

NAIA-ADA



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Technology, when used right, can be a sports information director's best friend. From the added capabilities of live stream to live stats, and of course, social media, the ways we can directly communicate with our fanbase dramatically improves year after year.

Perhaps our most significant and well-received improvement came this past summer with the switch to BlueFrame as our means of live streaming. The feedback received from the fans of not only our sports but our opponents as well has justified the change.

With the switch to BlueFrame, our media services team has been able to get creative with the presentation we put forth. The best example of creativity has to be the on-screen graphics the software allows us to display. What we have done thus far is just a start, as we are regularly

meeting and discussing ways to make our broadcasts better.

BlueFrame not only allows us to display a high-quality feed of the game, but it helps us promote our partners better. To say the things we have cooked up are exciting would be the understatement of the year.

Then there is our use of live stats.

Jessup decided last year to populate our live stats through our website provider, SIDEARM. SIDEARM live stats allow our fans to view real-time scores directly on our home page, and its integration with our site allows the viewer to learn more about our players as they are playing. Did we just hit a big three? Well, thanks to SIDEARM stats, you can click on his name and be taken right to his bio page, where you can learn all about your new favorite player.

And of course, no discussion of technology in athletics communication would be complete without social media. Jessup is currently active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with the latter two being our main pages of use. Social media not only allows us to get creative with our content, but it's a way to communicate with our fans in real-time directly.

Our in-game posts come from accounts for each team, allowing us to build better relationships with our fans and partners from those accounts and communicate through the voice of that program. Technology has dramatically improved the game day experience, as each game day starts with a motion graphic on social media showing one of our many student-athletes. Our use of graphics has allowed us to make our content stand out from the pack, so much so that they were voted best in the NAIA this past year.

The success of our social channels allows Jessup athletics to be a brand ambassador for the university. Whether it be to prospective students or a local business interested in partnering with us, when they see the attention to detail in our social efforts, it directly reflects on the university as a whole. Technology can be an incredible tool in driving prospective students and sources of new revenue.

At Jessup athletics, we are always looking for ways to make our product better because, with each improvement, we not only help our department's image but our university's as well. Technology has been a major asset in that, and we will continue to explore new and inventive ways to be the best of the best.

@NAIAADA

NATYCAA



Colin Preston

Cypress College
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The Silver Lining of the Pandemic ... Technology

As we entered the global pandemic, academic institutions were forced to transition to an online learning environment. Although it flipped our athletics and academic world upside down, I truly believe that we are more prepared to support students now than we were prior to the pandemic. After the initial shock of our "new" world, we have been able to structure classes in a more creative way to provide more learning options for our students. Being able to offer classes online or through a synchronous format, such as Zoom, compared to the traditional onsite classes, we quickly realized how successful these alternatives could be for students and faculty.

At California Community Colleges, there were

very few online activity courses offered throughout the state. However, the private sector was offering online fitness classes prior to the pandemic that were extremely popular. Additionally, we all witnessed the boom of at home fitness equipment, such as the Peloton, when individuals could not return to their gym and purchased individual equipment and technology. We learned that we were able to provide multiple learning environments to maximize our student experience through technology. The only issue that we are still navigating is balancing our schedules to determine the amount of onsite, online or hybrid classes for students.

Regarding academic support, institutions that were ahead of the curve with technology were more prepared to support students when the pandemic began. The pandemic forced institutions to develop more strategies and acquire new services to support their online student population. I personally feel that athletics departments were the leaders in this area since there are many more implications for academic issues for athletics programs compared to general students. Due to this fact, athletics departments utilize technology that allows them the ability to constantly track

student-athletes' progress throughout the semester to ensure athletics eligibility and success.

Another area in which athletics has led the way during the pandemic is utilizing technology during practice, competition and recruiting. Having the ability to film and breakdown every aspect of trainings and competition through virtual meetings allowed athletics programs to continue to improve without interruptions as much as possible. Even when student-athletes were not allowed to train on campus they could still use technology to send individual workouts to coaches to receive feedback. Additionally, the NCAA had a period of time when coaches could not recruit face-to-face, but with the current technology that is available to recruits, they could still be evaluated. Although all of these scenarios were not ideal for student-athletes and/or recruits, it still provided opportunities during this difficult time.

I feel that it is our obligation as athletics administrators to continue to strive to support our coaches and student-athletes no matter what obstacles we encounter. I will forever be grateful for the technology that allowed us the opportunity to support our students during this time, it truly was a silver lining.

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