

# A M E R I C A N CAREER

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# MOVING



CAREER PATH Arts and Communications

### Jeff Dengate: Features Editor, NBA.com

Even though he's not a pro basketball player, Jeff Dengate is following his hoop dreams. How? He serves as features editor for NBA.com, the Web site managed by the National Basketball Association. In this role, Jeff writes stories and builds Web pages about the latest happenings in professional basketball.

On a typical day, he arrives at the league's office in Secaucus, New Jersey, and puts the finishing touches on a story.

"I'll then code the story into a Web page using HTML so it can be displayed on the Web site," he says. "To build the page, I'll gather links to related stories we've worked on in the recent past as well as any pictures I want to include in the story."

In developing stories, Jeff often speaks with NBA players or coaches, either by telephone or in person. He attends games at Madison Square Garden in New York City or Continental Airlines Arena in New Jersey. He visits the teams' locker rooms to conduct interviews, not only of the Knicks and Nets but also the teams that are in town to play that night. When there is no game in the New York area, he keeps up by watching games on television.

"I love that I actually get to earn a living from basketball," he says. "I never dread hearing the alarm clock buzz in the morning because I get to go to work and talk and read about basketball every day."

He says the job does have its challenges. Sometimes he has to get stories out under tight deadlines. He also needs to spend a great deal of time editing material and placing it in final form for Web use.

"To be good at sports journalism, you must have a love for sports and be a good writer," Jeff says. "You can develop both through your education as well as any experience obtained through internships or writing for your school newspaper." Computer capabilities are also helpful, including Web design skills, he added.

In preparing for his career, Dengate studied broadcasting and computer science at Central Michigan University.

"You also need a keen eye for the little details, things that others may overlook," he says. "You should be able to tell a story so readers at home can paint a mental picture as though they, too, were there to witness the event."

Jeff advises others interested in similar careers to get involved early with school publications or other activities.

"Don't be content to just take your classes and focus on your grade point average," he says. "It's the extracurricular experience you gain that will help strengthen what you learn inside the classroom."

*Virginia writer Mark Roub interviewed Jeff Dengate, as well as Lauren Coben, James Baca and José Ruxera, who appear later in this publication.*



*Jeff Dengate at work at the 2006 NBA All-Star Game in Houston, Texas.*

