



## Memorandum

**To:** University of Michigan Students Interested in Gaining Hands-on Journalistic Experience

**From:** Joey Goodsir, Student, University of Michigan

**Subject:** Sportswriting at *The Michigan Daily*: Process, Benefits, and Opportunities

**Date:** May 30, 2021

### Purpose

The following informative report contains details on the process of becoming a Daily Sports Writer at *The Michigan Daily*, as well as what the role entails. It is intended for students who are interested in exploring the field of Journalism, but do not know where to begin since the University of Michigan does not have a school/major associated with the profession. The report highlights benefits and career opportunities the role can spark, both during and after a student's time at the university.

### Background

*The Michigan Daily* is a 130-year old news outlet that serves the communities of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and greater Washtenaw County. The *Daily* delivers information across a variety of platforms – including online, podcasts, video, graphics, and social media – but it is also the only newspaper in the county that prints Monday-Friday (*The Michigan Daily*, 2021). It is independently student-run by over 400 staff members spanning a business team and 14 sections, including Sports – which is responsible for covering all 27 varsity teams at Michigan.

## Process

Each section has their own process for becoming a part of their staff, but the most appealing aspect of becoming a member of the Sports section is that it is “super easy” to get involved (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021), with no past experience required and no formal application involved: “if you want to write, you can write,” (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020). Instead, the section takes a training-based approach to assimilate new writers into the section.

### *Introduce Yourself*

Although this first step can be completed in a slight variety of ways, the intentions are all the same: to express your interest in covering sports to the *Daily*, so managing editors can get you started. The easiest way to contact the section is by visiting [join.michigandaily.com](http://join.michigandaily.com), which is the “Join Us” page that can be located on the news site itself. Upon visiting that page, check to see if the “apply” button under the Daily Sports Writer page is active (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020). If so, fill out the linked Google Form with your contact information and select “Sports” to express interest – this will put your email address on a list that will be contacted about the next mass meeting, in which you can be formally introduced to the *Daily* and its leadership. If the button is not active, do not worry! You can still express interest to get involved by reaching out to the managing sports editors (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021), currently Lane Kizziah [[lkizziah@umich.edu](mailto:lkizziah@umich.edu)] and Kent Schwartz [[kentsch@umich.edu](mailto:kentsch@umich.edu)], or the section contact itself [[sports@michigandaily.com](mailto:sports@michigandaily.com)] (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020).

### *Attend a Section Meeting*

The section meets on Sundays to discuss weekly announcements, plan the week’s coverage, and otherwise familiarize yourself with the section. Upon completion of the first step, you will be on the sports email list and will begin receiving section correspondence – including

details on the weekly meeting. Upon your attendance to a sports meeting, you will be well on your way to becoming an official staff member (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020).

### *Shadow an Experienced Writer*

This is the most substantial step. While new writers can immediately begin working on feature stories, they cannot participate in game coverage until they shadow a more experienced writer. This entails going to a sporting event with the writer and seeing how a game story is reported, written, and published on a given day – as well as gaining exposure to valuable resources such as the section’s drive folder that can provide more in-depth assistance. Additionally, shadowing prospective writers have to complete a mock story – a practice run that gives the editors insight into how you would have reported the story on your own (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021). This allows for editors to gain insight into what you already know and still need to learn about Journalistic writing.

### *Write!*

Upon completion of your mock story, you can begin completing your first stories as a new writer for the *Daily*. Once you have written five trial stories (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021), you officially begin your role as a Daily Sports Writer (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020).

## **Responsibilities**

Beyond the reporting and writing itself, Daily Sports Writers have a few other responsibilities. First and foremost, writers are required to present all of their stories through the production process in order for them to be published. Beginning at 6pm (with some exceptions for bigger flash game articles), stories go through a first and second round of edits with section editors before the managing sports editors perform the last full round of edits. Upon final approval from either the Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor (*The Michigan Daily*, 2021), the story is ready to be published for the next day. While production takes place

Sunday-Thursday, an individual writer is only required to be present for the days in which they have stories.

Outside of the sports meetings (*The Michigan Daily*, 2020), there are some rare occasions of required daily-wide information sessions regarding an orientation of Daily policies and ethics (in the first semester on the job), as well as some training sessions that the executive board (known as MDesk) may deem necessary.

## Benefits

**DAILY SPORTSWRITING PERKS**

Benefits of joining the Sports section at *The Michigan Daily*

**PRESTIGE AND NOTABLE ALUMNI**

From ESPN's Adam Schefter to NFL Network's Rich Eisen and a professional network that spans industries, there are few more resourceful networks than the student-run sports section that has served U of M for over 180 years.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

With tangibly-published work and workshops for resume building, *The Daily* is one of the most impressionable organizations on campus to help construct a career.

**PAID**

While often seen as an extracurricular, sportswriting for the *Daily* is a JOB with thousands of scholarship dollars offered, in addition to a per-piece pay/salary.

**COMMUNITY**

The *Daily* doubles as a core facet of the college experience, with supportive section-members and welcoming staff events.

BY JOEY GOODSR  
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**A**  
SPORTS

With alumni serving big-time publications (NBC News, CBS, Wall Street Journal) and as well-known figures across industries (Sanjay Gupta, Arthur Miller, Mara Gay) including sports (Wikimedia, 2021). The established prestige is coupled with resume-heightening development opportunities – from alumni panels, to internship databases and hands-on published work you can always point to (*The Michigan Daily*, 2021).

Being a Daily Sports Writer is a paid job for a company you can put on your resume, with varying pay-per-piece roles and salaries available. The publication also offers tens of thousands in scholarship money every year (*The Michigan Daily*, 2021). Furthermore, even when the role can become a more daunting commitment, it is “still manageable to balance everything” (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021).

Perhaps the most notable incentive to become a Daily Sports Writer are relationships that can be built among staff. This includes editors and leadership that seek not to hijack, but to enhance your work (Personal Interaction, May 29, 2021), as well as bonding events and mutual experiences within and between sections.

## Interview

Interviewer: Joey Goodsir

Interviewee: Josh Taubman, Summer Managing Sports Editor – *The Michigan Daily*

Date: May 29, 2021

Location: Zoom

### 1. How did you first hear about the Daily?

*First semester of freshman year I wasn't really doing any clubs or anything, so going into second semester I knew I wanted to join some more stuff. I knew some people who were on other sections of the Daily, and so they helped put me in contact with the MSEs who were Ethan [Sears] and Theo [Mackie] at the time. I just reached out to them and it's super easy to get involved, and I just went to one of the first meetings, winter semester, and then just started picking up articles and writing stories. And I really liked being involved and being able to cover all the different sports, so I just ran with it.*

### 2. What was the process like for you in becoming involved?

*So, the first story that I shadowed was a track and field story, which both Spencer [Raines] and Nick [Stoll] were covering. They seemed cool and they seemed to be about my age, which made things easy because there's a lot of older guys who were very intimidating, so I decided to hop on that one. I shadowed that, and it was cool. At that event they had all this food laid out for the press, which I thought was super cool at the time, and I misattributed that they would have that available at every Michigan sporting event. I shadowed that, wrote a mock story, and then from there it was writing five trial stories – so I was just trying to do as many as many different types of sports I could do. I did tennis, women's lacrosse, and water polo. Actually only by my second or third story (I wasn't even a full Daily Sports Writer), they were like "we're gonna have someone shadow you now" and I was like "I don't know if I'm really ready for that," but I just went with it. So, then I got to be a Daily Sports Writer, and then basically right when I got that was when COVID hit, and all the sports stopped, but then this past fall I became a hockey beat reporter, so that was about it.*

**3. What are the biggest benefits you feel like potential members should know about?**

*I think the biggest benefits are that the editing team is really there to help you. They make you a better reporter, a better writer. The biggest thing is that I've never felt like they take my story and try to be like "oh no, this is how I would do it" and just basically make it like they're writing the story – I always feel like it's my voice coming through and they're just helping me enhance it. I don't feel like you get that with every newspaper you might be involved in, so I think that's what's really special.*

**4. What sparked your interest in more of a leadership role? How has that served your experience?**

*As I've gotten more involved with the Daily, you can kind of see how important the editing team is to the sports section as a whole. I knew I was interested in becoming a full time editor, which I'll start in the fall. I also felt like being the managing editor for the summer was a good way to get some experience and maybe a more low key setting even though it's proven to not exactly be low key when there's still baseball and softball going on. I just think it's really cool to kind of see the other side of it and now it's like, sort of the advice that I've been given from all the great editors we've already had and be able to now pass that on to some of the newer writers, I think it is a really cool opportunity for sure.*

**5. Obviously being a sportswriter involves taking on responsibilities. Did you ever have a challenge balancing your Daily obligations with other things in your life?**

*I will say that I can't speak for other sections, but when you're just on the sports section it's a super easy commitment because you can basically just pick and choose when you want to pick up stories and there's never any pressure to write. When you're on a beat, which I did this past year, there's an expectation to write a story every week. And in addition to covering the games you end up covering, and there were some weeks where I knew I had a big essay due that week or a big midterm to study for that I also had to fill my beat obligation and write a story, but I usually had an idea of what story I was going to write going into the week anyway. I usually had some quotes, ahead of time it's like I knew I was gonna be in a situation like that so it can be a little tough sometimes, but I thought even when being on a beat it was still manageable to balance everything.*

## 6. What have been your single most notable experiences involving the Daily?

*I mean, this past year with COVID and no fans being at games, being able to go to the hockey games in person was really cool because no one was there basically – so just to know that being one of the only people in the building to see the team live, and the fact that the Daily was the one providing that opportunity I think is super cool. I would also say the road trip I took to North Dakota, also thanks to the Daily. We obviously didn't end up covering a game, but the road trip itself was so cool because the people are really what makes the Daily, and this year that community aspect has kind of been lost a little bit, so I think like any chance to do stuff in person with them was really special.*

## References

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## Email Correspondence

### Daily Sportwriting Interview



Joey Goodsir <jgoodsir@umich.edu>

to Joshua ▾

1:47 PM (0 minutes ago)



Dear Josh,

Hope your weekend is going well. I just wanted to reach out and thank you for taking the time out of your day yesterday for our Zoom interview. I gained a lot of insight about how you became involved in covering sports at *The Michigan Daily*, as well as the benefits you've gotten from the experience. I will let you know if I have any further questions!

Best,  
Joey