

Norm Stewart

I consider Norm Stewart a great friend today. "Stormin' Norman", [legendary](#) coach of Missouri Tiger Basketball is--as you've read--one of the greatest coaches ever. Additionally, he and his wife, Virginia, are two of the nicest people ever and among Missouri's (as in the state's, not the school's) ambassadors. A few months ago, Sue and I went to watch him be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame, and his acceptance speech was pure Norm -- giving credit to everyone else, including his championship high school team buddies who he introduced! He's entertained your company's management team at his winter home in California. When Norm was a young coach he had strong opinions (and what great coach doesn't, I ask?). His relationship early on with me was rugged and we both were head-strong.

When we'd re-won the MU rights, we had paid the University all we had and there wasn't anything left over for the coaches or athletic director and nothing was mentioned in the bid docs that we'd need to participate in that fashion. Further, we were now requiring affiliates to carry basketball if they wanted football. This leveraging could only be a boon for Stewart's program. But Norm wanted payment to do the pre or post game coaches shows. I told him "no". First because we'd paid the University all we had. Second, as I reasoned it, a radio show would build his athletic program, so he should be paying us to have his show cleared all across Missouri. I told him if he wouldn't do it for free, we wouldn't do it. He was furious. He didn't give; I wouldn't give in; so we didn't have a coaches show that year.



To break the impasse the next year, when we got all those nice cars from Chrysler, I called him up and offered him USE of any model Chrysler he wanted. In about an hour he returned my call and said he wanted a New Yorker, beige, with leather trim. I put in the order with the Chrysler guy and when it arrived a few weeks later, I delivered it out to his home. Oh, he liked it a lot; we shook hands, discussed the post-game show, but then he dropped the bomb: he wanted the title. I explained our deal was for usage only--like a lease, or a rental car. He wanted ownership. I asked him just to drive it for two years, and then we'd see. But no, the hard-headed coach didn't see it that way; so I kept--and drove--Norm's New Yorker. And we still didn't have a coaches show.

But sometime later a mutual friend--and now MU Curator--Don Walsworth interceded. I showed Don my financial records and explained the difficult finances of this business. Norm had thought I was making a killing but when Don shared with him the truth, Norm gave in and soon we started doing *The Norm Stewart Show* prior to and following every game. Here's a great picture of Norm doing the post game show, hosted by our color analyst, John Rooney (now voice of the Cardinals). But who's that guy in the middle behind them? That's Mizzou's play-by-play guy: Bob Costas.

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