

Should bloggers be allowed in the Mavs locker room ? Conceptually its not a big deal. A blogger, a beat writer, a columnists. The medium they use to deliver their content should be irrelevant. No question about it.

But then there is the question of realworld constraints. This is a picture of our [locker room](#). This is the area the media conducts their interviews post game. As it is now, between reporters, photographers (both still and video), trainers and the players, it gets pretty full.

Right now we have a situation where a blogger that works for the Dallas Morning News would like continued access to the locker room. Prior to last week, I had no idea this person's primary job at the Morning News is to blog. I hadn't seen or read it. He was just one of the 4 or 5 people from the Morning News in the locker room post game. When it was brought to my attention I immediately made it an issue. Why ?

Not because I don't want this blogger in the locker room doing interviews. What I didn't like was that the Morning News was getting a competitive advantage simply because they were the Dallas Morning News. I am of the opinion that a blogger for one of the local newspapers is no better or worse than the blogger from the local high school, from the local huge Mavs fan, from an out of town blogger. I want to treat them all the same.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough room to allow any and all bloggers in the locker room. There also are no standards that I have been able to come up with that differentiate between bloggers to the point where I should or should not credential one versus the other. My experience in reading blogs has favored bloggers not affiliated with major media companies, but that could be my unique bias.

When I told the newspaper we would no longer allow their blogger in the locker room (he would still have access to everything else), they got upset. They took the path that their live blogger was no different than a feature article written on a website. They used Marc Stein of ESPN as an example. i explained to them that Stein not only wrote primarily features on ESPN.Com, but also was a TV commentator, and those two elements of his job differentiated him from what their blogger did. Do they not know the difference between a blogger and someone who actually writes feature articles on a destination website ?

A blogger is a blogger is a blogger. If I were to ask for media credentials as a blogger on this blog, I would expect to be treated exactly the same as any other blogger. No better or worse.

Of course my "discussion" with the Morning News did not stop there. As a blogger and a sometime commentator on the newspaper business I had to share my opinion. So when presented with the following:

" Gilbert Bailon, president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, says blogging is now "part of the base job of being a beat reporter" at a newspaper. He acknowledges your need/right to control press credentials but thinks you're off base when it comes to banning bloggers from major news organizations from your locker room. He says this seems like a policy aimed at one reporter, Tim MacMahon, because he wrote something you didn't like. (Note: Bailon is editor of the editorial page at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and previously was a top editor at The Morning News.)"

My response:

"If he is correct and blogging is part of the base job of being a beat reporter, thats a sad commentary on beat reporters. They get 500 words in a story about a game or event, if readers are lucky. If there is excess time, I would imagine that time could be spent offering indepth analysis and access rather than throwing up hundred word commentary on a blog. If there isn't space in the paper, then in depth analysis that takes advantage of the minimal marginal cost of publishing feature stories, IMHO, would be a far better use of a beatwriters time and serve as a far stronger differentiation that would attract readers.

Instead , we get bloggers from mainstream media. Newspaper blogging is probably the worst marketing and branding move a newspaper can make. The barriers to entry for bloggers are non existent. There are no editorial standards. There are no accuracy standards. We bloggers can and do write whatever we damn well please. Historically newspapers have set some level of standards that they strived to adhere to. By taking on the branding, standard and posting habits of the blogosphere, newspapers have worked their way down to the least common demoninator of publishing in what appears to be an effort to troll for page views.

As far singling out mr MacMahon, I havent read what he has written, so that is not the case. its an issue of fairness. As a blogger, and someone very familiar with bloggers and the blogosphere, I recognize that a fair policy would apply to all bloggers. There is nothing superior about a blog produced bysomeone in the employ of The Belo Corporation. So there is no reason to give them preferential treatment. Where there is physical room to fairly credential any and all bloggers, Mr MacMahon is welcome. Where we can not accomodate all bloggers, he will be excluded."

So post my little newspaper rant, it comes down to something very simple. A blogger is a blogger is a blogger and there are millions of us. . The name on your check, if you get a check, is irrelevant. BlogMaverick, Belo, xyz.blogger.com, we is what we is, and as long as there is limited space in our locker room, we is going to be outside in the Press Interview room getting comments

One last little thought. Some out there will take this as my not "liking" blogs. Ridiculous. its the exact opposite. What I don't like is unequal access. I'm all for bloggers getting the same access as mainstream media when possible. Our interview room is open to bloggers. We take interview requests from bloggers. I'm a fan of getting as much coverage as possible for the Mavs. What I'm not a fan of is major media companies throwing their weight around thinking they should be treated differently.

As has been the case since this blog started, I wont pull any punches in sharing my feelings or starting conversations about how media does its job. Its a topic I find interesting and fun. It's a reason why I enjoy HDNet so much. Expect more of it.