

Where is the Coverage?

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This past year has been an insanely busy year for Piedmont students, athletes, staff, faculty and definitely the president. So many different projects have been fundraised for, started and progressed since 2019, including the addition of the renovated Education major building, as well as preparation for new dorms on the Demorest campus as well as new buildings in Athens as well. Obviously, these are all large projects that require many moving pieces and is very exciting for students, parents and staff alike. Have you heard of any other though? If you have, you're one of the few that have been informed on the biggest project Piedmont College has ever seen since its founding in 1897. An 80-acre plot has been purchased back in the fall season of 2019, with plans to turn it into a giant new athletic complex, accompanied by a softball field and other practice fields for the various sports Piedmont is home to. This is clearly a major deal considering with current COVID regulations, teams have had to change how they stagger practices in order to reduce exposure. The weird thing is that other than the initial purchase of the land and the plans to change it into something very beneficial, Piedmont hasn't made any other statements on completion times or updates on what is happening when in the construction of it all. If I was to cover this story in a variety of different ways, all of the key information would be presented to interested parties in simple, easy to understand ways such as the ones below.

One of the most effective ways to reach students and others heavily associated with Piedmont College would be to write an article and have it published in The Roar. The focus of the article would be to update the Lions community on something that affects a large member of students, since most of the students attending Piedmont are also athletes. This would include things like when the complex is estimated to be finished, what the upcoming steps are in order to

get the ball moving and a description of the blueprints or overall summary of the specific amenities the complex will have. It would also be important to include quotes from sources directly connected to the project. For instance, the man who put this plan in motion and has used money fundraised from different sources to pay for it all, Dr. James Mellichamp, the president of Piedmont College. Another great person to talk to would be Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Coach Jim Peeples. Both of these men would be great to interview about the project since they oversee large departments of staff and students who would be using the facility. For a third source, I would ask a coach who will be using the facility, such as Coach Jimison, the head coach of the cross country and track programs. This would be an interesting quote considering currently Piedmont doesn't have a track of their own, so getting insight into how the track program is feeling about the addition would be great to include. With these aspects put together, an insightful and very informative article could be written for The Roar where interested people could easily educate themselves on what's happening with this highly anticipated project.

In order to spread the news over the airwaves, a template similar to the written article could be used. The radio story for this topic would have to be shortened down to fit the one-to-two-minute time slot, but a lot of the information used in the article for The Roar would work, once it is shortened down and matches the right language used for radio. This would include the information about what will be happening when, and the overall estimate for the time of completion. Rather than using an entire long quote, using a short 15-20 second soundbite from President Mellichamp as well as a coach such as Coach Jimison. This way listeners can get the point of view of both an executive who put the plan in motion and a coach who will be using the facilities for the betterment of his team each day. The elements of the reporter (me), and the soundbites from interviews would of course be mixed together. The segment would open with

me giving an intro and some details pertaining to the progress, followed by a quote from Mellichamp about what has happened so far and when there will be more progress. The segment would continue like this with a quote from Coach Jimison in there as well and wrap up with me giving a short summary followed by a look towards the future. The combination of these elements would give listeners all the information they can obtain in a span of one-to-two-minutes.

A TV story would give me a little more freedom in ways that my words can be followed up by images and shots of what is being talked about at the same time. For instance, I would like to go to the site purchased by Piedmont and do an intro to the segment in front of it, to where I can point behind me and show the exact plot of land and where it is in relation to campus and 441. The interviews of President Mellichamp, Coach Peeples and Coach Jimison would be filmed so that students and others watching who may not know these gentlemen by name would be able to put a face to them and maybe recognize them from around campus. For b-roll, I would film portions of different sports teams practicing as one of the interviewees is discussing the opportunities that would open up for these teams. If it was possible to see construction equipment actually moving dirt and bringing materials to the site of the project, I would film that also and include it as a break from seeing me or the interviewees talking. B-roll could also be determined after I have spoken to the interviewees and based on what they say I can film something that ties in to exactly what they mention, to make it a little more personal and involved for the viewer. For instance, a shot of President Mellichamp on the phone would be good to use as he is in the background talking about the process of fundraising that it took to be able to buy this land and budget out the facility in the first place. These elements could do for a

very complete and interesting video story covering the progress of Piedmont's much anticipated athletic facility.

To construct an infographic, I visualize a large cartoon image of a round, stadium-like building and around it there are various athletes competing in various sports. I would include information like dates of start, middle and finish in sports like a scoreboard or event clock by a track. The sports that would be depicted would be the ones who are being directly affected by the project, such as softball, soccer and track and field. Other bits of information would be around the outside of the image, such as small quotes from excited student athletes, parents, and coaches. Obviously there would be lots of green, white, black and gold to represent our Piedmont pride, and maybe a few other touches like a dump truck hauling dirt would make the cut as well. This would give interested parties an opportunity to view the stats and facts of the total progress as well as visualize how much of a success this complex will be once it's completed.

One of the best ways to reach student athletes specifically would be to use a blog filled with information geared directly toward them. Most of these athletes I've talked to really only want to know what their team in particular will be gaining from the complex and when it will be completed and ready to use. I would break the blog up into different sections, first starting with a brief overview with a summary of the complex's amenities and what it is projected to look like. I'd then set up different tabs labeled with the different sports teams where athletes can click and go directly to information about where their sport is getting upgraded. This way they can get right to the meat that they care about without all of the fluff to read through and lose their interest along the way. Included in this blog would be quotes from all of their coaches, and updates from Coach Peebles and President Mellichamp in the form of short videos that require no effort at all to watch and listen to. With these additions to the athlete-focused blog, students

can easily find out in a minute or less what they are looking at in terms of a sports complex coming up to get them excited and motivated to make Piedmont proud.

All of these different methods would be great ways to give out highly sought-out information to students, parents, faculty, staff and anyone else who may be interested in the amazing sports complex scheduled to be completed. All who hear about them will be able to look forward to something positive in these times of great uncertainty, and the thought of playing, viewing, or covering a sports event in such a great facility is something that can be the light at the end of a lot of people's tunnels. In the future I do hope that at least one if not all of these forms of communication can be used to spread the word, once we know for sure the concrete timeline that we are all looking at. No matter what someone prefers to use for their news and Piedmont updates, there is a way to get everyone involved. As we look towards the future, hopefully they will be utilized in ways that everyone of all ages and interests can get behind and enjoy.