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## Top 30 Under 30 with Nina Mandell

By [Kirsten Ballard](#) June 16, 2016



When Nina Mandell was 15, she wanted to be a professional soccer player. Her parents gently let her know that probably wasn't going to happen, so she defiantly said she was going to be a sports journalist; and that's exactly what she did.

Now she is the managing editor of For the Win, a USA TODAY publication. She was one of the founding staff members of the social sports news property.

Jamie Mottram, creator of FTW, nominated Mandell for News Media Alliance's Top 30 Under 30. He wrote that she pushes the staff to be progress and explore social initiatives such as Facebook Instant Articles and Snapchat stories. Under her leadership the site posted its biggest numbers in February with 16 million unique visitors.

"Nina's collaborative and calm approach has stabilized FTW and its staff during a time in which the site and industry-at-large are undergoing radical change," he writes.

As the industry changes, Mandell says she is most excited for all the places people can get news. She loved the viral running man video sensation.

"It's funny, and not that big of a deal, but there are so many emerging technologies, without them, we wouldn't have the videos of them in the locker room," she says.

Her day starts at 8 a.m. with a morning news meeting among senior editors. After that, she works on interviews and stories. She collaborates with other writers and editors.

She stresses the importance of teamwork. "Every place I've worked and really loved, I was most excited about my coworkers and all the cool stuff they do every day," she says.

Even at her young age, she understands the importance of listening.

"I think my age is an advantage, but you still have to listen to people with experience. [Millennials] grew up with more technology but it is important remember [veteran journalists] have a few journalist tools up their sleeves that we haven't even thought of," she says.

Recently, Mandell and a social media editor went to the WNBA draft and covered the event with Facebook Live and Snapchat.

"Not only were we covering a sport that doesn't get that much coverage, we used all the tools available to journalists now," she says.

She describes the end project as a really full story. The possibilities for live streaming are diverse and endless, and that intrigues Mandell.

"Everyone is just coming up with new ways to cover the news," she says. "If you're having a dull day, you're not in the right spot. The exciting thing about news and sports news is there's always something exciting. It's our job to find it."

*News Media Alliance announced the winners of its first "[Top 30 Under 30](#)" Awards program at [mediaXchange 2016](#) in April, which honors young leaders working in every aspect of the news media who are contributing to the future success of the industry. Over the next several weeks we will feature profiles on the winners, highlighting their work and ideas, and how they're helping the industry grow and evolve.*



Kirsten Ballard



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