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## From Matc Student To South Korean Tv Star

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Melanie Conklin

Madison Area Technical College's sport programs don't normally get media visits from South Korea. But that's exactly what happened this past week.

Jason Verhelst, MATC's sports information director, was contacted by a Korean television crew last June. The producer was interested in a story he had come across on-line about student Brandon Watkins, the double amputee who plays basketball on MATC's men's team with prosthetic legs.

So last week the Korean TV crew came to Madison and shot a documentary on Watkins to air on one of South Korea's three major stations sometime early next year. (That's a potential audience of 50 million people.)

"People in South Korea who are paraplegic are often just put in homes and that's how they live out their lives," says Verhelst, explaining why they'd travel the ocean to film Watkins. "They wanted to show that you don't have to be sitting in a chair. Brandon was kind of awestruck, but he's outgoing enough that he enjoyed the whole thing."

Verhelst says the crew filmed Watkins being fitted for new legs, interviewed his family members and had him play street ball outside. (Verhelst also reveals that Watkins is happy with the new legs, that he says may even give the 6-foot-1 player a little additional height.)

Theo Chung, the production coordinator for the Seoul Broadcasting Systems crew, says when he first met Watkins, he didn't think they had the right guy, "because he looks so normal." Chung calls Watkins "an awesome kid" and says he was full of surprises that he's eager to show.

"The point of the program is to introduce him to the Korean audience," says Chung. "I personally had never heard of anyone playing basketball with prosthetic legs. There are people with physical disabilities in life and this message is to say to them, 'Don't get down. You can do it.' We wanted to focus on how he's overcome his disadvantage."

### The scoop on celebrity scalps

It's not every day a Madison hair stylist gets to do the hair and makeup for the Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson. But when she was in Chicago on Oct. 29, Jamie Lee (who splits his time between Rose's Design Studio on Odana Road in Madison and Teddie Kossof Salon in Northfield, Ill.) was tapped to fix up Ferguson, not once but twice.

Ferguson came into the salon in the morning before doing television interviews, and then was back again in the evening before a Ronald

McDonald House Charities' annual benefit gala to have her hair put partially up.

"She was very nice," says Lee, who is no stranger to celebrity scalps. He styled Joan Rivers' hair for the Women's Expo when she was in Madison in 1995. But he didn't get any dirt on Britain's royals.

"She was mostly just interested in getting her lines right for the events," he says.

Asked what famous head of hair he'd jump at styling if given the chance, he pauses, then answers, "Camilla. Her stylist or whomever puts her look together - I don't know. I wouldn't mind a challenge."

Sanders moves on, up?

After two years at the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, vice president of public policy and economic development Henry Sanders has given his notice. "December 31st will be my last day," confirms Sanders. "I want to stay around for a little while to help with the transition."

Sanders, who is also president of the young professionals network MAGNET, has been eyed as a candidate for political office. And his life-long roots on Madison's North Side make him a prime contestant for the seat held by state Rep. Dave Travis, although Travis is not stepping down. Asked if he'd run against Travis, Sanders says he's interested in some political office in the future, but he has more immediate plans.

"I'm going to start focusing on MAGNET and try to give back to the community, especially the North Side," says Sanders.

Sounds like perfect material for a stump speech.

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