough for the time being. We'll introduce the spring sports in March, we'll add the summer sports in May and we'll give you the fall sports in August. It will take about eight months to write about all 142 teams in the Metro area, but we'll get there.

This has been an extraordinary project for our staff. It began with a fairly simple idea last July and has grown into a full-fledged website with twitter, facebook, hyperlinks and a whole bunch of stuff that didn't exist a few years ago. Amazing.

Here's another amazing part: All the truly gifted and talented people who have agreed to work with us, many of them with familiar names from their days at The Gazette like Ecker, Dukes, Koolbeck, Tom Fruehling and Mike Deupree.

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And just wait until you read the story Sher Jasperse wrote about Washington basketball star Tia Dawson, which you'll find on the Washington girls basketball page. Sher is an extremely talented writer and editor who knows how to string a few words together.

Fruehling has an interesting piece today on Washington basketball star Wes Washpun, who is making the grade in more ways than one. Deupree turned in terrific pieces on the facilities projects at Linn-Mar and Prairie, and just wait until you see that picture of the new football stadium at Linn-Mar.

Many of you remember Carl Gonder from his days as an outstanding basketball player at Washington, but Carl also is a talented writer and a member of our team. So are Randy Krejci, Don Taylor, Jake Koolbeck, Lucas Ptacek and Chris Lembeck, a former All-American wrestler at the University of Northern Iowa.

We went to wrestling practice at Kennedy one day to conduct interviews, and Becky Baskerville (one of the wrestling moms) introduced herself and volunteered to take pictures for us. She's really good, and you might have seen her shot of Kennedy freshman Nathan Waterhouse setting a school record with a seven-second pin this season.

We went to one of Kennedy's wrestling meets and Heather Feuerhelm (another mom) introduced herself and volunteered to write stories. She's really good, too, and a member of the team.

We've got the venerable Bob Brooks, still the hardest-working journalist in town, writing a weekly column. We've also got Scott Unash, the prize-winning sports director at KGYM. You'll see their work on page one, sharing space with Dukes.

We have talented college students as well from the University of Iowa and Mount Mercy University, and we've got well-placed stringers in Iowa City, Dubuque, Waterloo, the Quad Cities and even Muscatine.

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Ken Gilchrist, a superb photographer for the Marion Times, will be shooting for us. So will Carlin Stover, a talented young photographer.

We have an excellent advertising sales staff, led by Carl Whiting and Karen Woods, and a superb group of website administrators who are responsible for putting the pieces of this puzzle together.

And if you ever need someone to build a website from scratch, I strongly encourage you to call Eric Wylie from Wylie Creative Communications. He's aces.

We think we have an attractive product, one that will give people what they want. Best of all, it's free. We don't charge a cent, although we'd sure like to sell a few more ads and find more sponsors for your favorite teams. Click on the "sponsors" link and check it out. You can sponsor a team for \$10 a year, although you certainly don't have to.

It should be easy to contact us with questions, comments and helpful hints. Go to the top of the home page and look for MSR (located to the right of all the school names); click on MSR and you'll find our contact information.

Do us a favor. Spend a few bucks with our advertisers. Tell them you saw their ad on our web site. That will help.

One final thing: We're not going to be perfect. We'll make a few mistakes, miss a few stories, spell somebody's name wrong. But we'll keep hustling, and keep trying to improve.

Thanks for listening.