**Broadcast Journalist of the Year 2019**

Comments from judge Steven Weiss

I have ranked the contestants from 1-5 and included brief comments on each one.  Let me know if you need anything else from me…or want me to take a different approach.

1. Anthony Miles
2. Bella Rulon

**Anthony Miles** - demonstrated multiple video journalism skills throughout his story samples that go far beyond what is typical at this point in his young career. A wonderful grasp of shot variation and use of effective close-ups. I appreciate the extensive use of a tripod.  Enjoyed Grilled Cheese Thursday, the Orchestra, Jean Luc Stomp and the Winter Percussion very much. Excellent framing of soundbites. Nice storytelling by going the extra mile and soliciting perspectives of many characters in each story. Nice writing and storytelling overall.  My only comment in terms of what Anthony may want to consider in taking “the next step” would be to use a little less of a music track with even more natural sound in his storytelling. Particularly in the stories about music and musicians.  It is powerful and adds a layer of interest to the audience to “hear” more from the people in the story as they go about their day. Sometimes a music track enhances that, but occasionally in a story where the music is being performed, it can get a little bit in the way. Overall, an excellent representation of your work and talent.  Well done!

**Bella Rulon** - has shown very strong news storytelling skills in her story sample entries for this contest. In particular, the Project Bike Tech story has very good visuals, nice camera work with good framing of soundbites (the nice lighting on the student soundbite is appreciated) and a well thought out script. I thought the scripting and producing of the Homework story was especially strong as well. Throughout her story samples there was nice attention to script/narration and visuals matching effectively. Overall, the video scenes were solid (nice use of tripod) and edited together well. There are a few things Bella may want to consider in her future video storytelling- particularly starting stories with strong, compelling visuals and the use of natural sound.  The music piece in particular would benefit from the use of multiple “soundups” from the music to give the audience a better vibe of the topic. The majority of the other stories -- bike tech, vaping and homework…would also be enhanced by using natural sound from the scenes to transport the audience to the locations.  The vaping story had very good info about an important topic, but it is the storyteller’s obligation to find and use effective visuals such as people who are vaping and perhaps an interview with someone who uses the product to better understand what the attraction is. Always look for characters in the story who we, as an audience, can identify with. We care about issues much more when we can see and understand who they impact individuals we have empathy or identification with. Overall, this is a strong group of stories which are to be commended for someone so early in their journalism career- keep up the good work and always consider taking the extra step to find and use the visuals and people that support the story.

**Myles Rubin** - demonstrates an amazing enthusiasm for journalism and storytelling at such a young age. His willingness to tackle various subjects and approaches is to be commended.  His profile story with family members is an important story to tell and the pictures used certainly helped. Pay attention to the framing of soundbites in this story and others- give your subjects appropriate headroom and lead space in the frame. It is a good idea to avoid the practice of using vertical video (in the second sample) unless it so compelling it is necessary to do so to tell the story. This sample had great energy but was right on the line in terms of using video that might be just a little too shaky/jumpy.  Stabilizers are becoming more popular and less expensive and this would have been a good place to consider using one. The third sample with Myles grandpa had some slight audio variations (and watch the framing on his soundbite). Sample 4 was a nicely conceived and produced promo. The coffee sample was a clever approach which took a lot of effort and he producers should be recognized for that. Long form interview stories like these are challenging to keep the visuals interesting enough to the audience, so always look for those interesting cutaways and b-roll shots that keep the story visually moving along with the dialogue. My single biggest suggestion for Myles moving forward is to consider using more tripod and stabilization shots in his b-roll and interviews.  Overall this is a very strong demonstration for Myles ability in a number of areas - his passion for his craft is on full display and his technical abilities will grow with his experience.

**Sam Stern** - is a very enthusiastic sports anchor and host. His ability and comfort on camera is fun to watch.  Sam’s knowledge is also very impressive. My suggestion for Sam in the future is to take the next step in his development- telling sports stories through shooting and editing both short and long form topics. Use ESPN style programs, and specifically the stories they tell (as opposed to commentary and reading the scores) as a template and inspiration.  As a former sports broadcaster I can tell you that having these extra tools in your toolbox are keys to your success if you envision this as your career. Sam is well on his way in his on-air live performance development, but the vast majority of opportunities today go to the sports guy or gal who can do it all- shoot, edit, tell visual stories about characters and also be on camera. Adding these examples to your submission in a contest like this will put you on a competitive par with those who are doing so with their multiple news stories and promotional videos.  Overall, Sam has demonstrated great potential and is an impressive sports performer at such a young age.

**Grayson Black** - demonstrates wonderful passion for sports and a strong play by play ability in his submitted samples. Grayson also demonstrated strong diversity of skills with his additional samples featuring color commentary, directing and camera operation. I would encourage Grayson to continue down this path of diversifying his skill set. Particularly when it comes to taking the next step of shooting and editing both short and long form sports topics. Use ESPN style programs, and specifically the stories they tell (as opposed to commentary and reading the scores) as a template and inspiration.  As a former sports broadcaster I can tell you that having these extra tools in your toolbox are keys to your success if you envision this as your career. Grayson is well on his way in his on-air live performance development, but the vast majority of opportunities today go to the sports guy or gal who can do it all- shoot, edit, tell visual stories about characters and also be on camera. Adding these examples to your submission in a contest like this will put you on a competitive par with those who are doing so with their multiple news stories and promotional videos.