



Jenny Dial

I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas where I attended East Central High School (same school that my parents attended). I played a few sports growing up - softball was always my favorite. In high school, I was one of those kids involved in everything - sports, clubs, National Honor Society, FCA... everything. Even then, my passion was journalism, though. I was the editor of my high school yearbook, which won national awards. After that, I attended the University of Oklahoma. I was on the newspaper staff there and got to cover a lot of really exciting teams and events including BCS national championships, the mens and womens NCAA Final Four, the Womens College World Series and several others. I graduated in 2005 and took a job at a community newspaper in Katy, Texas. I was hired at the Houston Chronicle in May 2006 and have been there ever since covering high school athletics.

Some of the highlights over the last few years for me have been my coverage of the need for AEDs in high schools that I worked on with my colleague Sam Khan. Our work helped open a lot of eyes on that topic and there was eventually a change to state law requiring schools to have AEDs and training for them.

I have also done several stories on the growth of girls sports, particularly with a major boost in girls basketball and softball in the Houston area. We have seen recruiting and scholarship numbers go way up and I have been able to highlight that.

I have done stories about the very small chances of athletes receiving scholarships and how they can improve those odds.

I have also written a few stories on injuries and how to prevent them - the most common for females being torn ACLs and SLAP tears.

This year, I have been able to put a few area athletes in the spotlight, including Brooke Graham from Pearland Dawson High School, who had surgery on her skull after being hit in the face in a softball game. Brook helped me piece together a story on the importance of face masks for softball pitchers. I also got to meet Jesse Landry - a Nimitz basketball player - who is missing half of her left arm.

Those are the stories I love writing in addition to getting to attend regular season, playoff games and of course the state tournaments.

People often ask me how I decided to become a sports writer. I have always loved writing and have always loved attending sporting events. I was lucky to have the kind of parents who took my brother and I to Spurs games growing up, to East Central High School football games. We sat and watched the Dallas Cowboys together on Sunday afternoons. In those moments, I bonded with the people I cared about, got a lot of entertainment and learned a lot of lessons. It

was easy to decide that I wanted to be around that as much as I could.

On the side, I work with high school journalists all over the country. In 2008, I won the Gold Key award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association at Columbia University in New York. It was an award for teaching, speaking, judging and working with high school newspaper and yearbook staffs. I still work with CSPA a few times a year and travel to New York to work with young journalists. I also speak at the UIL's journalism conference and help judge regional UIL journalism events.