

Sports Journalism Skill Module

The Post-Game Story

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand the conventions and expectations of the post-game story
- Use your understanding of post-game stories to analyze the significance of games and matches

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – The Post-Game Story: What’s Next?

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce the Post-Game Story: The purpose of the post-game story is to analyze a recent game’s impact on athletes, coaches, and fans. A post-game story will begin by reminding readers of the recent game’s outcome. But from there it will look to the future, and discuss how people are integrating the experience of the game into their preparation for the next contest.

2. Teach the Post-Game Story:

- Tell the students that post-game stories address several topics. Some of the main ones are:
 1. *Preparation.* How is a team preparing for the next game? What adjustments and changes in training and strategy are being made, based upon recent performance?
 2. *Injuries and Personnel Changes.* Who was hurt, and how will these injuries affect the team? Who has performed better than expected? What changes in playing time are anticipated in the next game?
 3. *Ongoing Team Issues.* Going into the game, did the team have questions about certain players or strategies? Has the recent game provided answers to any of these questions?
 4. *Impact Upon Fans/Community.* How has the recent game affected the people who follow the team, the families of team members, area businesses, or the community at large?
 5. *What’s Next?* What is the next challenge faced by the team? Has the recent game made a difference in how the rest of the season looks? Do things look better or worse? How is the team coping with the change?

EXAMPLE

Before and After

Tell the students that one of the best ways to start writing a post-game story is to look back at a preview/advance story. By looking at the issues and questions raised *before* the game, you can see if the recent game has provided any answers.

For this exercise, copy and hand out 1) a copy of a preview story about an upcoming game, and 2) a game story for the same game.

Have the students read both stories. When they are done, compare and contrast the two stories. Ask: did the game address any of the issues raised in the pre-game story? On the board, make a list of topics that could go into a post-game story.

- Tell the students that post-game stories can be thought of as the third phase in a three-phase

process. First, there is the preview story. Second, there is the game story. And third, there is the post-game story. The job of the post-game story is to compare the ideas that people took into the game, to the events of the game itself. The post-game story is where sportswriters get to integrate new information into their ideas about teams, athletes, and fans. To help students visualize this process, work through the following exercise. Write the table below on the board. Based upon the provided information and examples, have the students orally improvise a post-game story.

EXAMPLE

The Pregame Situation	Game Events	The Post-Game Story
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Davidson High and Sturnbridge High have a non-conference football game scheduled. 2. Davidson (1-2) is in a lower division than Sturnbridge (4-0). 3. Sturnbridge has a powerful offense, with a tailback, Sam Harris, who averages over 200 yards a game. 4. By contrast, Davidson's entire offense averages 100 yards a game. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Davidson wins, 34-7. 2. Sturnbridge tailback, Sam Harris, out of game with the flu. 3. Davidson, due to injuries, starts a third-string tailback named Joe Dawes. He scores 4 TDs, gains 235 yards rushing. 4. One of Dawes' TDs is a 99-yard run, on the first offensive play of the game. 5. Sturnbridge, behind in the game, is forced to pass. Their usually reliable quarterback, Jim Ross, is intercepted five times. 	

3. Apply the Skill: Hand out copies of the You Try It! Worksheet, "The Post-Game Story: What's Next?" After reading the directions to the class, have the students work through the exercise individually. When they are done, reconvene the class and have volunteers report on their work.

QUICK SKILLS CHECK Ask students to tell you the main functions of the post-game story, and what issues can be discussed in such a story.

YOU TRY IT!
The Post-Game Story: What's Next?

GOAL

Post-Game stories give you a chance to factor in new information, and appraise the significance of a recent athletic event. As you compete the Blue Nose Sportswriting Contest, use the form of the post-game story to highlight your powers of analysis.

DIRECTIONS

Look back at a game or match that was played at your school, in your city, or on television. As you review the game, use the following chart to organize your thinking about the impact of the game. What was revealed in the game? What adjustments do the teams and athletes need to make as they go forward?

Sports Event: _____		
Time and Place: _____		
Final Outcome: _____		
<i>What Questions and Issues Surrounded the Game Before It Was Played?</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5	<i>What Were the Key Events, Players, and Statistics from the Game?</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	<i>How Did the Events of the Game Address the Concerns People Had Before the Game? What New Issues Were Raised by the Events of the Game?</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<i>Now, Write the Opening Paragraph of Your Post-Game Story, and Outline the Rest of the Story:</i>		

Self-Check

Look back at the three-phased process of gathering information for a post-game story. Keep this process in mind as you write other post-game stories. Based upon the work you have put into this chart, do you have a good start and a good plan in mind for your post-game story?