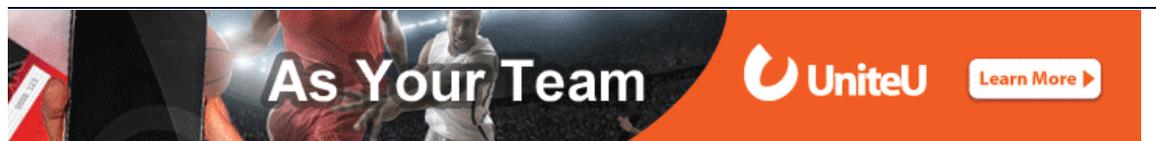


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## David Rudolph, CEO, PlayOn Sports

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David Rudolph was only 26 when he wrote the business plan for Turner South and launched the new cable network. He always appreciated the massive amount of resources he had at his disposal there, but he also wondered, “Am I really any good at this or am I just a product of the environment here?” To answer that question, Rudolph bought a Turner property called PlayOn Sports in 2008 and went into business for himself. He recast PlayOn Sports with a 100 percent focus on the broadcast of high school sports events. More than four years later, Rudolph has 65 full-time employees, close to 2,000 freelancers, and a business that is growing at nearly 100 percent a year..



Photo by: PLAYON SPORTS

“ We have a vision here that eventually every one of the 2 million high school events across the country will broadcast live. ”

**About the model for his business:** We acquire rights like any other broadcaster. There are postseason rights that come from state high school associations, and the regular season mostly comes from the individual schools. We acquire the rights, serve as the production company, and monetize that content through advertising and the licensing of the content primarily to cable operators and regional networks. The last school season (2011-12), we produced 15,000 live events. Based on what we’re seeing through December, that number will grow this year (2012-13) close to 30,000 events. We have agreements with 25 state associations and we’re strongest in the Southeast and Midwest. Our goal is to work with all of them.

**On his 15 years at Turner:** That’s where we first developed the “PlayOn” concept. It actually started with a streaming product called ACC Select, which was a novelty at the time, because you could watch a streaming ACC event and it looked good. But we saw the window closing as these rights packages began to consolidate so that TV and digital were all wrapped up into these billion-dollar packages. That really was an outgrowth of being a Georgia Tech graduate and not being able to watch a Georgia Tech football game at North Carolina. I was annoyed that, as a consumer, I couldn’t watch the game. Now the expectation is that you can watch any event, anywhere, on any device.

**On the evolution of technology:** I’m a believer that technology doesn’t drive but it enables. We’re at a point where we’re seeing the cost [to broadcast a game] go down and the quality is going up. When we spun PlayOn out of Turner in 2008, we didn’t have an HD camera. Now everything we do is in HD. We use no satellites. We can typically get a high-quality [mobile] signal from the venue and stream from there. As we talk to schools, we’re finding that consumers drive this. There’s an expectation. My oldest is 5 years old, and 10 years from now, when he’s entering high school, there won’t be a game you can’t see.

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