



DOCUMENT 01

NEWSROOM OPERATIONS & EDITORIAL STANDARDS MANUAL

Every Vote Counts News Network™ (EVC News Network™)

North Carolina State, Local, High School & College Sports News

Foundational Operating Document • August 2026

1. Purpose of This Manual

This manual establishes the operating structure, editorial standards, newsroom workflow, sports coverage framework, and public-trust principles for EVC News Network™. It is designed to guide the network from development into regular production while protecting accuracy, fairness, independence, and community credibility.

EVC News Network™ will serve North Carolina with state and local reporting, civic and election information, community and faith stories, and dedicated high school and college sports coverage.

2. Mission and Editorial Promise

Mission: To provide timely, understandable, nonpartisan and community-centered news that helps North Carolinians know what is happening, why it matters, and how it affects their communities.

Editorial Promise: Accuracy before speed. Fairness before favoritism. Service before sensationalism. EVC will clearly distinguish verified reporting, analysis, commentary, advertising, sponsored content, and AI-assisted presentation.

3. Core News Divisions

3.1 State & Local News

- North Carolina state government and public policy.
- County commissions, city and town governments, school boards and public agencies.
- Education, public safety, business, transportation, housing and major community developments.
- Breaking news and significant weather or emergency information when appropriate.

3.2 Politics & Elections

- Nonpartisan coverage of candidates, campaigns, elections and voting information.
- Equal editorial standards regardless of party, ideology, office or candidate.
- Clear sourcing for claims, polling, election results and official voting information.
- News and opinion must be labeled and separated.

3.3 Community & Faith

- Churches, nonprofits, civic organizations and neighborhood initiatives.
- Human-interest stories and North Carolinians making a constructive difference.
- Community calendars, service opportunities and youth programs.
- Faith coverage handled respectfully without turning straight-news reporting into religious endorsement.

3.4 EVC Sports™ - High School & College

EVC Sports™ will be an official newsroom division, not an occasional segment. Its purpose is to give North Carolina athletes, schools, colleges, coaches and communities consistent, credible coverage.

- High school football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, volleyball, track & field and other significant sports.
- College athletics across North Carolina, including major universities, HBCUs, smaller colleges and community-based programs where newsworthy.
- Scores, highlights, standings, playoffs, championships, signing-day stories and athlete features.
- Game of the Week, Athlete of the Week and coach/player interviews.

- Recruiting coverage that respects student-athlete privacy and verifies commitments through reliable sources.
- No exploitation of minors; heightened care with injuries, discipline, family matters and personal information involving high school athletes.

Proposed EVC Sports™ positioning line: “From Friday Night Lights to Saturday College Showdowns - North Carolina Sports Live Here.”

4. Newsroom Chain of Command

Role	Primary Responsibility
Executive Leadership	Sets organizational direction while respecting editorial independence.
News Director / Editor-in-Chief	Final newsroom authority for editorial standards, major stories and corrections.
Managing Producer	Runs daily production schedule, rundown and deadlines.
Assignment Editor	Assigns stories and coordinates reporters and sources.
Politics & Elections Editor	Reviews political coverage for sourcing, fairness and nonpartisan standards.
Sports Director	Leads high school and college sports coverage and coordinates game assignments.
Anchors / Reporters	Research, verify, write and present stories accurately.
Fact-Check / Standards Desk	Verifies names, dates, quotes, statistics, claims and source attribution.
Digital / Social Producer	Publishes approved stories and creates platform-specific clips without changing meaning.

5. Daily Newsroom Workflow

- Morning editorial meeting: identify the day's most important state, local, civic, community and sports stories.
- Assignment: designate reporter/producer, required sources, deadline and expected format.
- Research and verification: confirm facts with primary or authoritative sources whenever possible.
- Script development: write for clarity, brevity and spoken delivery.
- Editorial review: check accuracy, balance, context, legal/ethical concerns and appropriate labels.
- Production: record anchors, reporters, interviews, graphics and sports elements.
- Final quality control: verify names, captions, dates, statistics, graphics and audio before publication.
- Distribution: publish the full newscast and approved short-form clips.
- Post-publication watch: correct meaningful errors promptly and transparently.

6. Flagship 15-Minute EVC News Brief

Approx. Time	Segment	Purpose
1:30	Top Headlines	Fast overview of the most important North Carolina stories.
3:30	State & Local	Government, education, public safety, business and community

		developments.
3:00	Politics & Civic	Nonpartisan elections, government and voter information.
3:00	EVC Sports™	High school and college scores, stories, highlights and upcoming games.
2:00	Community & Faith	Service, nonprofit, church and positive community stories.
2:00	Closing / What to Watch	Upcoming meetings, events, games and next-day developments.

The rundown may change when breaking news requires additional time. The 15-minute format is a discipline, not a reason to omit essential context.

7. Editorial Standards

7.1 Accuracy

No story should knowingly air or publish with an unverified central claim. Names, titles, locations, dates, scores, statistics and quotations must be checked before publication.

7.2 Fairness and Nonpartisanship

Political reporting will not favor or oppose a political party or candidate. When a story contains a significant allegation or criticism about an identifiable person or organization, reasonable efforts should be made to obtain a response before publication.

7.3 Sources

Whenever practical, EVC should rely on primary documents, official records, direct interviews and identifiable authoritative sources. Anonymous sourcing should be exceptional and approved by senior editorial leadership.

7.4 Corrections

Material errors should be corrected promptly. Digital stories should carry a clear correction or update note when the change materially affects the audience's understanding. On-air errors of consequence should receive an on-air correction.

7.5 News vs. Opinion

Straight news, analysis, commentary, editorials and sponsored material must be visibly and verbally distinguishable. Sponsors and advertisers may not dictate news conclusions.

8. Election Coverage Standards

- Use official election authorities for voting dates, locations, registration requirements and certified results.
- Do not present projections, unofficial numbers or social-media claims as certified results.
- Apply consistent interview and profile standards to comparable candidates.
- Disclose relevant conflicts of interest.
- Do not allow advertising relationships to determine editorial coverage.
- Correct false voting information quickly and prominently.

9. EVC Sports™ Standards

- Verify scores and statistics before publication; label preliminary information when confirmation is pending.
- For high school athletes, avoid unnecessary personal details and exercise special care because many athletes are minors.
- Do not speculate about medical conditions or injuries beyond information properly disclosed by authorized sources.
- Recruiting commitments should be attributed to the athlete, school, college, coach or another reliable source.
- Separate sports commentary from factual game reporting.
- Credit photographers, schools, leagues and other rights holders for licensed or authorized media.
- Do not use game footage, music, photographs or broadcast clips without appropriate rights or permission.

10. AI-Assisted Newsroom Standards

EVC may use AI to assist with research organization, transcription, drafting, graphics, translation, production planning and virtual presentation, but human editorial responsibility remains essential.

- AI-generated or synthetic presenters must not be presented in a way that intentionally deceives viewers into believing they are real human reporters.
- AI-generated scripts must be fact-checked before publication.
- AI should not fabricate quotations, interviews, eyewitness accounts, sources, scores or election results.
- Synthetic images or reenactments that could be mistaken for real documentary footage should be clearly labeled.
- Sensitive or consequential stories should receive heightened human review.

11. Breaking News Protocol

- Confirm before announcing whenever possible.
- State clearly what is known, what is not yet known and where information originated.
- Avoid repeating rumors merely because they are trending.
- Update headlines and social posts when facts materially change.
- For emergencies, prioritize authoritative public-safety information and audience usefulness over dramatic presentation.

12. Advertising, Sponsorship & Editorial Independence

EVC may sell advertising and sponsorships to support operations. Commercial relationships must remain separate from editorial judgment.

- Sponsored content must be clearly identified.
- Advertisers cannot purchase favorable news coverage or suppression of legitimate reporting.
- Political advertising must be handled under applicable legal requirements and internal documentation procedures.
- Sports sponsors may sponsor a segment or program but may not control scores, rankings, athlete selection or editorial conclusions.

13. Launch-Week Production Plan

- Pilot 1: Internal rehearsal of the full 15-minute rundown.
- Pilot 2: Recorded test newscast with state/local, politics, community and EVC Sports™ segments.
- Pilot 3: Refined public-facing pilot with graphics, lower-thirds and standardized transitions.
- Review: Evaluate accuracy, pacing, sound, visual identity, presenter performance and sports integration.
- Launch: Begin a sustainable regular schedule before expanding frequency.

14. First-Year Growth Priorities

- Build a reliable North Carolina source and contact database.
- Develop county-by-county and school-by-school sports relationships.
- Establish an EVC Sports™ Game of the Week.
- Create repeatable election-night and breaking-news procedures.
- Develop advertiser and sponsor packages without compromising editorial independence.
- Expand distribution only when the newsroom can maintain accuracy and consistency.

15. Foundational Statement

EVC NEWS NETWORK™

North Carolina's State & Local News - with High School & College Sports

Accuracy • Fairness • Community • Service • Sports • Trust

This document is intended as an internal operating foundation and should be reviewed as EVC grows, hires personnel, enters commercial agreements, expands sports rights usage, or develops formal legal and compliance policies.