

Quick Guide to Programming Sports at your Station

1. Prepare for Programming Sports at your Station

Programming a sports show at your radio station requires a decent amount of research and preparation. Not only is it crucial to research all relevant sporting news, fixtures and/or results, it is important to understand your subject, develop and write your own scripts, organise interviews, prepare audio grabs and production elements.

Prior to the research and preparation of your sports show, the casting of personalities/hosts, content structure and placement and generally having a programming plan is paramount in developing and executing a credible, professional, and successful show that your audience will enjoy. Ensure there is a solid balance of Information Value vs Entertainment Value. (IV vs EV)

2. How to Program Sports at your Station

Casting of personalities/hosts – Whether you intend on flying solo or partnering in a duo or trio to present a sports show, everyone involved should have an interest in your sporting subjects and have a passion for all things sport – at a bare minimum. This should not be forced or fake.

Think about the dynamic of your personalities too. Each personality should add their own flavour to the show.

Who is anchoring the show and ‘steering the ship’? This person needs to keep the show moving and on track.

Who is the larrikin of the show? They provide the laughs and some light entertainment relief.

Who is the opinionated and outspoken personality? This person sparks an emotion and is not afraid to say what they think.

The key to casting personalities/hosts is to ensure that you do not have two or three people all agreeing on the same thing. There needs to be some ‘ying and yang’ to keep it interesting.

Content structure and placement – Maintain a consistent and relevant structure when developing your sports show. Your audience will become accustomed to routine.

How will your show start? / What do you start with? / How many benchmarks will you have? / How many interviews should you have?

You should always open your show with a produced *Program Opener. This is where you welcome your audience and ‘hook and tease’ what they will hear in the show. This should not be a shopping list of content. Pick the three biggest things in the

show and headline it. Keep them engaged for the first 30 minutes and you will have a greater chance of holding onto them for the next 30 minutes.

*Benchmarks are a great way to 'highlight' content segments. Depending on the broadcast day of your show (Sunday is always ideal), your first segment should be something like 'Around the Grounds'. This is where you re-cap the games played so far in a variety of sports fixtures. I.e. NRL, AFL, Soccer, Cricket etc.

*Production elements for show Openers and Benchmarks add a polished and professional sound to your show.

Audio enhancement is a great way to 'colour up' your segment too. Always look for ways to add audio grabs to your segments. E.g., "The Sydney Roosters defeated the Cronulla Sharks five tries to three last night at the SCG, the final score 26 - 18. Here are the highlights" – Play an audio grab of the tries.

Each content break should focus on 'one thought per break', and in this case, covering off on a different sport for each content break. This is where each content break should go through the IV vs EV filter for show balance. For example:

Content Break 1: Show Opener

Song

Content Break 2: Around the Grounds – All sports (IV)

Song

Content Break 3: Play of the Day (EV)

Ad Break

Song

Content Break 4: Soccer. Interview with Brisbane Roar Coach. (IV)

3. Important tips for Programming Sports at your Station

- You and your fellow personalities/hosts should sound passionate, interested and 'in the moment'. If you are not, you cannot expect your audience to be either.
- The Anchor must control the show. This person opens and closes every content break and ensures all other programming collateral goes to air on time. E.g., songs/ad breaks/news blocks.
- The roles and responsibilities of each personality/host should be defined. All involved need to be part of the content structure and placement. One person should be responsible for the production, another for booking interviews. Everyone has a role to play.

- Role play and rehearse your content breaks before you go on air. Everyone should know their bit in each segment. This will avoid talking over each other. Some of the best shows on radio are rehearsed.
- Pre-record your interviews. An interview that drags on for more than three minutes is too long. Prepare five or six questions and edit your interview down to the best four responses. By pre-recording you can 'cut the fat' and broadcast the best bits of the interview.
- Placing interviews live to air lends itself to going longer, losing its continuity and your audience. Pre-recorded interviews should be arranged prior to the show.
- If you persist on interviews going live to air, ensure the guest is aware that you will call them and place them on hold 10 minutes prior to the broadcast time. There is nothing worse than pre-promoting and hooking a guest and you cannot reach them, especially when they are on the phone.

4. Links to find out more:

- [CMTO Pathways Programming Review - Resource Booklet](#)