

SPORTS

Kids learning sports broadcasting

Local production company gives youth a chance both behind and in front of cameras

BY JOHN REID
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Romtin Rezvani, of Los Altos, knows what he wants to do for a living. Rezvani was one of eight sixth- through 12th-graders attending the MC Sports Broadcasting Camp at the MidPen Media Center in Palo Alto this week.



Alley

"I want to be a camera guy when I grow up," Rezvani said Tuesday. "It's fun setting up the camera and using it. I want to do sports because I'm a big sports fan. I'm a big fan of the Giants, the Warriors and the Sharks."

Camper Max Pelczarski, who will be a seventh-grader at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School in Palo Alto, wants to be a color commentator one day. After his first day of camp, Pelczarski was merely thrilled to learn about how to handle television cable.



Buteau

"Cable-wrapping is the best part of the camp so far," said Pelczarski, a fan of former Warriors coach Mark Jackson, now an NBA commentator. "I learned how to do that the first day. It was fun."

Producer Chuck Alley has as much fun running the camp as do the campers taking part. Last year, Alley held three one-week camps. This summer, there are six camps with campers paying a \$485 fee — with the exception

of next week's camp at the East Palo Alto YMCA. That camp, already full with 14 campers, comes free of charge.

It was 1991 when Alley got out of film school. He came to work in the very truck that he uses now to teach all aspects of sports broadcast production.

"I'm using the same equipment," said Alley, who lives in Mountain View. "It was a long time ago. The truck is about 33 years old."

Three years ago, Alley came back to MidPen Media Center after working elsewhere. Program Manager Becky Sanders talked to Alley about a fresh idea to help local youths and save money, simultaneously.

"I saw the truck was sitting there empty and wasn't being driven," Alley said. "She asked me if I had a minute. I said, 'Sure.'"

Sanders and Alley talked about having middle school and high school kids volunteer to take the truck out to telecast local sporting events.

"Prior to that, they had an adult professional crew who they paid to do that," Alley said. "The bubble burst and they didn't have the funds to support it."

Not all campers fit in the truck at the same time. "We break it down," Alley said. "We have a mobile production truck that has a studio inside. They learn directing, switching, graphics, audio, camera, also the announcer's booth. We teach play-by-play announcing and color



Photos by John Reid / Daily News

Chuck Alley instructs campers at MidPen Media Center on Tuesday in Palo Alto.



The production truck is a lot older than the campers.

commentating."

There are times when Alley takes campers to an event where budding announcers can hone their chops. Palo Alto girls basketball coach Scott Peters lets campers come in and do play-by-play during his summer camps. Then there is an impromptu football game on the

street.

"It gives the camera guys something to follow," Alley said. "The announcers make up things as they go along. A little street ball."

It was at a real football game at Palo Alto High in 2012 when Alley and a couple of wide-eyed high schoolers scored an inter-

viewer with then-San Francisco 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh, now head football coach at the University of Michigan.

"I was in the truck and the kid told me, 'Hey, coach Harbaugh is in the stands,'" Alley said. "I said, 'Do you want to interview him?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'I'll go ask him.'"

Alley told Harbaugh what was happening and Harbaugh graciously accepted.

"The minute I told him I had kids, he was all over it," Alley said. "He's a great guy. My kids were in seventh heaven having coach Harbaugh in the booth with them."

The biggest success story deriving from Alley's instructional camps is Wes Rapaport, a Palo Alto grad of 2011. Rapaport went through the broadcast journalism program at Chapman University in Orange. He is now a news

reporter for KMAC in Lubbock, Texas. Simone Buteau, a Palo Alto grad of 2013, has volunteered at the MC Sports camps the past three years, but has never taken Alley's course. Buteau attends Chapman, majoring in broadcast journalism.

"I do a lot of this stuff down at Chapman, too," Buteau said. "I was on one of the first crews when we started broadcasting games. I'm drawn to what goes on behind the camera. I love the fast pace of sports."

Buteau enjoys watching kids soak up information like sponges.

"They come in and they don't have a clue about what they are doing," Buteau said. "Then they get super-excited how everything works. It's fun to see that passion in them."

"It's very exciting," Alley added. "They come into the camp not knowing a thing about sports production. At the end of the week, they're producing their own sports show. It's incredible."

Rezvani is thankful there is a camp such as Alley's.

"I like how they let us use everything they have," Rezvani said. "It's very educational. I'm grateful to have it."

MC Sports' remaining camps are full with the exception of the last one, which runs July 27-31 at MidPen Media Center. There are a couple spots left.

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Rezvani