

The web is world wide

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 05 January 2011 20:54 - Last Updated Saturday, 08 January 2011 00:46



The Metro Sports Report has gone international!

According to Google Analytics, a reader in Shinjuku, Japan spent 13 minutes and 41 seconds on the Metro Sports Report website this week and visited 18 different pages. Somebody in Agana, Guam toured six pages on his or her visit.

We launched the new MSR on Monday, so it didn't take long for the word to spread a long, long way (or a short way in cyberspace).

Somebody from Canada clicked the website, but stayed for only a few seconds. Maybe they pushed a wrong button.

We've had visitors from 28 states and the District of Columbia. We've had 27 visitors from New York (thank-you, sisters), 19 from California (no direct relatives there), 13 from Florida, four from Texas and 834 from Iowa.

We had 5,809 total page views through Tuesday, which sure sounds like a lot in two days. And we're just getting started.

We may have created a monster here. A good monster, with a ravenous appetite for news about the seven high schools in the Cedar Rapids/Marion Metroplex.

We thought we had a good idea with the Metro Sports Report, but we may have underestimated the impact. We knew there would be grandparents in Arizona who'd use the website to keep track of their grandkids in Iowa, but Japan? If you're reading, drop us a note from Shinjuku.

Speaking of notes, some of you have wondered if we're going to install a "comments" section at the bottom of stories. The answer is yes, we will, but we have to be careful. We have to make sure all comments are monitored and approved before they are posted, to keep inappropriate remarks off the pages.

If you'd like to comment on a story or the website, just send us an e-mail and let us know. My address is Jim.Ecker@MetroSportsReport.com . I'll compile a sampling and write a column in the next few days. And feel free to be critical or offer suggestions. We can take it.

We passed a big test Tuesday with the first busy night since we officially launched. There were 20 Metro events Tuesday night, including 14 basketball games, four swimming meets and two bowling meets. We promised to deliver news about all 20 ... and we did!

We covered 10 of those basketball games with our own writers and correspondents, and we also covered one swimming meet. In addition, we had photographers (staff and volunteers) at six events, clicking away at the action.

Meanwhile, MSR vice president Mike Koolbeck directed the night crew with incredible skill and patience. Almost all of the stories and pictures arrived in our files during a hectic two-hour period from 10 p.m. to midnight, which created an incredible amount of material to process in a short period of time.

Mike was ably assisted by Scott Flaherty and Michael Zogg, two gifted college students who have joined the staff. Scott is working on a degree at Iowa, while Michael is working for us as an intern on loan from Iowa State. Both of them have worked for their college newspapers and are welcome additions.

Koolbeck, Flaherty and Zogg put all the pages together Tuesday night, working with a brand-new website and new computer technology. They pulled it off, with just a few minor glitches. Somehow, one of the stories escaped its border, ran underneath an ad and spilled into the right-hand margin.

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Good one, guys. You can stop with the practical jokes now.

Please don't tell anyone, but working for the Metro Sports Report is outrageously good fun.

Sayanora.