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A little TV coverage never hurt anyone

You watch. It'll happen.

At some point during Saturday afternoon's National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division II football championship game between host Linfield College and William Jewell College of Liberty, Mo., a KATU Channel 2 television cameraman will pick a player, any player, and point the lens in his direction, for whatever reason.

It doesn't make any difference if he's a Wildcat or a Cardinal. But if the guy's on the ball, he will look straight into the lens and give it the old "hi mom" shot.

You know how the pro and major college players appearing on the tube from week to week love to ham it up in such a way.

Well, what's good for those guys is good for the small college players.

As if Linfield's football program has not received enough print and broadcast media exposure in recent

weeks, what KATU is doing by providing its viewers live television coverage is acting as a tremendous recruiting tool.

The station officially announced Wednesday it would televise the game.

Kickoff is at 12:30.

But because KATU is leaving a game being shown regionally by the American Broadcasting Company to begin its Linfield-William Jewell coverage from McMinnville High School's Wortman Stadium, the kickoff could be delayed a few minutes to allow Channel 2 to get on the air prior to kickoff.

Steve Arena, a Linfield College graduate who played baseball for head football coach Ad Rutschman, will call the play-by-play.

He watched game film Thursday, trying to familiarize himself with both teams. It's called doing your homework.

Providing color commentary will be Bill Johnson of

Portland radio station KXL. He handles KXL's sports coverage and assists Warren Swaim with coverage of University of Oregon football and basketball games.

KATU sports reporter Steve Wick will cover the game from the sidelines.

"We feel that between 75,000 and 100,000 people will be watching," said KATU production manager Lee Petrik, who is producing the coverage.

Station program director Bob Kalstad is the executive producer.

The numbers Petrik quotes are sweet music to the ears of Linfield coaches, who will be hitting the recruiting trail shortly after the season ends.

Winning a national championship will provide the Wildcats with great recruiting leverage. Doing so on television will paint an even better picture of the recruiting situation.

This will be the fourth major sports "exclusive" broadcast KATU has tackled this year, the others

being the Cascade Runoff, GI Joe's Grand Prix auto race and Pendleton Round-Up.

Petrik arrived at a figure of between 75,000 and 100,000 potential viewers based on viewership for the aforementioned events and the rating a college football game might earn in the same time slot.

"There is high interest around the state in this game," Petrik said. "I'm excited for Linfield."

It takes many individuals and pieces of equipment to produce a quality broadcast.

Try five cameras for openers.

"We will have one end zone camera," Petrik said, "and three up high, one on the 50-yard line and one at each 30. And we will have the hand-held camera on the sidelines."

"Hi mom."

Approximately 20 production workers and 15

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engineers will work at the game site.

KATU will park its remote truck near Wortman Stadium.

From the field, a microwave signal will be sent to another truck located at an elevated site. That signal is sent to the station's transmitter situated in Portland's West Hills, with the signal eventually reaching the KATU studio, located on Sandy Blvd.

"At halftime," Petrik said, "we'll return to the studio and wrap up the game we left. We'll show some first half highlights. There are public service announcements planned, one focusing on each school and one on the NAIA. We'll look at the first half statistics and get back to the game.

"I'm confident we can follow the game well and produce a good product."

KATU and officials from Linfield College and the NAIA laid the groundwork for this broadcast with little time to spare.

"Everything has been done on such short notice," Petrik said. "We like to work farther ahead, but we could not even begin preparing until the last game (Linfield vs. Westminster College in the semifinals)

was played a week ago."

Petrik said the NAIA would not approve live television coverage of the game until it had been sold out.

Commercial time was sold without any major difficulties. There are four major sponsors. Spot carriers are Oak Valley Honda of McMinnville and Willamette Industries.

"They purchased at least one spot," said KATU general sales manager Tom Oberg. "We had to sell this game on such short notice," Oberg said, "that it's a credit to the people who bought time at the last minute so we could carry the game. To produce something like this is very expensive. When you take in right's fees, camera rental and so on, there is quite a bit of money involved."

McMINNVILLE RADIO STATION KCYX-AM (1260) is broadcasting the game, with an expanded pre-game show beginning at noon.

LINFIELD CAMPUS STATION KSLC-FM (90) is broadcasting the game, with the pre-game show beginning at 12:10.