



The “Rollercoaster Ride” Of Anne Montgomery, One Of TV’s First Female Sportscasters

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - Anne Montgomery was one of the first women to be a sportscaster on television. Through her long and varied career as a sportscaster, youth-level sports official, teacher and author, she learned how to literally and metaphorically pick herself up from a fall - whether she was trying to stand in a pair of hockey skates or accomplish her goals when others doubted her.

Montgomery said her career overall has been “a bit of a rollercoaster ride” on an episode of [Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](#). Early on in the twists and turns of her career, it became clear she was one of few women in the field at the time.

“When I wanted to be a sportscaster in the 1970s, there weren't any women sportscasters anywhere - there might have been one or two regionally, but I had never seen any,” Montgomery said.



After telling her mother she wanted to be a sportscaster when she grew up, she said her mom told her, “Don't be ridiculous.” However, Montgomery didn't give up on her sportscasting dreams. One day, she was handed a hockey announcement to read over the airwaves on her high school's local radio station, and she soon found herself in charge of making all the school's sports announcements.

Even after graduation, others doubted Montgomery's ability to be a sportscaster. After not having much luck landing a sportscasting job, she eventually found herself on the other side of the microphone as a sports official.

"I loved it, so it was easy for me to say, 'I want to be a sportscaster.' What I didn't notice was that there just simply weren't women doing those jobs back then," she said. "I went to college, got a degree - all my professors said, 'You will never be a sportscaster, you're a woman.' Got out of college, nobody would interview me, and a very strange thing happened one night."

At a Washington Capitals hockey game, Montgomery was seated next to an amateur hockey official who was complaining about the lack of sports officials. Citing Montgomery's background as a figure skater, her aunt suggested she try being a referee, not knowing the difference between figure skates and hockey skates. Montgomery explained figure skates have "toe picks," small ridges which she used to help herself stand as a self-described "lazy" ice skater. She learned the hard way just how different hockey skates are while officiating her first youth hockey game.

"I went to take my first face-off and I fell," Montgomery said. "I'm lying on the ice and 5-year-olds are looking down at me, I'm like, 'Crap.' I tried to get up, and I kept falling down because I had no toe picks, and I don't remember the rest of the game at all."

On the drive home, she decided to become a certified official for all five team spectator sports - football, baseball, ice hockey, soccer and basketball - to gain more intimate knowledge of each sport. If she did that for five years, she believed "some forward-thinking news director might give me a job - and that's exactly what happened."

"I ended up working for five TV stations, including ... ESPN, because of my background as a sports official," she said. "The ironic thing is that I never quit officiating until 2019, so I officiated for 40 years, primarily baseball and football."

"Both of those jobs, it was hard because I was always the only woman. It was a struggle all those years, but I ended up loving officiating - quite honestly, I miss that more than I miss being on TV."

Montgomery was also a teacher for 20 years, and while the rest of her career certainly wasn't easy, she said teaching was the hardest job she ever had. After hanging up her many hats and retiring, she said she still sees barriers for women trying to be sports officials today.

“Here’s part of the problem - I have the answer to the officiating problem: The officiating groups are not recruiting women,” she said. “Women are 51% of the population - why aren’t they trying to draw women into the games?”

“I’ve asked them about this. I said, ‘You guys are complaining about the fact we don’t have enough officials. There are a lot of women out there, and girls play sports today, not like when I was in school. Something like 42% of girls play sports today. Go recruit them, it might solve the problem,’ but they don’t really seem to want to do that.”

Montgomery currently resides in Arizona and is also an author of several novels; more information about her and her books is available at annemontgomerywriter.com. The full interview featuring more insights from Montgomery can be watched at the top of this story or on Riverbender.com/video.