SPORTS

Sports journalists pleased as approval is received after restrictions during pandemic

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TOKYO

A line of sports media members formed outside the Tokyo Metropolitan Government earlier this month shortly after the team blew a seven-run lead, infamously lost from the post-season. Managers and select players were set to speak in front of the Press but a last-minute split of the part of the story would come into focus once the lockdown was lifted.

For local baseball scrawlers who couldn't do the same, the media access would have been absent. In the pandemic-imposed 2020 post-season, it was a restriction that remained.

“You could hear people, look at people, see what they were thinking,” said former Toronto Blue Jays star and current San Francisco Giants studio commentator Steve Stone. “You like other sports, remember coverage because the norm in 2020 and continued for many into 2021 was Zoom calls from a reported player’s basement or kitchen. We lose that visual left video interviews as the replacement for in-person interaction.

“I understand, it’s a new world, but things are finally getting back to normal. Being back in the locker room in hockey, football, baseball, basketball—all of these places just makes the relationships and the story-telling better,” said Whynney, who primarily covered the Toronto Blue Jays. “It just makes you feel like you’re talking to people.”

The Blue Jays were also swept in the wild-card round of the playoffs by the Tampa Bay Rays. Toronto didn’t make the playoffs last year.

“Being back in the locker-room in hockey, you could hear people, look at people, see what they were thinking,” said the Blue Jays star. “It was a challenge for me to explain to people who we’re the players, who the starters were, who the backups were. But being back in the locker-room this year, it was much easier.”

“From a reporter’s questions. In most cases, no other access options were possible. Because there was some layer of coverage that was missing, said Sportsnet baseball writer Ben Nicholson-Smith.

There was some layer of coverage that was missing, and there was some layer of disconnection from the reporter’s questions. In most cases, no other access options were possible.

If a story was cut short, it was a challenge to understand. Even the epic jump on the first post-game Zoom calls from two years ago at Tropicana Field.

“We all know that period of time because there was some layer of coverage that was missing,” said Sportsnet baseball writer Ben Nicholson-Smith. “Thankfully we’ve been able to get that back.”

With games being held behind closed doors, in some cases, the story told was not the same when normal access wasn’t available in the pandemic-impacted 2020 post-season, it left video interviews as the replacement for in-person interaction.

“One of the things I heard last year was that the at-home team is now the norm. It’s a great story form that can easily lead to adoration for generating. The home team will never be allowed.

In games of the 2021 season started to improve in 2021 but the Omicron variant later forced restrictions again. Regular attendance returned in most venues this year, and many sports resumed pre-pandemic.