

TEAMtalk media provides opportunities in sports journalism

A career in sport is often thought of as on the pitch, but sports media is a prime space for young sports enthusiasts to channel their passion and earn a decent income to boot.



Mfundo Feke, Jonhenry Wilson and Siyasanga Cekiso

Sport may begin on the pitch, the tennis court or in the pool, but as Mfundo Feke and Siyasanga Cekiso (TEAMtalk media's first sports academy recruits) will attest, there's a vast array of career prospects awaiting young South Africans in the field.

This year's TEAMtalk media Online Sports Journalism Academy beta programme was run in collaboration with the Western Cape government and Deloitte, and covered a six-month period during which these two candidates received hands-on training in various aspects of online journalism, specifically relating to sports data analysis.

Here, Mfundo and Siyasanga share their experience.

Sport as a metaphor

For Mfundo, sport has provided a constant in his life, getting him through the good and the bad. Sport is a metaphor for how he conducts his own life, using the same approach as one would in a match to overcome life's hurdles and always aspiring for the highs even when life is at its lowest.

As an inaugural cadet in TEAMtalk media's Online Journalism and Sports Data Analysis Academy, he is excited about the opportunities that have opened up for him and others like him. He says, "Having the skills to be able to take what's happening on the ground and convey this to the people who want to know, counts for points. The people want to know how many goals Tshabalala has scored this season, or how many tackles he has made. That's where my colleagues and I come in."

"It's more off the field"

Siyasanga joins Mfundo in now being able to realise his dream of a career in sports and providing for his family. An avid tennis player in high school, but not having the means to go further with this as a potential career, he has now channeled his passion and energy into sport content creation. This will give him access to more sports and through TEAMtalk's Academy he has already demonstrated a flair for collating statistics, managing picture galleries and being a helpful assistant to a host of full-time writers. He manages to stay close to the action even while travelling to the CBD each day and is happy to share with his fellow passengers and colleagues. Isn't that what it's all about?

"It's good that I stay in contact with the sport by getting to write about it a bit and cover that statistical side of it. This is something I'm very proud of," Siyasanga shares. "There is so much truth in the fact that sport unites and sport empowers. This isn't just on the field. In fact, it's more off the field. You will find far more guys in and around the sport - rather than on the field professionally. Honestly, I'd rather be doing this than much else," he says.

The unifying nature of sport was recently echoed by former Proteas captain Graeme Smith, who remarked: "The future of sports lies in the people involved, and the discussion surrounding it - it keeps it alive and growing."

Jonhenry Wilson, who is the chief mentor of the Academy at TEAMtalk media, concluded: "There is a growing and eager audience for what happens on the field and what happens off it, and the 'sports lovers' dotted around the country - eager to fashion a career in sport, in front of a keyboard or behind the camera - often embody the sentiments valued by Smith and company." "At the Academy, we give everyone the opportunity to acquire skills that can help them further their aims, and by extension we are helping to grow a new generation of sports reporters."

Due to the success of the beta programme, the company intends to expand the Academy intake and curriculum in 2015.

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