Big Red Mascot Challenge

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Leave it to Big Red, WKU’s wildly popular mascot, to go from being left out of a national mascot challenge to almost winning the whole thing.

Amy Bingham has more on the creative effort behind the last minute campaign in this week’s View from the Hill.

Olivia Higgins \ Director of Marketing, WKU Athletics

Logan Fry \ Creative Content Producer, WKU Athletics & WKU-PBS

Ralph Carey \ Alum, Creator of Big Red

 “If there’s a competition to be had Western Kentucky University is looking to compete in it.”

At a time when COVID 19 had brought sports to a screeching halt, here comes a mascot challenge on Twitter. Except WKU fans quickly noticed something was missing.

 “They just started blowing up Sirius XM and was like I can’t believe you left Big Red out. Big Red is the first mascot to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, you left him out, he’s nationally known.”

After being added in a play in game, Big Red began swatting away the competition.

 “And our fan base is known for that. They’re passionate and they will do just about anything for Big Red, but they’ll do just about anything to protect our brand.”

These clever videos produced were also a big part of Big Red’s success.

 “In our group text and and email and everything confirming the video that would go out that night for the win and stuff like that and started talking about what we’re gonna do next.”

In the end, a questionable last minute surge by BYU knocked Big Red out of the top spot.

 “We pretty much decided at that point let’s just lose with dignity.”

 “I think my favorite video from this whole campaign was the one at the end because it kind of resolved all the complete monstrosity that was us undertaking this bracket and literally campaigning for Big Red.”

It was competition we were all craving and even the lovable character’s creator was following along.

 “I always find it just a head scratcher and sort of fascinating that, this far down the road, this creature even exists.”

Not only exists, but after forty years is still putting WKU on the map even during a pandemic.

 “Just the exposure not just for Big Red but our university in general, you never would have thought those two weeks would bring that much exposure but it did.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Big Red may have lost to BYU’s mascot but it did lead to a conversation between the schools’ athletic directors. Stay tuned to find out if WKU and BYU will compete against each other in the future.

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