

College Basketball

High Point's impassioned student broadcasters exemplify March's madness

Griffin Wright and Jimmy Rosselli paid their own way and stayed in an Airbnb, but their unfiltered reactions were high points of their school's first NCAA tournament bid

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By Kyle Melnick

High Point University's men's basketball team faced a steep deficit in the second half of its conference championship game last week. Anxiety that its season would end without an NCAA tournament invitation extended courtside to Jimmy Rosselli and Griffin Wright, High Point students broadcasting the game.

Rosselli and Wright had paid out of pocket to travel to Tennessee and provide play-by-play and color analysis to a few dozen listeners on the school's student radio station. Neither expected High Point to come back against Winthrop University in the Big South Conference championship game, but they stayed positive on their broadcast.

"They could go on a 10-0 run very quickly," Wright said. "With 15 minutes left in this game, and you're down by 15, you need it to come fast."

When that run came and High Point rallied to win, Rosselli and Wright couldn't contain their enthusiasm. They yelled, flicked their wrists, raised their arms and pulled on each other's suit jackets. Wright jumped from his seat multiple times; Rosselli exclaimed "Oh my goodness!" over and over.

A video of Rosselli and Wright's broadcast went viral in the following days, exemplifying the excitement of March Madness for mid-major programs — and student media covering them.

The sports media majors at the North Carolina university will be on the microphone again when the No. 13 seeded Panthers, making their first NCAA tournament appearance, play No. 4 seed Purdue in a first-round game Thursday at 12:40 Eastern time in Providence, Rhode Island.

“We’re just best friends doing it together,” Rosselli, a sophomore, told The Washington Post from a hotel room in Providence. “There’s no one I’d rather go viral with than this guy.”



@griffinwright46

Me and @Jimmy.Rosselli will see yall at March Madness

#fyp

#foryou

#marchmadness

#hpu

🎵 original sound - Griffin Wright

Rosselli and Wright, a junior, have broadcast many of High Point’s men’s basketball games this season for the student-run High Point Panther Radio Network. They play off each other’s jokes, and sometimes even discuss their intramural basketball team on-air.

When High Point secured the top seed in the Big South Conference’s tournament in Johnson City, Tennessee, this month, Rosselli and Wright wanted to experience postseason games. They paid for the trip themselves and tried to be as cheap as possible. They rented a one-bedroom Airbnb for about \$100 per night. Wright got the bed because he booked the small house; Rosselli slept on the couch.

After Rosselli and Wright broadcast two wins, the Panthers advanced to the championship game March 9. Winthrop led at halftime and extended its advantage to 15 points with under 16 minutes remaining.

Rosselli recorded a video on his phone of himself and Wright courtside to show friends and family, but neither expected a crazy finish to the game. They said their radio station encourages broadcasters to root for the Panthers — although cheering in press sections at sports games is typically frowned upon.

“We want to keep the listeners,” Wright told The Post, “... even though I did not believe in a comeback and neither did Jimmy.”

“I mean, I like to think I believed,” Rosselli responded.

“You did not,” Wright added.

The game’s momentum shifted with a little more than 13 minutes remaining, when Panthers forward Simon Hildebrandt drained a three-pointer to cut High Point’s deficit to five. Rosselli and Wright flicked their wrists when the shot went in before Wright clapped.

Then with just more than 10 minutes left, High Point guard Trae Benham made a deep three-pointer to knot the score at 50.

“Benham!” Rosselli yelled. “Trae Benham! Oh my goodness.”

With less than nine minutes remaining, Benham made a layup while drawing a foul. High Point had pulled ahead, 54-52.

“Oh my goodness!” Rosselli said again while leaning back in his seat. Wright stood and grabbed Rosselli’s jacket as Rosselli continued, “Oh my goodness! Trae Benham! You animal! And one!” Wright stuck his tongue out at the camera.

At the end of High Point’s 81-69 victory, its players stormed the court while Wright stood and raised his arms and Rosselli declared the Panthers “were dancing with glory.”

Rosselli and Wright soon returned to their normal lives. They stopped on their drive back to High Point at McDonald’s and Krispy Kreme for chicken nuggets, french fries, hamburgers and chocolate-sprinkled doughnuts — food that fit their tight budget.

Wright edited the videos of their broadcast and posted them the next day on social media, hoping someone in sports broadcasting would notice them. Soon — to Rosselli and Wright’s surprise — hundreds of thousands of people were watching the video. Barstool Sports called it “perfection.” SB Nation said on X that the call was “electric.”

High Point paid for Rosselli and Wright’s travels Tuesday to Providence. Rosselli said he hopes High Point beats Purdue — so he and Wright can broadcast more games.

“This one will probably be a little bit more professional,” Rosselli said of Thursday’s broadcast.

He paused for a second before adding: “Depending on how this game goes. If it’s a buzzer-beater, ah, we’re losing it. There’s no shot we don’t lose it.”

“I’m actually storming the court,” Wright added.
