

Puffed-Up Résumé Costs Sportswriter a New Job

By Howard Kurtz
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A longtime New York Times sportswriter who left to join the Indianapolis Star has resigned from his new job after admitting that he falsified his résumé.

Mike Freeman, who covered professional football and basketball and did investigative reporting at the Times, apologized for telling the Star that he was a graduate of the University of Delaware. He said he attended the school for four years but did not graduate.

"These were lies," Freeman, 37, said in a statement posted on the Web site SportsPages.com. He added: "This was a terrible and unforgivable manipulation of the facts. . . . It was the only time I have told such falsehoods and no other deceptions have ever appeared in any of my newspaper stories or two books at any time in my 16 years of practicing journalism. Nevertheless, the information I gave the Star was wrong and I will be punished with the loss of my newspaper career."

Star Editor Dennis Ryerson said in an interview yesterday that he had accepted the resignation, although this was "a bit awkward" because Freeman had not yet started his job as a columnist.

"The message is, he will not be working at the Star," he said. "I'm very sorry about the way it turned out." Ryerson added that a college degree is not required to work at the Star, and in fact, he does not have one.

Ryerson disclosed the news to readers through the paper's Web site yesterday afternoon.

Freeman worked for The Washington Post in 1988 and again from 1990 to 1992, covering pro football. He has also written for the Dallas Morning News and Boston Globe. Freeman is the author of "Bloody Sundays: Inside the Dazzling, Rough-and-Tumble World of the NFL," published last year, and the 2000 book "ESPN: The Uncensored History."

In July, he reported for the Times on allegations of academic misconduct involving Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett.

In his statement, Freeman said "there are no excuses or alibis" for misrepresenting his résumé. "This is my fault and my fault alone. Most of all, I have hurt and disappointed close friends and family, particularly my wife, and for this I am truly sorry. I also want to apologize to the Star."

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