

SB Nation Blogger Best Practices

The following are general guidelines for writing for an SB Nation site. These are very general and do not go into much detail. If you're looking for more detail, see our blogger intranet, which has best practices documents and much more detail than is listed here. As always, if you ever have questions, ask your league manager, Tyler Bleszinski (blez@sbnation.com) or any of the other contacts within the company listed below.

1. This one is the biggest and most important of all our rules. No racism, homophobia, sexism or any other kind of discriminatory language is permissible on our sites. We give our editors the freedom to manage their communities as they see fit, but this is the golden rule that should never be broken.
2. We don't have an across the board policy on profanity, but we do ask that you keep it out of the headline of your stories and preferably not above the jump on the front page. We understand that sports bring out passionate writing, but we're trying to maintain a professional demeanor on our sites and especially in headlines.
3. Use of photos shall be limited to use of photos that appear in the SB Nation story editor tool, photos where you own the copyrights, or other properly licensed photos. Use of videos, GIF's, or audio files shall be limited to content where you/SB Nation own(s) the copyrights or where SB Nation has properly licensed the content. If a third party gives you permission to publish its multimedia content, be sure to get the permission in writing. Any use of photos should be following the Photo Use Guidelines; any use of videos should be consistent with the Video Use Guidelines & FAQ's any use of podcasts and/or audio clips should be consistent with the FAQ's re: Podcasts & Audio Clips. We would rather you not use multimedia content at all than have you use content that belongs to someone else without permission. You should consult our General Counsel, Lauren Fisher, if you have any questions (lauren@sbnation.com) with a cc to Tyler Bleszinski and your site's lead blogger/editor.
4. Remember that the majority of people who read our headlines on our sites aren't familiar with your community. So keep them simple, use keywords that make sense (team names, player names) to people who aren't familiar with your community's inside jokes.
5. Formatting your posts into readable text is important. Make sure you make liberal use of the jump feature on our sites. That is, if you have more than a paragraph for a post, put anything beyond the one paragraph below the jump. It makes the front page look a lot cleaner, gets more than one story above the top fold and encourages community interaction by having the comments there once they click through the jump.
6. All of our information has shown that frequency of new posts is the most important thing you can do to impact your traffic. Generally, the blogs we have that update the most frequently are also our biggest trafficked ones. Give your community something new to discuss without burying other discussions. I would recommend having a post up first thing every morning and then at least another post in the middle of the day leading into game time (if your team is in season). The more posts, often the better chance you have of growing

your community. You can even subsidize the front page with shorter, more newsy-focused posts.

7. If you're quoting other sites, make sure that you always hyperlink to the article with the content. And never use more than two or three lines from a given article. The quotes should always be separated out by block quote.
8. Tagging stories appropriately is very important. Tagging not only helps identify relevant stories about players across the network, but it also helps in terms of search engine optimization. The autotagger should work most of the time for players. We also often create special tags around events like the NFL Draft and MLB Trading Deadline. Be sure to figure out what that proper tag is and tag anything related.
9. Make sure you submit relative stories for distribution. But never ever click on something like a game thread for distribution. Submitting for distribution basically sends your story to Yahoo! or any of our other various partners so use common sense when it comes to submitting for distribution. If you're talking about a community event where no one outside of people in your community would understand the post, then don't submit for distribution. But if it's a game recap with a clear headline, definitely submit for distribution.
10. Along those same lines, submitting for Twitter and Facebook is very important as well. I would highly recommend that you use the Twitter account for your site as its own entity rather than just submitting with the same headline. You can send stuff to Twitter from your site, but be sure to give it some personal spin and put something clever on it. Make sure you use hash tags as well so the people looking for trending topics regarding your team can find your tweets and your site. Facebook is also important in that it can be a really natural place to get all your friends and family to find out what you're doing and have them promote it to their friends. That's the beauty of the social network. If the work you promote is good, it should flourish in social media.
11. If you need help with technology, always email support@sbnation.com. They may not get back to you immediately, but they receive a lot of requests every day. They often prioritize the most pressing matters and then reply to the requests as they were received.
12. If you need help with advertising, email Kyle Ragsdale at kyle@sbnation.com. Kyle gets a ton of email because he doesn't just handle sales, he also handles payroll and various other issues for SB Nation. So you have to be persistent to get a reply.
13. If you ever receive a legal notice like a cease and desist letter, you need to immediately contact both Tyler Bleszinski at blez@sbnation.com and Lauren Fisher at lauren@sbnation.com. Never reply to anything without first discussing with Lauren.
14. If you ever have questions about anything editorially speaking, email Tyler Bleszinski at blez@sbnation.com or John Taylor at john@sbnation.com. We can also assist with things like applying for media credentials and preparations for interviews with key team personnel.

15. When attending team functions (interviews, press conferences, parties, whatever), make sure and dress in a professional fashion. Our blogs already fight the perception that most of us spend our time in our parents' basement in our underoos. In my opinion, it's better to be overdressed than underdressed for events to fight that perception. But usually a nice three-button polo shirt and some dress pants are suitable for nearly any event.

16. If you want to apply for a credential, we have documents online at the company intranet that express how to do that. There are also many more documents for you to peruse that have a lot more in depth information than this guideline.