

Sportswriter Steve Slack is leaving The Reporter

By Reporter staff

As a boy, Steve Slack would sit on the front porch of his parents' house and hear the Lambeau Field crowd roar when Brett Favre or Reggie White made a big play for the Packers. So it's fitting that he landed a gig covering sports for The Reporter.

Fitting, but not preordained. Slack, you see, came to the job with a pretty thin resume.

"I had no hard journalism experience," Slack said in an email sent to The Reporter on Tuesday, June 1. "I'd done some blogging and some opinion stuff in regards to both sports and pop culture but had almost no true journalism experience with sports."

Slack, who began writing for The Reporter in November of 2018, is dropping his sports writing duties to attend law school at UW-Madison this fall. His last day with the paper is June 8.

Jeff Brown will take over Slack's beat. Jack McLaughlin will continue to cover sports for The Reporter as well.

Carrier, Packers were highlights

Slack, who lives in Sun Prairie, began writing for The Reporter after replying to an ad posted on the paper's Facebook page. He did much of his work remotely, corresponding with coaches via email and phone and poring over score sheets and box scores to craft the stories that each week clued the Tider faithful in to the fate of their favorite teams.

He made sure to attend several away games each season—fall, winter and spring. It was a lot to juggle, especially when Slack and his wife Lindsey welcomed a new baby, Vivian, last July. The couple also has a five-year-old daughter, Elliot.

Elliot played a big role in one of Slack's favorite memories from his time with The Reporter.

"I once brought my family to a girls basketball game where my then three-year-old was generally being rambunctious the whole time," Slack said. "During a free throw, she broke the utter silence in the gym by yelling VERY loudly. Parents and players chuckled and smiled.

"Afterwards, a player went out of her way to give my daughter one of the cookies that



Steven Slack and his family

Submitted photo

she had brought for the team. It felt like a perfect encapsulation of how welcoming Edgerton athletes had always been to me."

Slack said that watching the Tider boys basketball team three-peat as regional champions was a highlight of his tenure. So, too, was the one-season turnaround engineered by the girls hoops team.

Two other highlights include a phone interview with Derek Carrier and a trip to Lambeau Field to cover Carrier and the Oakland Raiders when they squared off against the Packers in October of 2019.

"Derek was extremely personable and grounded," Slack said. "The chat went longer than expected, and I felt like I got to have a real conversation with him.

"When the Raiders came to Lambeau, I was able to be on the field for the game to take photos and had locker room access afterwards. Being a lifelong Packers loyalist, that was an incredible experience and—as a person who picked up journalism and photography at 30-something—was one I never thought I'd have."

Jon Dupuis, the athletic director at the high school, said Slack would be missed.

"The EHS athletic department would like to thank Steve for his commitment to covering high school sports in a positive way for our students and their families," Dupuis said in an email. "I wish Steve good luck on his next adventure."

Small-town vibes

After covering Edgerton sports, Slack said he now understands what makes life in a small town like Edgerton spe-

cial.

"I was welcomed without reservation into gyms, homes and lives. Parents, coaches, teachers and students always met me with patience and warmth. I'm grateful to have watched athletes grow and succeed in a variety of ways."

In his email, Slack thanked all the coaches who gave him so much of their time. He also thanked Diane Everson, The Reporter's publisher, and Sam Martino, a retired journalism professor who regularly contributes to the paper and served as a mentor to him.

Slack closed with a paean to the type of local journalism he's practiced for the past two-and-a-half years.

"It's been an interesting time to be part of 'the media' but I would implore everyone to extend patience and grace to each other. In my experience, The Edgerton Reporter's prerogative has always been to serve and inform a community for which they care deeply. Truly local news coverage is increasingly rare across the country and is sorely missed in many communities."



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