

Webliography of General Sports Sites: The Big Four

compiled by *Suzanne Wise*

All the sites discussed here are excellent sources for current sports news and scores. The layout is uniformly cluttered, but a staggering amount of information is available. Specific strengths of each site are highlighted in the annotations. I evaluated the pages for golf, NCAA basketball, and automobile racing, and searched specifically for coverage of Appalachian State University sports.

CBS.SportsLine <<http://CBS.SportsLine.com>> offers excellent all-around sports information. While emphasis is on the big four — baseball, basketball, football, and hockey — there is also satisfying coverage of a wide array of mid-level sports like boxing, soccer, and alpine sports. The site is notable for its information on sports more popular outside the U.S., such as cricket, rugby, sailing, and even chess. For librarians, the real strength of *CBS.SportsLine* is its reference value. There are complete compilations of winners of championships, bowls, and major sports awards, and members of halls of fame. The sports columns on the site are archived back to 1995 and are searchable by author or topic. Multimedia data is available in the form of photos and audio and video highlights. The photos cover a surprisingly wide range of sports, from surfing in Hawaii to cricket in Zimbabwe. As I write this in November 2000, there are the photos from the murder trial of Carolina Panthers player, Rae Carruth. For employment seekers, there is a guide to sports jobs (access requires a membership). Another good feature is the Alumni Tracker option, which allowed me to pull up a list of all Appalachian State University graduates who are currently playing in the NFL (there are four). The site's Kids' Zone offers coverage of the big four sports geared especially for children, and there is also a section on sports health. There are two small disappointments. The Search Center retrieves matches to keywords quickly, but the data runs a couple of weeks behind. A guide to search tips would also be helpful. Otherwise, *CBS.Sportsline* is a good place for quick, current news and reference information with an international flavor.

CNN.SI.COM <<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com>> . If you want in-depth sports coverage on the Web, try the Sports Illustrated/CNN site. It is especially valuable for the many articles, interviews, and opinion pieces from *Sports Illustrated* and *Cable News Network*. For instance, the Men's College Basketball page has an archive of news stories on former Indiana University coach Bob Knight's fall from grace. A keyword search on the Motorsports page retrieves a wonderful collection of material on minorities in NASCAR. There is a piece by Nick Charles, "Black NASCAR: African-Americans Still Trying to Make Inroads," and a number of multimedia links, including Sybil Scott talking about her father, driver Wendell Scott, who was the only African-American to win a

top level NASCAR race, and comments on minorities in NASCAR by Willy T. Ribbs, Joe Washington, Richard Petty, NASCAR officials, and others. Samples from *SI for Kids* are available. A design flaw is that the keyword search box is hidden in a jumble of promotions at the bottom right of the screen; however, a search can bring good results.

ESPN <<http://espn.go.com>>. *ESPN* is strong in current news and scores. The StatSearch option can be useful, but you may have to try several combinations of words to get what you want. I liked that I was able to view all of Appalachian State University's current athletic activities on one screen with a keyword search of "Appalachian." Some sports have nice frills; the Women's Golf page provides rules and instruction information, a list of books, and links to other sites. A new feature, ESPNdeportes, offers sports coverage in Spanish. It is a great hook to attract Spanish speakers to the library and can also serve as an instructional tool for people just learning Spanish. Also noteworthy is the collection of short biographies of sports figures, including racehorses; go to ESPN Classic and then select SportsCentury. For the younger crowd, *ESPN* covers extreme sports thoroughly and has lots of chat opportunities.

FoxSports <<http://www.foxsports.com>>. This site is being rebuilt and is expected to be unveiled in its new form this summer. At present it contains primarily current sports news and scores. Let's hope that some of its previous features are incorporated into the new version. In the past, it had a Sports Business category with information on sports media, stadia, legal issues, endorsements, and other pertinent topics, the archives going back a year. The Local Links option got you to Web sites for newspapers and Fox television stations in the region of your choice. I linked to the *Birmingham News* and Alabama television sites and read all about the firing of the Crimson Tide coach, Mike DuBose. There were hefty video snippets — I found a lengthy one on the opening of Appalachian's new Holmes Convocation Center (and basketball palace). Coverage is primarily U.S. focused. Using the Sports Search feature resulted in occasional dead ends, where clicking the "Back" button resulted in the reloading of the same page; when this happens, use the "Go" function.

To complement these meat-and-potatoes sites, try the sports categories on the big Internet search engines, such as *Yahoo!Sports* <<http://Sports.Yahoo.com>> and *google.com/Top/Sports/* <<http://directory.google.com/Top/Sports/>>. These and similar sources are excellent guides to Web sites across the spectrum of sports. You can find everything from tips on using the Iditarod sled dog race in classroom activities, to getting started in rope skipping.