

# Koza: 'On fire' and 'loooovin' it'

Catch phrases  
abound for local  
sportscaster

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LIMA — Vince Koza does not just see simple pass interceptions or fumbles. He sees "disaster."

Mere hot streaks are too tepid for his tastes. Instead, he sees someone who is "on fire."

And when he tells you about a play he likes, he doesn't just like it, he "looooooves" it, stretching the word out in a futile attempt to pronounce "love" as a four-syllable word.

For 24 years Koza has been the sports anchor on WLIO-TV. Except for his first few years in that chair, when he says he took himself too seriously, he has liberally seasoned his broadcasts with his signature catch phrases.

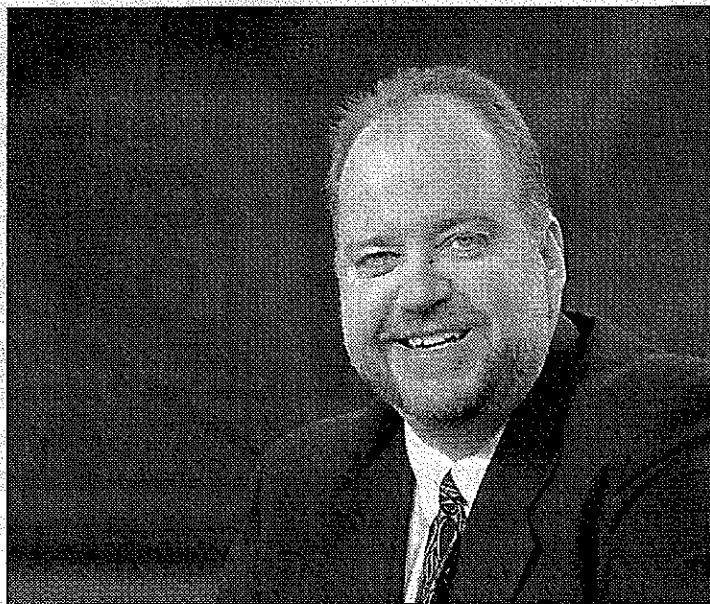
He has stuck with the old favorites and added a few new ones along the way. Those exclamations have stayed with his viewers, too.

Koza does not recede into the backdrop when he does a sportscast. He's working hard. Working hard at having a good time.

"I think I've just developed the notion that if I wasn't having fun, why would people want to watch," the veteran broadcaster said.

As for the catch phrases, he said, "That just came. I don't know how I started doing it. I keep doing it, keep running it into the ground. But it works. I think the coolest thing is when people do them back to me."

Koza got his start in broadcast journalism as a teenager



ANDREW McMURTRIE • The Lima News

**WLIO-TV sports anchor Vince Koza has become a familiar figure to area sports fans in his 24 years in that position. While he might be best known for his work behind the microphone, he says covering games is his favorite part of his job.**

doing play-by-play of high school sports on his school's radio station in Streetsboro in northeast Ohio. His idol was Cleveland Cavaliers announcer Joe Tait. He even followed Tait's advice on where to go to college when he picked Ohio University.

He still wanted to go into radio play-by-play when he got out of OU in 1980, but turned to television when WLIO offered him a job that was part sports reporting, part news reporting.

"I'm from Ohio, but when I first came here for the interview, I really didn't know where Lima was," Koza said. "I saw this naked doll on top of a restaurant and thought, 'OK.' I thought the interview went horrible, but I got the job. I didn't think I would be here more than two years."

Instead, he stayed 25 years

and met his wife of 15 years, Holly Gearman, at work. They have twin daughters, Brittany and Sarah, age 12.

He also finally got into radio. He has been the host of "Sports Talk With Koza," now on WIMA-AM, for eight years and the co-host of "Buckeye Tailgate Party" on that station since 1998.

But it all comes back to live TV. And with Koza, it is decidedly live.

He uses scripts but doesn't like them. "I write terribly as far as verbs and nouns and punctuation and all those things," he said, with a smile.

So, working from a general outline, he has room to ad lib. Room for another "Ho-ho," or an extra "I love it."

Apparently, it works. As he would put it, he has "dialed long distance" in his job.