

A truly strange week ...

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 17:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 September 2011 22:40



Last week was one of the strangest that I have been through in my now 45 years of gracing God's green earth.

And I knew it would be. I knew for a long time it would be.

For the first time in my career as a play-by-play broadcaster, I was not sitting behind a microphone at a high school football game on a Friday night. For the first time since September 1, 1989, I was not calling a game.

Instead, I was sitting in the stands at Chalmers Field in Dubuque watching my son play football.

A little background. My son Ryan is a senior wide receiver for the Kennedy football team. Going into the Fall we were hoping he would be getting some varsity playing time and that has turned out to be the case. I knew it would be a thrill to call my son's name on a game broadcast, but hey, that's another subject and another column for sometime down the road, perhaps.

Putting together the high school football schedule for the radio station this summer, I knew that I had several dilemmas to face. First, how was I going to see my son play football and call the games? Second, how was I going to do this without having too many Kennedy games on the schedule? Fortunately, many answers came together when the station decided to add a second local sports talk show and Brent Balbinot was hired to host that show. Brent is a top-notch play-by-play man and I knew he would be able to call some games with no problem.

I first started to wonder about the situation I faced last week back in 2003 when at a Metro Youth Football game a parent asked me what I would do if Ryan was playing football in high school and I had to call games on the radio. I honestly had never thought about the question until that very day.

A truly strange week ...

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 17:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 September 2011 22:40

And the question never left my mind from that day forward.

I had many theories about what I could possibly do to see games over the years, but nothing concrete until this past summer and with a new voice on board, the opportunity to take a couple Fridays off to be a "Dad" was looking like a reality.

It was a strange week. Starting early in the week, when I'm usually emailing and talking with coaches about lineups, etc., I was helping Brent get organized. A sense of emptiness started on Tuesday and continued to grow throughout the week. I even had a "nightmare" that I had forgotten to be at the game on Friday night! Finally on Thursday it started to settle down somewhat when I went over equipment with Brent and all of the last minute details he would need to know.

We all were ready, Brent to call the game, and me to play "Dad" for the night.

As I drove with my family up to Dubuque, I felt my first real sense of calm all week. As I went through the gate and sat down to enjoy the game I was thinking more about the game I was about to watch than what was happening back down US 151 in Marion.

Then the radio equipment had a different idea for the evening.

For the first time in many years, we had some equipment problems at a game so I had to concentrate on that for a moment or two and do what I could to keep the game on the air. We finally got it solved and I was at the game ... and I was "Dad."

In retrospect, I was happy I was there. Ryan caught a pair of passes and had a reverse run in Kennedy's 33-7 win at Dubuque Senior and the game was on the air back home in Marion. Except for the small problem with the equipment it was mission accomplished.

I owe many thanks for my "Dad" night. Brent Balbinot, John Hegarty, Brent Staab along with

A truly strange week ...

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 17:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 September 2011 22:40

Garrett Knock and Greg Runyon all made things much easier, even with the equipment snafu. Also thanks to Rob Norton and Julie Hein for letting me head out for a Friday night away from work.

I will try it one more time toward the end of the season. I will be somewhat apprehensive during the week, but now that I have been through this process once it should be easier. Oh well, the entire night will be a great one to look back on years down the road.

(Scott Unash is the sports and program director at KGYM-AM 1600. He is a six-time winner of the Iowa Broadcast News Association play-by-play Announcer of the Year Award. Scott and Mark Dukes co-host the Gym Class weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM)