

SUMMARY

The goal of this project was to create a six-part audiovisual documentary series, „Vaikus enne tormi“ (“Silence Before the Storm”), which follows and conceptualizes the activities and development of the Tartu football club Welco's first team during the 2025 season. The objective of the project was successfully fulfilled: the planned series was completed in its entirety and premiered on the Coolbet Estonia YouTube platform, garnering positive feedback from both collaboration partners and a wider audience. Achieving this goal was made possible through systematic pre-production, maintaining a strong vision, and making an uncompromising effort during both the shooting period and post-production.

One of the defining aspects of this project was the fact that I carried out the entire production process alone—simultaneously acting as the producer, director, cinematographer, sound recordist, and editor. This one-man-band dynamic fundamentally influenced the entire process. On one hand, it placed a tremendous burden and responsibility on me, requiring technical and creative decisions to often be made in a fraction of a second. On the other hand, it gave me complete authorial control over the work, teaching me to see the big picture and make painful but necessary compromises between the ideal vision and the technical resources available.

The curriculum at the Pallas University of Applied Sciences has provided me with a strong foundation and the tools to cope with this complex process. The skill developed during my studies to constantly seek and find more interesting compositions helped me visually enrich even the most routine locker room or training shots, making the viewer's experience more multi-layered. The film course taken in the autumn of my final academic year proved especially valuable, giving me very clear priorities right before the most intensive phase of the project. For instance, it reaffirmed that sound quality is the absolute number one priority in documentary filmmaking. In my own practice, there were situations during shoots where the equipment failed or I misjudged the acoustic complexity of the environment, making it incredibly difficult to salvage the sound to a satisfactory level later in post-production. Furthermore, the course reminded me of the importance of controlled lighting, which I successfully applied during interviews, ensuring a more professional look for the series.

However, I received the most practical and direct lesson from lecturer Raphael Gianelli-Meriano, who emphasized a rule in the context of brainstorming and meetings: "Write absolutely everything down." The human brain's short-term memory is limited, and the best solutions can disappear in an instant. I applied this principle during the final phase of my project, and it saved me on several occasions—looking back, I found ideas and developments in my notes that worked times better in editing and story building than what I had blindly tried to do from memory.

Creating the documentary series also enriched me with deep human understanding. Although I practically knew the entire team beforehand, the long-term and direct presence with the camera allowed me to learn about details and facets of personalities that usually remain hidden behind the football pitch and standard media interactions. A prime example for me was the story of winger Erki Mõttus. An outwardly large, massive, and explosive player who possesses excellent technique thanks to his futsal background seems like an ideal candidate for aerial duels. Yet, it was only during this process that I discovered he deliberately avoids heading the ball due to a previous traumatic experience. Although this fact revealed a completely new angle to his player profile, as an author, I made the decision not to cover it in the documentary. The vast majority of opponents did not know this detail and disclosing it could have harmed him sportingly on the pitch. Such nuances and the responsible choices that accompany them reminded me that the true value of a sports documentary lies not in the results, but in the people and their hidden barriers, which make their effort on screen truly meaningful.

In conclusion, this project provided me not only with a valuable and substantial piece for my portfolio but also moulded me into a significantly more independent, technically aware, and solution-oriented visual storyteller.