

# Baseball Commentary Basics - Tim Collins (www.eurobaseballtv.com)

## General thoughts on baseball commentary:

- The #1 goal of the commentary is to help the viewer enjoy the game - mostly by giving the score often .)
- Pronounce names correctly as best as you can! If you have to ask the player themselves, do so - they will appreciate it!
- Radio style vs. TV style - I prefer radio style because I know many viewers will put the game on and be doing something else simultaneously. With a 'radio style' the announcer would mention every pitch and describe the outcome of each play so that someone who isn't watching can still follow the action.
- WHAT happened. WHO made something happen.
- Keep a rule book handy.
- always keep your own score with a scorebook - don't trust Gamechanger because sometimes it's slow.
- Statistics: I print out pages of stats because it's easier and quicker to look on paper that I've gone over with highlighters during the course of the game. Hitting, pitching and base stealing stats are things I keep handy.

## At the beginning of the game:

- Team intros (Stuttgart Reds 10 wins 8 losses, vs. Haar Disciples 10 wins 8 losses blah blah blah)
- Batting order
- Defensive Alignments
- the pitcher (give statistics, recent performance, bio info)
- the umpires
- any other background info that might be relevant to the game

## At the beginning of each half inning:

- Score and inning
- which hitters are due up, what part of the batting order is it
- What has the defensive pitcher done so far (innings, hits, runs, walks, Ks, pitches, etcetera)
- any defensive updates

## At the end of each inning:

- give all totals for the inning (2 runs, 4 hits, 1 error, 2 men left on base. After 5 full innings, the score is Solingen 5 Bonn 2)

## For each new at bat

- What has the hitter done in his previous at-bats? (McOwen is 1 for 3 with a double and an RBI)
- Check the defensive alignments - tell the viewer if the infielders are shifted to the right, or perhaps playing in looking for a bunt. Where are the outfielders? Deep, shallow, shifted left, right or straightaway?

## The 'verbal instant replay'

- Imagine that a viewer looked away for a moment. Someone makes a great play and they don't see it! That's where you come in. Always go back and describe plays a SECOND (and maybe a third) time after the fact so that those who are saying 'What just happened??!' will get the answer to their question.

## Big moments

- Mention when the runner on base is the 'tying run' or 'winning run'
- Give reasons for people to continue watching the game - predict ways in which the losing team could mount a comeback
- Look for exceptional personal achievements - cycle, no-hitters, high-strikeout totals, etcetera

## Throughout the game

- constantly mention the score and totals (Red Barber egg timer)
- give recaps on how each team has scored
- mention nice defensive plays that took place
- summarize the pitching performances to that point in the game
- add any interesting bio information about the players, or news from the teams or league
- Give the situation very often ("2 outs, runners on 1st and 3rd, 2-2 count on Matt Vance in the 4th inning of a 2-2 tie")

## Extra stuff that makes the game more interesting for viewers:

What is a team hoping for in certain situations?

- Runners on 1st and 3rd with 1 out in a tie game in the 8th inning. Are they playing back to look for a double play? Or is the infield in to try to cut the run off at home plate?

Pitching strategy

- If you are able to see the pitch types, try and keep track of patterns the pitcher is using. Do they go to a slider with 2 strikes every time? Are they using a fastball to jam the hitter? If a guy struck out on a curveball last time, do you think the pitcher will try the same thing again in the next at bat? These are all things you can mention to the viewer.

Base running situations

- Is it a bunt situation? Is the runner in a good situation to try to steal? If so, does the catcher have a good arm?

## Other random thoughts (my personal opinion)

- Opportunity for a uniquely German brand of commentary (similar to how the Montreal Expos French announcers decided to 'invent' a specifically French way to call a baseball game)
  - Umpires - I pretty much never say anything regarding 'bad calls' by an umpire. Umpires are human, and they make mistakes. If you're going to spend twenty minutes complaining about a bad call, then theoretically you should also spend twenty minutes complaining about the pitcher that can't throw strikes, or the fielder who made an error.
  - Openly rooting for your team vs. being impartial, pros and cons of each. My opinion is that being impartial is generally the best, because half of your audience might be rooting for the other team. If you want them to keep watching, you shouldn't make them angry!
  - You don't actually have to talk all that much. No need to tell random stories unless the score is 15-1 in the 3rd inning..
  - Great broadcasters to listen to: Vin Scully (Dodgers Radio/TV), Howie Rose (Mets Radio), Jon Miller (Giants Radio), John Sterling (Yankees Radio), Rick Rizzs (Mariners Radio), Ken Korach (Athletics Radio)... just to name a few. Basically any major league radio broadcast is great to check out.
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## Baseball Broadcast Small Setup - Tim Collins (www.eurobaseballtv.com)

Minimum requirements  
1 camera + announcer

Small Broadcast Setup CONTENTS:

1. **Laptop**
2. **Camcorder (with HDMI output)**
3. **Some way to get the HDMI from the camera into the computer**
4. **Commentary microphone + field/crowd microphone**
5. **Some way to get the commentary microphone into the computer (USB headset mic)**
6. **Broadcasting software (Wirecast, Open Broadcaster Software, Adobe Flash Encoder)**
7. **Internet connection (LTE Stick)**
8. **RAIN PROTECTION!!!!!!**
9. **Extras (SDI cable for increasing camera distance)**
10. **Extras (Belkin Thunderbolt Dock)**

More details to each of the above listed things:

1. **Laptop.** I use a MacBook Pro 15" with extra RAM because it has enough juice to run 3 HD cameras. However a one-camera setup should be possible with just about any laptop (I did it in 2014 with a MacBook Pro 13"), as long as there are either USB3 or Thunderbolt ports. USB2 is NOT fast enough for HDMI camera connections.
2. **Cameras** - I use a Panasonic HC-V210 (about 200euro). The quality is much better than the highest quality Webcams. Webcams also have no zoom feature. I also have 2 Canon Legria camcorders (200Euros), but the Panasonic is better.
3. **Inputs:** Blackmagic Intensity Extreme, UltraStudio, or Magewell USB3 dongle.
4. **Microphones:** Shure Headset Mic (XLR out) or any USB computer headset mic. For field/crowd sounds you could incorporate the sound from the camera, or get a second mic and run it through a mixer (the mixer would go through either USB or
5. **Sound Input:** Either a USB headset or any XLR mic plugged into a mixer - The mixer might have a USB connection or it can be connected to the Blackmagic Intensity Extreme
6. **Broadcasting Software:** I use Wirecast Pro (1000 euros). Incorporate pre-recorded movies (ads), music, graphics, scoreboards, INSTANT REPLAY. It's a great program. Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) is free and apparently also very powerful, but will require more technical knowledge because it's an open source program.
7. **Internet:** If there's no internet at the ballpark then you'll need an LTE stick (Ben Ott will give more info)
8. **RAIN PROTECTION!!!!!!** Modified plastic boxes for protecting power cables, camera covers, emergency tarps...
9. **Extras - SDI Cables:** If you want to put the camera farther than a few meters away from your laptop, you will have to use SDI cables. You must convert the HDMI signal to an SDI one by using HDMI to HD-SDI converter boxes (50 to 100 euros). Depending on your setup, you might have to convert the SDI back to HDMI before connecting it to the laptop (This would be the case with the Intensity Extreme, but not so with UltraStudio or the Magewell SDI-USB3 dongle).
10. **Extras - More power??** I found that when I had three HDMI input converters plugged in to my laptop, it would lose power even though it was plugged in. This is because the laptop was powering the Intensity Extreme, Ultrastudio AND the Magewell SDI-USB3 converter. It was too much power going out and drained the battery. As a result I had to buy a Belkin Thunderbolt Dock (around 200 Euro). This is a device which has extra thunderbolt and USB3 sockets and has it's own plug for electricity. This allowed me to have the three cameras without losing power in my laptop.