

Warrior radio man Schultz will be tough to replace

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Hired to be fired.

Apparently, that applies to radio announcers as well as to coaches.

Brian Schultz has been in radio for 13 years and already has been fired by three stations.

Unfortunately, that's the nature of the radio beast.

Schultz, who did play-by-play sports in Brainerd for nearly three years, was a casualty when KLIZ-FM, KLIZ-AM and KVBR-AM were acquired by BL Broadcasting of Brainerd. His last day was March 31.

I have crossed paths with few individuals who have a passion for statistics like Schultz. He compiled countless pages of data on Warrior football, boys' hockey and baseball. Just ask Warrior coaches Ron Stolski, Ty Eigner and Lowell Scearcy.

In football, he took stats provided by The Dispatch and the coaching staff and compiled them onto neatly organized spread sheets, making them readable and professional.

In hockey, he literally published a bible for every game, with stats ranging from number of goals scored in the first two minutes of a period to detailed line sheets to individual player stats.

In baseball, he published another volume of information, ranging from record when teams combine for 11-19 runs or less to hitting, pitching and fielding stats for each player.

Schultz was diligent in his approach, showing up hours before going on the air to hook up his equipment and to secure a space in often tenuous press boxes.

He didn't stop with statistics. Schultz was a technological wizard when it came to producing his broadcasts. There were pregame and postgame shows in football and baseball and between-period interviews in hockey. He was a master at incorporating highlights into his broadcasts and making CDs of season highlights for fans.

In addition, Schultz was the Web master of www.brainerdwarriors.org, a site that features stats, schedules and rosters of every Warrior sport.

In short, he helped make the coverage of Warrior athletics as comprehensive as any high school in the state.

Incredibly, Schultz compiled the statistical data, and maintained the Web site, for no compensation.

"I thought his technical expertise was incredible," said Jeff Hilborn, director of sales at KLIZ. "He brought a lot of that, and a lot of professionalism to the job. He was very thorough, very involved. He had a good relationship with all the coaches."

One of them was Eigner, the Brainerd boys' hockey coach.

"In the three years he's been here it's been wonderful," Eigner said of Schultz's coverage. "I don't know if there is another radio person I've ever been involved with, at any level, as prepared as Brian is.

"And, I know in talking with other coaches we played against, they were completely impressed. Brian would give them the stats when they would get to the game. They were very impressed with all he did. It just blew them away to have this at the high school level."

Mike Boen, general manager of BL Broadcasting, said his company intends to continue doing Warriors play-by-play. He believes the company has people on staff who possess the experience to fill the play-by-play position.

"I think the listeners will be pleased," Boen said.

Colin MacDonald of KLIZ broadcast football and baseball with Schultz.

"I'm definitely going to miss him," MacDonald said. "I enjoyed working with him so much so that I could even put up with him wearing a (Wisconsin) Badgers jacket. Brewers, Badgers, Packers, he lived and breathed for them, along with the Warriors."

It's difficult to say goodbye to a cohort and a friend. Although we got off to an icy start, we broke the ice, shared statistical data and developed a great relationship.

I will miss him. He will be difficult to replace.

It's easier said than done, and it's easier to tell someone else who's been fired, but something good will come out of this.

And, my hope is that happens soon.