

SAM KHAN REPORTING FOR



Cy Falls High School grad now working as a sports journalist for ESPN

Written by Leigh Ann Mitchell and Kirsten Cornell | Photography courtesy of Sam Khan

In 2005 Sam Khan graduated with a psychology degree and a minor in communications with a concentration in print journalism from the University of Houston. “I kind of stumbled into it,” Khan recalls. Friends at Cy Falls High School encouraged Khan to be a sports writer since he enjoyed writing stories every week that pertained to a fantasy football league or March Madness. “I dismissed it as nonsense, but eventually, it made sense,” says Khan.

TRAINING CAMP

A college newswriting course hooked Khan into the journalism world. He found himself captivated by the industry. He soon joined the student newspaper staff, *The Daily Cougar*, where he began covering sporting events and local news. “The experiences I had at *The Daily Cougar* were what really opened my eyes to the possibilities,” explains Khan.

After landing a full-time job after college as a freelance writer for the *Houston Chronicle*, Khan began to see doors open up for him. The experience led him to a position as a reporter for ESPN.com, the most nationally visited sports web page.

HIGHLIGHT REEL

While many interviews certainly rank in his highlight reel, there are a few heartwarming ones that have stood out. Last fall, Khan had the opportunity to interview Marcus Abbott, a football player for Lamar University who served in Afghanistan and earned a Purple Heart. “He survived an IED attack and when he returned to the U.S., he wanted to play college football, so now he’s living that dream,” says Khan. “That was an incredible story to hear, told from the person who’s traveling that journey.”

LIVING THE DREAM

Covering sporting events for ESPN.com gives Khan a front row seat at many of the noteworthy plays that define modern sports culture. The two biggest events that he’s covered, and always strike a chord, are the 2011 Final Four, which was in Houston, and the 2015-16 College Football Playoff national championship game between Alabama and Clemson. “Those were the kind of events I dreamed of covering when I first broke into this industry, and to be able to get to a point where I could was memorable. I remember less about the actual games than I do the experiences as a whole, the people I met, and the atmosphere that surrounded those contests.”

Khan also says that he will never forget watching Kyle Drabek throw a 19-strikeout no-hitter for The Woodlands High School in the 2006 Texas high school baseball playoffs. “I drove up to Carrollton, Texas to cover that game and it still remains the most dominant high school pitching performance I’ve witnessed.”

THE PERFECT PLAY

Khan advises aspiring journalists to work hard and have a great attitude because those two things will take you a long way. “You have to be able to develop and maintain good relationships with people in order to succeed in the industry and it’s hard to keep those relationships if you have a bad attitude.”

As for his own future, Khan has his journalistic sights set on publications such as *ESPN Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *TIME Magazine*. “Ultimately I want to write stories that last forever. Stories that make people feel, impact them in a certain way, or make some kind of societal difference, that’s what I want to do.” CFM

A photograph of Sam Khan, a young man with a mustache, smiling and wearing a dark suit, a purple and white checkered shirt, and a purple tie. He is standing on a football field with a large crowd in the background. The image is framed by a white diagonal line on the left side.

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Sam Khan is a Cy Falls High School graduate and sports reporter for ESPN