

Video editors: the unsung heroes of sports on television

A look into what video editors do behind the scenes, and why they deserve more credit from sports fans

By Julius Hern

TORONTO-A sports fan will encounter this scenario often: the game's on but they're unable to watch it. Fans who can't possibly follow or watch every game daily rely on highlight packages and videos to catch them up on what they missed. Video editors make this possible and do it relatively unnoticed.

Joe Bacanovic is video editor 1 at Sportsnet in Toronto. His job is to put together highlight packages for YouTube, *Sportsnet Central*, and *Blue Jays Central*, as well as condensing Toronto Blue Jays games for *Blue Jays in 30*.

"I often compare my job to fast food," Bacanovic said. "We have to get our work done well, but in a timely manner. We then move on to the next project. This goes on all night."

He describes his position as very dependent on his colleagues and the material he's given. Editors are only given limited visuals, and if a game isn't particularly good, there's not a lot to work with. Very often, he's not allotted much time to put out something great.

A lot of the editing work happens during events. For example, Bacanovic says for a Blue Jays game, he'll slowly start building the highlight package during the third or fourth inning. For hockey, this process will usually start just after the first period.

Bacanovic says the senior broadcast advisor and the associate producer are most important to his success because they are the ones who essentially script out what needs to be included in a specific highlight package or story.

On highlight edits, Bacanovic doesn't necessarily get to put the package together as he sees fit. He must follow a loose guideline set by the senior broadcast advisor or associate producer, who then ultimately determines what the final product looks like visually.

"With highlights, you're kind of being told [what to do]," Bacanovic said. "You may not agree with it... It kind of sucks because you feel like you get really invested in the project, but someone else has a different vision of what you guys did."

However, in montages, like on *Blue Jays Central*, for example, there's a lot more opportunity for him to put his imagination to work.

"When you're doing one of those sound-on-tapes or montages, you have a lot of creative freedom to do your own thing, within reason," said Bacanovic.

When fans search for highlights on YouTube, they may find that Sportsnet has its own separate videos for NHL games and Blue Jays games. Bacanovic explained the reason for this is, is so Rogers doesn't have to pay the NHL or MLB to edit the highlights for them. Sportsnet will edit them with their own staff to avoid the extra cost.

Another reason for this is that Sportsnet is the national broadcast rightsholder for the NHL, as well as the regional broadcast rightsholder for the Blue Jays, and four Canadian NHL teams (Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Vancouver).

Bacanovic says his work schedule usually consists of 11-hour shifts for five straight days. Because of this, along with the long commute to and from Hamilton and Toronto and his family responsibilities, he doesn't have the opportunity to outsource his skills on the side for independent projects.

He considers himself a big sports fan, but the intensity and repetitiveness of his job have made him lose interest in watching hockey casually. However, he still enjoys baseball and football, but now also has more appreciation for less popular sports like curling, which he doesn't have to work on as often.

Bacanovic, a Loyalist College alumnus, began his career in television in master control but he progressed into video editing on a whim. He started his editing work at TheScore, and now works for Sportsnet after Score Media's television assets were acquired by Rogers in 2012, and then fully rebranded as a Sportsnet channel in 2013.

He recommends anyone looking to enter the sports media field consider volunteering for local broadcast organizations and looking into options for specific post-secondary education options such as the College of Sports Media in Toronto which concentrate on the sports media field.

"You need to get yourself out there, even [if] you are in school," Bacanovic says. "Constantly work on connections and even on your craft. It is hard to get ahead with on-screen talent. There are only so many positions. Even start small. Smaller stations, sports leagues... just work on your craft. You won't be on TSN or Sportsnet right away. Gotta work your way up."