

ZAIN BANDO

Credentialed Sports Reporter

CONTACT



630-340-0131



zainbando99@gmail.com



Downers Grove, IL



[Zain Bando](#)

EDUCATION

Northwestern University

Class of 2023

M.S. Journalism-Sports Media [3.8 GPA]

University of Illinois-UC

Class of 2022

B.S. Journalism [3.6 GPA]

LIVE EVENTS COVERED

Credentialed Media Member

- Super Bowl LVII (2023)
- NCAA MBB Tournament (2023, 2025)
- B1G MBB Championship (2023, 2026)
- UFC 319 (2025)
- ReliaQuest Bowl (2023)
- Cheez-It Citrus Bowl (2024)
- Music City Bowl (2025)
- Final Four (2026)
- Bellator MMA (2022-2023)

SKILLS

- AP Style
- Breaking News
- Social Media
- Google Analytics
- SEO
- Copy Editing
- Press Releases
- Columns
- Features
- Podcasting
- TV Production
- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Suite

PROFILE

Adaptable, multimedia sports journalist with credentialed expertise across Big Ten athletics and major combat sports. Proven track record of managing high-volume daily editorial quotas, driving SEO strategy, and producing on-site event coverage for the NCAA and UFC.

WORK EXPERIENCE

SPORTS WRITER (BIG TEN EDITOR)

Resilience Media (hosted on The Sporting News)

September 2024-Present

- Conceptualize, pitch, write and publish 4-10 stories a day on the latest news in college athletics
- Generated **1.31 million** views in 2025
- On-site live event coverage for University of Illinois athletics
- Utilize ChartBeat to track SEO/page views
- Began working autonomously without an editor in Jan. 2025 to curate critical storylines daily as head of vertical

SPORTS WRITER (NCAA BASKETBALL AND COMBAT SPORTS)

Field Level Media

July 2024-Present

- Cover every UFC event, including pay-per-view previews through event recaps and analysis
- Did select previews and recaps for various NCAA basketball teams during 2024-25 season
- Timely communication with editors and consistent completions in deadline-driven environment

FREELANCE WRITER – AFFILIATE AND COMMERCIAL CONTENT

The Sporting News

April 2024-August 2024

- Filed 15-20 articles weekly about the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, and NASCAR, to inform details about games, events, start times, streaming services, betting odds and ticket prices
- Followed all breaking sports news and potential impacts
- Interacted with editors surrounding assigned topics and consistently maintained TSN brand standards

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MEMBERSHIPS

- Society of Professional Journalists
- Medill Club of Chicago
- UIUC Alumni Association
- United States Basketball Writers Association
- Football Writers Association of America
- Bellator Rankings Panelist (through 2023)

LINKS

- [Twitter](#)
- [Muckrack](#)
- [Linktree](#)

WORK EXPERIENCE

MMA KNOCKOUT & DALLAS WINGS WRITER

On Sports Illustrated

October 2023-Present

- News writer covering mixed martial arts and boxing
- Publish 30-35 stories every month to supplement post-event fallout, daily news and reactions
- Covered Dallas Wings (July 2025-March 2026)
- Conduct fighter interviews
- Credentialed for UFC, PFL and regional events

NEWS DESK WRITER/CONTRIBUTOR

BigPlay LCC

October 2025-Present

- Write 15-20 stories a month for the Ohio State Buckeyes on SI channel
- Pitch relevant stories on Ryan Day, Jeremiah Smith, Matt Patricia to drive traffic and SEO
- **Achieved over 41,000 views** on stories about Michigan, Big Ten title games

FanSided

NEWS DESK CONTRIBUTOR

2019-2023

- Wrote NFL news hits and curated long-form features and columns covering Illinois and Northwestern football and men's basketball
- Produced over 300 WordPress pieces about combat sports, including legacy stories on behalf of PBS ahead of Muhammad Ali's Ken Burns documentary
- Provided live on-site coverage of the 2023 March Madness Des Moines Regional, Big Ten men's basketball tournament, and 2023 ReliaQuest Bowl as credentialed media
- Transcribed and copyedited various long-form interviews including Bellator president Scott Coker and former UFC light heavyweight champion Glover Teixeira