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ENGL 203 Analysis of a Professional Football Blog

A professional football weblog (a.k.a. blog) is an online recording of football events typically posted shortly after the time of the event, intending to acquire the largest reader base possible.  Writing an effective blog requires more than just knowledge of football.  It is more than just writing an introduction, body, and conclusion like what your teachers taught you throughout your academic writing days.  It requires constant attention to everything circulating the NFL, from injury updates about Michael Vick’s ribs to Troy Polamalu’s criticisms of commissioner Roger Goodell and the NFL’s safety policy.  Thus, writing an effective blog requires constant attention to news happening about football.  Blogging about football is a competitive race to publish because readers find the first blogs available, and, if a blog isn’t organized efficiently, readers will quickly click to another blog.

Blogging connects people from around the world. For example, a woman decided to cook her way through Julia Child’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in one year and blogged about her progress. Quickly, she acquired many readers, some of whom were sending her packages of ingredients and other gifts in support of her project. She now has her own published book and a movie made after her idea.

Blogging about football allows writers to express themselves to football fans easily. Most bloggers enable a comments section somewhere for the audience to contribute and stimulate debates. Many bloggers will also lead their readers into possible comments by simply asking “what do you think?” at the end of their blog.

Effective blogs need to start with a catchy title to draw readers in. The title’s the most important part of the blog because it typically appears first in a search engine or on a website. It is also important that your first sentence be engaging. After these first two steps, you’ve generally either enticed your reader or they’ve left your page. Most effective football blogs limit their post to one message. This keeps readers in tune with what they’re reading. Many bloggers use lists and steps in their organization because readability is essential. To keep readers even more glued to the page, bloggers add exotic pictures and graphs. By analyzing two of the most prominent football bloggers of today, espn.com’s Matthew Berry and yahoo.com’s Brad Evans, we can dissect their blogs and figure out what makes them stand out from the rest.

Matthew Berry usually begins his writing with personal anecdotes and segues into the actual content with an analogous structure, relating the moral of his anecdote to the moral of the actual football content. This technique affects viewers at an emotional level, because he uses the first chunk of his blog to crack pop culture jokes and make fun of himself. Berry’s humor largely differentiates his blog from his competitors. For example, Berry’s most recent blog’s first two sentences were: “The Internet rules. Hooray, Internet.”—A pretty catchy, concise way to engage readers, but something unique to Berry’s style. He can get away with writing “hooray” without an exclamation mark or explaining himself further, because he’s accumulated a dry humor in his previous blog entries. Having gained a reputation for his humor and style from publishing blog entries since 1999 when he began writing for RotoWorld.com, he can break free from the typical writing conventions without editors bashing and bruising his work. He even refers to himself as “the Talented Mr. Roto” or “TMR”, because he’s gained enough credibility over the years that he feels he deserves another name that differentiates him from other bloggers.

Another football blogging pioneer; Brad Evans writes with explosive vigor and flamboyant humor. Also known as “The Big Noise”, he packs a punch of noisy prose that lives up to his name. He curses and slices his way into the content by name-calling, confessing “man-crushes” and slipping in pop culture references. He uses a unique writing technique to create humor from “scratching out” words, like you’d see in your rough draft, and leaves the word clearly visible for readers to get a little chuckle. Evans edgy style has separated his blogs from the rest and he continues to stand as one of yahoo sports’ most prominent bloggers.

One of the many benefits of writing blogs is that it offers more freedom than your typical academic genre. Although Matthew Berry and Brad Evans have editors, they still have nearly unlimited freedom to express their humor and personalities through their words. Editors rarely question these elite’s blogs, because they’ve acquired an enormous reader base. In other words, their writing speaks for itself—untouchable.

Some essentials to writing blogs include extensive external links, pictures, and videos. One of the ways bloggers maintain reader bases is through exposing other worthy blogs, pictures, and videos in their own posts. This offers a separate dimension from their writing alone. Many blogs start with a video, like many of barstoolsports.com’s, which might show a pretty woman as the video’s picture, tempting hormonal men to click on it. Matthew Berry likes beginning his blogs with videos of himself talking about what he’s about to write about or something similar to his topic so we get to know him on a personal basis before reading his blog. Brad Evans typically jumps right into his content with a humorous topic sentence.

“Humor is the key to writing a sweet post” insists Jeff Green in an email interview who writes about the New England Patriots. When asked how he approaches every blog entry, he replied “With audacity and eccentricity. I like to keep readers in mind, but on their toes.” Green writes for his readers with a humoristic approach about the New England Patriots.

Blogging about football requires efficiency because it is such a competitive genre of writing. Football fans propel blogs forward so constant attention to football events are essential. Crafting a personal style and referencing other works in your own blog can enhance your reader base tremendously. Blogging about football is easy: just write with your own voice, be consistent, don’t offend your readers, and be creative.