

Attestation of Zack Creglow, Regional Sports Director for USA TODAY Network

About five years ago, I set out to find a partner to help me create the model for high school and recruiting coverage in Gannett.

That person ended up being Matthew Bain, and I could not have found a better person to accomplish this.

Matt has revolutionized how high school and recruiting coverage – both growth areas in terms of digital viewership and subscription converters – is done not just in Iowa but throughout our entire company.

He has developed relationships with the state's top high school athletes to the point where they ask to do first-person narratives on our website to make their college announcements. Beyond his engrossing storytelling, analysis and breaking news, Matt has added a layer of watchdog reporting.

The state's top AAU basketball coach had a life sentence upheld earlier this year; Matthew Bain had broken the story of his assaults of former youth basketball players and broke major stories throughout the episode that showed the scope of the coach's abuse – 300-plus athletes – that helped inform investigators.

Within Gannett, how Matt has covered recruiting and high school sports has been developed into presentations shared throughout the company. If imitation is flattery, there's a lot of newspapers in Gannett that think highly of how Matt engages with his audience in high school sports and recruiting.

And I've so thought highly of him that I've added more to this partnership, with Matt becoming a deputy sports editor where Matt now oversees all of high school sports coverage for Gannett's numerous properties in Iowa.

Matt Bain's statement of goals

In my five-plus years with the Des Moines Register and its sister papers, I've consistently brought innovation to my beats, most notably revolutionizing the way the Register and all papers throughout the USA TODAY Network cover college sports recruiting. That work led to my promotion to deputy sports editor. In that role, I've successfully reshaped the way we cover fall high school sports, leading the newsroom in new subscription orders thanks to a focus on deep, one-of-a-kind analysis and live Friday night football coverage that isn't common at most papers. My goal for the rest of my career? Keep innovating. And that doesn't just mean finding ways to get more page views on stories. It's also finding ways to create sports content that everyone, not just sports fans, will want to read. Sports is just one of the many arenas in which journalists tell great stories.