David Lowden

My name is David Lowden and I am the coordinator for sports journalism at La Trobe University and at the Olympics I will be a studio producer. What that will entail is looking after one of the presenters for Foxtel and their role in conjunction with me will be to link the different sports on 8 channels that the viewer has a choice of all at once. Each channel will have a different sport and it will be finishing at different times and so we’ll have to make a judgement as to when one channels finishing are we going live on that channel and then hopefully we have time to host something on another channel, if they’re finishing at the same time we’ll have to predict then in advance and maybe pre-record a host-in or perhaps there will be an interview to be conducted and we have 8 channels finishing at different times so we’ll need time to do the interview but also need to keep an eye on those channels so it’s a bit like air traffic control- we’re going to be watching over here, watching over there, looking for that- ok the hockey’s finishing there, the cycling is about to start so e are going to be jumping around for maybe 8 hours at a time. So we wont be bored!

If you watch the football at the moment on Foxtel, it looks roughly the same – sometimes it is the same- coverage on channel 7- maybe there are less adds, maybe there are more adds, the same commentators, but its more or less the same but your going to see quite a different product. SO people are used to seeing the Olympics in kind of a highlight form, where channel 9 or channel 7 will show a bit of this or a bit of that, now that’s all they can do so that’s not a criticism because if you only have one channel and you only want to show the best then you show all the Australian’s and the super stars of world sport and you have to make decisions on what your going to show so you’ll get to the weightlifting late to show the Aussie and maybe the gold medallist, nickoff and see if we win the table tennis, then nick off and see if we win the 100 meters final. So Foxtel, part of their rights agreement is once they get to a sport they have to stay and by in large they have to stay right to the end even if that takes 4 hours. By in large they will get in at the start and stay right to the end even if that takes four hours, so some of those channels will be going in long form, but people who are interested in those sports say if your interested in equestrian youll get to see all the jumpers and the context of a win and I think, if you’re a sports nut then that’s really interesting.

Well were going to hopefully Skype into tutorials – so a colleague of mine Erdem Kiock is going to take my tutorials for me but I’m hoping to join the class through Skype but I’m also going to give my lectures from London so well be talking about issues wed normally talk about and one of those is major events and what better even that from the Olympics- so we can talk about the press centre, the international broadcast centre well be able to talk to international sports journalists about their approach so hopefully we can bring La Trobe students to London via those lectures. And then hopefully I can bring back some footage and some interviews as well that we can watch when we’re back about how it was covered and what to look for- that sort of thing.

I think I love the idea that we are having some small contribution to the telling of the story that’s unfolding – the athletes are the ones that put in the work, and they are the ones that write the story in terms of competing but were the observers of it and everyone loves the Olympics- not everyone loves sport but most people down tools for the Olympics so just to have a small part in bringing ht at joy to people- sport in some ways is really trivial and in someway its really important because it gives people a break from the mundane or it can inspire junior athletes as well and you really are producing something for the record and later on in history you can look back and say ‘I had a really small part in that- I covered that event.’

What I am really most excited about is that England really knows how to put on a show. So they have had two Olympics in the past, one of them I think was wartime and another was handed in at short notice because another city couldn’t do it, but this si their first big chance to say ‘look what we can do.’ I think its going to be the best Olympics ever. People said that about Sydney- but I think we’re going to see an amazing event- really well done and just so much celebration and pomp and ceremony and there are just some iconic images- the beach volleyball in front of Buckingham Palace, there are some terrific sites, so if you think about Big Ben and the Tower of Britain – the Olympic rings are already there, they look fantastic, so its really exiting to see it – I’m leaving in just a few days and I am starting to tingle a little bit.