



## Three media access centers collaborate to cover state high school rugby tourney



The Oregon-Stoughton High School Rugby Club struggles for the ball in this photograph from the state tournament held in Cottage Grove.

By Paul Zwicker

This spring, the coach of the Oregon-Stoughton High School Rugby Club asked me if I could produce and televise the 2016 Wisconsin State High School Boys Rugby Championships to be held in Cottage Grove. I was happy to take on the project. After all, I was the assistant coach, I had 30+ years of video experience, and I was the new Program Manager of Oregon Cable Access (OCA Media).

First, hoping to get the largest audience possible, I researched what it would cost to have the games produced and aired by a local broadcast station. The quotes came back in the \$2,000 range. In order to afford that, I'd need underwriting. After investing some hours on the phone, I realized I wouldn't be able to come up with enough funds.

I decided to turn to my second option: cable access television. This posed a different set of challenges. I could produce and direct the games, but I would need a crew – quick. I was looking around for skilled crewmembers when I found out I had gotten a job as a live camera operator for a bicycle race in Philadelphia the same weekend as the rugby tournament!

In a bit of a pickle, I reached out to my fellow Dane County WCM member media centers for assistance and was pleasantly surprised to find them so willing to help!

So, here's how we succeeded in covering the games: Before I left town, I did as much pre-production as possible. I built a rain shelter for two high angle camera positions on a scissors lift donated by a local construction company and I cobbled together an announcer's shelter in the bleachers. Knowing that any pair of a hundred rugby cleats could cut through a power cable on the ground, we strung power overhead to a camper donated by a local rugby player to use as an operations base.

Andrew Day, WMCF McFarland's technical specialist and the part-time cable coordinator of Cottage Grove's media access center, agreed to manage and direct the production. The rest of the crew was Justin Janness, Kelly Logan, Patrick Moran, and Ryan Denzer also from WMCF, James Wyngard from Stoughton Cable Access, and Tom Kirchdoerfer from OCA Media. I went off to Philly, thrilled to have pulled it off and wondering how the collaboration would go!

Rugby teams from across the state played a full day of round-robin games. Then storm predictions put the late afternoon schedule at risk. Andrew had to have everyone in position early in case the two final games were moved up. As a result, the crew had a lot of time to rehearse shots and they were more than ready once coverage began – at its regularly scheduled time!

I made a few anxious calls from Philly at the end of my long workday, but I needn't have worried. Thanks to the amazing cooperation between OCA Media, WMCF and WSTO, and WCM's network of media access centers, residents across the state will be able to view complete, high quality coverage of the 2016 Wisconsin State High School DI & DII Rugby Championships! 📺

## Cities begin monthly show on the issues



League Executive Director Jerry Deschane talks with Errin Welty, Downtown Development Account Manager for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation on *The Local Perspective*.

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities just shot its first episode of *The Local Perspective* in cooperation with Wisconsin Community Media. Sun Prairie Media Center graciously provided its production facility for the program. Executive Director Jerry Deschane says he hopes to “open up the hood on local government and take a look at some of the inside details on how things work.” The first program discussed what every downtown needs to work well. Next month's episode of *The Local Perspective* will be about water issues facing communities. 🏠

## Significant Community Program

### Viewers Voice showcases local and national entertainers for more than 25 years

At the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Best of the Midwest Media Fest in April, WCM honored a program with a Significant Community Program award that began production more than 25 years ago in a different time. *Viewer's Voice* started out as a project of Viewer's Quality Television, an organization whose mission was to save critically acclaimed television programs from cancellation due to low ratings. It became a separate non-profit in 1992. Over the years, the show has evolved to showcasing mostly local talent and covering major events like the annual Wisconsin Area Music Industry (WAMI) awards. The future of the show is very uncertain, however, because Milwaukee's MATA Community Media is expected to close in 2017.

In the early years, *Viewers Voice* organized letter-writing campaigns to pressure broadcast networks to keep good shows on the air. *Viewer's Voice* was "bicycled" to access centers (mailed from one to another) all over the country to build interest. Founder, producer, co-host, and co-editor, Sharon Rhode says that for years she and her crew traveled to California to interview stars like Ray Romano of *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and Sharon Gless and Tyne Daly of *Cagney and Lacey* (the first cop show to feature two strong women leads and their complicated personal lives). "The networks were more than happy to let us on the sets," Sharon said. "We never had any problem getting permission." Rhode credits *Viewer's Voice* as being instrumental in saving *Party of Five*, a TV show about five siblings' lives after the loss of their parents, in 1996.

As times changed, the focus of the show shifted to covering the entertainment industry closer to home. Her long-time crew (her

husband, Jim, camera; Murray Pyant, director and editor; Marc Ferch, audio; Rollie Krieger, camera; Barbara Wagner and later Cindy Huber, co-hosts) now regularly covers the entertainment at the Wisconsin State Fair and the annual WAMI awards.

Over the years, you may have seen performances and interviews with stars like Glen Campbell and Billy Ray Cyrus, but you would have also seen upcoming homegrown talent like Hannah Mrozak, an *American Idol* contestant, Nora Collins, who won the WAMI "Rising Star" awards in 2012 and



Sharon Rhode interviews Barbara Walters.

2013, and the Burie Family, a singing group composed of two brothers and two sisters from Milwaukee that Rhode has been following for eight years – ever since the youngest was eight.

Rhode began producing the first of 450 *Viewer's Voice* programs at the West Allis Community Media Center, but when WACMC lost its funding in 2011 (due to 2007 Act 42 that outlawed PEG fees), she began producing the program through MATA Community Media in Milwaukee. Now MATA will run out of funds in 2017 due to the same law that closed WACMC. "I'm worried," Rhode said. "Where else can a person do something like this? Taking local access away from people – it's a tragedy." 📺

### UW-Whitewater broadcast students learn football and the craft of live television production

September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> will be a busy weekend at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup>, is officially "Move In Day" for the nearly 4,000 students who live on campus. One day earlier, however, a different form of excitement will be in the air. It's the home opener for the six-time national champion UW-Whitewater Warhawks football team.

At 11:00 a.m., while the athletes strap up for opening day and tailgaters gambol from the parking lots to fantastic Perkins Stadium, the UWW-TV student crew will be there, too, with *Warhawk Sports Saturday*. This live one-hour pre-game show is televised on the campus cable access TV channel and streamed at [uwwtv.org](http://uwwtv.org).

This will be the fifth season of UWW-TV's signature sports program, although live sporting events have been produced since the early 1980s.

The crew consists of students majoring in Electronic Media and Broadcast Journalism. Director of UWW-TV Jim Mead and UWW-TV Program Director Eric Stelter are on site for every broadcast, but the production is in the hands of students looking to develop their skills in a live television environment.

The pre-game show includes analysis and commentary from a sports announcing duo that spends numerous hours prepping the week before the game. The student crew also includes a

field reporter, four camera operators, a director, a technical director, replay and graphics operators, and an audio technician...all who work each season's home field pre-game show and the game itself in rain, shine, snow or freezing cold.

By the end of a typical broadcast, the entire crew has put in an eight-hour day, which also includes production of a live halftime show and post-game interview with Warhawk Head Football Coach Kevin Bullis.



Pregame with Connor Moore and Adam Reed.

All the hard work students have been putting into producing *Warhawk Sports Saturday* has paid off in recent years. Award recognition has come from both Wisconsin Community

Media's "Best of the Midwest Media Fest" and the Wisconsin Broadcaster's Association

Student Award Presentations. The biggest honor the students receive, however, is when supporters from the opposing team take the time to contact them via the stream site or email and tell them what a great job they do.

The broadcast students at UW-Whitewater are an enthusiastic and hard-working bunch. Whether the Warhawks emerge victorious or not on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the crew is already a winner. 📺

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