HED: Turning a hobby into a career: Sport media members explain

DEK: Three sport media members on why they chose the industry

Slug: turningahobbyintoacareer

BYLINE: Joseph Casciaro

Many young kids dream of one day winning a Stanley Cup, World Series or other pro-sports titles. Unfortunately, these dreams only come true for a select few. But for those who love sports so much that they look beyond athletics to get their foot in the door, success can be more attainable.

Noor Zainab is the host of the popular basketball podcast <a href="<https://twitter.com/dishesdimespod>" target="\_blank"><i>[*Dishes and Dimes*](https://twitter.com/dishesdimespod)</i></a>. For her, the love of sport started at a young age.

“Since I was born, like out of the womb, my parents put me in front of the TV and my dad was a huge wrestling fan. So I always grew up in a competitive sporty environment,” she said.

Though sports was a key part of her upbringing, Zainab never considered working in sports media until she made some new friends through Twitter earlier this year.

“We just created a podcast out of this Twitter platform. I didn't realize that this was something that I wanted to do or I was even good at or I could even pursue in any way,” she said. “But the fact that I'm here now and that door's been opened, it's not only a privilege, but it's one of the best things that could have happened in the pandemic.”

<p class="pq">“Now that I have this platform and I have been given a seat at the table, I'm looking to see that there are a lot of empty seats that could also be taken by women”</p>

For Zainab, <i>*Dishes and Dimes</*i> serves a greater purpose of creating space for other women that may be intimidated to get into the sports field. She said this is the most motivating part of her job and she considers her platform a privilege.

“Now that I have this platform and I have been given a seat at the table, I'm looking to see that there are a lot of empty seats that could also be taken by women,” said Zainab. “I'm seeing women really talk about what they know and they're analyzing sports, and that has been so eye-opening and inviting for people like me.”

Michael Chandler, a senior news editor at <i>*The Score</*i>*,* also grew up on sports culture. He said it isn’t surprising that he went into sports media.

“I grew up reading a lot of baseball writing from the likes of Roger Angell while devouring box scores in the newspaper pre-functional internet era, so perhaps the seed was planted long before I knew,” he said.

Chandler said he follows sports for the personalities as much as anything else, in the hopes of uplifting individual athletes’ stories. He recently covered stories about COVID-19 concerns in the NBA and player’s feelings about being left off the all-star team.

“Over time, I've become more a fan of the individual athletes than the teams,” said Chandler. “I'm interested in sharing tales of unique people with compelling stories, in particular athletes that break antiquated moulds used to define what an athlete should and should not be.”

Nick Baldwin, a mixed martial arts (MMA) editor at <i>*The Score<*/i>, is also taking a unique approach to sports media. He doesn’t describe himself as a traditional sports fan; rather, he fell in love with MMA a long time ago and has never let go.

<p class="pq">“This has gone from essentially my hobby to my job. I still love what I do, I still love writing about MMA five days a week"</p>

“Some sports fans watch everything and love it all, it consumes their whole life, I wouldn’t say that’s me,” said Baldwin, a third-year Ryerson journalism student. “I fell in love with MMA and that’s kinda where it stops. I’m not a diehard sports fan, I just really love one sport.”

Pursuing a specific sports beat has led to success for Baldwin, and is something up-and-coming journalists can look to do as they begin their careers.

“This has gone from essentially my hobby to my job. I still love what I do, I still love writing about MMA five days a week,” said Baldwin. “Just the fact that I love it, that's motivation in itself.”