



## **Media in Sports**

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### **Abstract**

Stories about sports make up a large part of today's news coverage. In particular, information and news about star players are what drive headlines, and celebrity athletes can play a significant role in strategic communication efforts. The aim of this study is know the impact of media on sports, the study of sport and the media has been a popular topic in recent years. Reports and studies on media sport institutions, media sport audiences, media sport texts and sport journalism, abound in academic literature. Within this genre, a number of authors have noted the existence of a symbiotic relationship between sport and the mass media in society. Public Relations in Sports Business, Social Media's Effects on Public Relations, Public Relations Objectives for Sports Entities, Social Media and it's affect on Sports. The media includes any form of promotion of sport, such as: TV and Radio - Show (or commentate on) matches and competitions. There are also highlights; documentaries and quiz shows about sports, Cable and Satellite TV. These show events on a pay-per-view basis, Have up-to-date information about events in the world of sport, All teams and major athletes have their own websites where you can find all kinds of information about the team/athlete/matches, Newspapers and Magazines have Print predictions and results of matches, as well as articles about athletes and clubs.

**Keywords:** media, TV, radio, sport, social media

### **Introduction**

In many ways, both today's sport and the media are classic outcomes and, indeed, icons of the far reaching social, economic and technological change that characterised the twentieth century. Each has developed extensively and rapidly as a major global industry. Each plays a significant part in structuring and informing people's lives. Each has a global as well as more local scope of operation and has the structures and practices to reflect this. Importantly, they are two industries tied together in complex networks of relationships. Their respective histories of development have been fuelled and influenced by the dynamics of this partnership. The evidence of the partnership is all too apparent. The wellbeing of particular sports or, indeed, sport as whole has become linked. To income generated directly or indirectly from the media. The way in which sport fills newspaper pages and television and radio schedules bears testimony to the influence it has on the structure and extent of media activity. However, partnerships are not always equal, stable or constructive for those involved. In this study, consideration will be given to a number of themes and issues that characterise the link between sport and the media. Sport has become 'big business'. It is now a well-established global industry with international organising bodies, like the International Olympic Committee (IOC), eager to promote and structure its further development. Sport, but not necessarily in all its forms, has something to sell. It has its events, leagues, clubs and elite performers. Sport can make money but the costs involved, not least the large rewards paid to the top performers in some sports and the capital and revenue expense of increasingly spectacular

sports stadiums, has left it with an insatiable appetite for more and more funding. The world of sport is a competitive one, not just in terms of which team tops the league or who wins the gold medal, but also which sports are able to attract the greatest financial resources. The relationship with the media is central to the political economy of sport. Traditionally, it was the medium through which key information like schedules of events/matches, venues and times was transmitted to the public. Today, the media, primarily television, offer sport-added attractions in terms of finance from broadcasting fees and exposure to advertisers, sponsors and a wider audience. Hence there is the all too apparent readiness of sports organizations to get involved with the media. Stories about sports make up a large part of today's news coverage. In particular, information and news about star players are what drive headlines, and celebrity athletes can play a significant role in strategic communication efforts. The aim of this study is know the impact of media on sports.

### **Television and sports**

Television has clearly become the leading medium in the context of sports. Like the radio, this medium allows live reporting, but because it transmits not only sound but also live images, the feeling of being there is even stronger for television spectators than for radio listeners. So, with television, major sporting contests are no longer available just to spectators witnessing the event in person, but also to many millions more who can view the spectacle in their own homes, thanks to their television sets. The added value stemming from this medium is evident: close-ups, replays, slow motion, and

the different angles from different cameras, and cameras that follow the action. Due to added values-stemming from reporting skills, and broadcasting itself-televised sports reaches more individuals than does on-site sports. The phenomenon of mass consumerism of televised sport has created a much different feel for sport than in the past. To be part of the party, athletes and sports managers are ready to accept interference from the side of television. Media managers decide, for instance, at what time a sporting event starts. Several sports have accepted changes in their rules just to make the sport more suited to television. Commercial breaks are imposed time-outs. The marriage between sports and television is so tight in some countries that a divorce would mean bankruptcy for athletes and clubs. But it is a love-hate relationship with the medium in the stronger position. The beginning of television broadcasting was, as well, already closely related to sports. As a test for the new medium, promoters established a TV program at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. The program could be received within a distance of 10 miles from the sender. But as there were yet no TV sets, the organizers also provided 21 auditoriums with large screens. Early television sports had several technical problems. The cameras were immobile, and close-ups were impossible. Therefore boxing seemed to be an ideal sport for television in the beginning because of the small dimensions of the ring. Nowadays other sports have become much more important. The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s brought smaller, more mobile cameras with more functions, worldwide satellite transmissions, and, finally, color television. These developments were a breakthrough for sports on television. The increased number of TV channels due to cable and satellite television made it possible in 1979 to start the first network in the USA specializing in sports, ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network).

### **Sports and the Internet**

Since the mid-1990s, not only television but also the Internet can transmit live pictures of sports events. However, the memory capacities of personal computers and data transfer rates have set limits to this kind of sports broadcasting so far. Therefore television still remains the most important medium for sports reporting. But the Internet already offers a lot of interesting options for sports fans today. The Internet allows a fast worldwide transfer of data, so it is well suited to the transmission of short sports news. Portal sites specialized in sports and the official websites maintained by organizers of sports events continuously report the latest news and results. These services are very popular, especially during big sports events. The official websites of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, the 2002 winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, and the 2002 Soccer World Cup in Japan and Korea registered billions of page views within a few weeks. Websites are comparatively easy to produce and use; with the aid of a search engine, fans can easily find even detailed information about special topics. So the World Wide Web is also an ideal place for sports information and for those sports neglected in other media. One of the first websites successfully covering a sports event did not deal with one of the major sports: The

event was the Whitbread around-the-world sailing race in 1997 (Bertrand, 1999) <sup>[1]</sup>.

### **Social Media and it's affect on Sports**

With the boom of social media over the last couple years, it has taken a toll on society that you can now find long lost friends, relatives and meet people at a more rapid pace than ever thought possible. But the sports world tried to stay out and away from it during its infancy that really took a change last year and looks to continue to build steam into this year. But as with everything, there is a fine line that could go from letting the fans into their lives and then giving the fans too much information. It seems like in 2011 that every league, team, player, and even commissioners have their own face book pages and twitter accounts. But the real troubling fact is the fact that college players have been on twitter and have been known to let their emotions take control of their better judgment. Fans can now get into their favorite athletes life better than they ever have before. Sometimes you will get the very bland tweet about what was for breakfast, but then you get the juicy tweet or status update that ends up making headlines on sport scanner. While most people will say this is a great thing and will help make the player and even the sport in general better. I tend to disagree, while It is fun getting an inside look at some people, you have seen in the last year the wrong side of it. Players let their opinions fly, and end up getting in trouble over it. Some college coaches have gone so far to ban their players from even being on twitter or face book at all. While this is a smart move, it still happens that some players get on and use them anyway. But over the last year it has been real troubling that High School kids have been bombarded on their social networks by overzealous fans that will go as far to say anything to get a recruit to their school. On the other side of that coin, is there have been stories of kids getting death threats on face book and twitter for not going to a particular school. I understand being a rabid fan and doing what it takes to help your team or school, but attacking a high school kid is crossing a line. If fans want to go berate an NFL, NBA or even an NHL player, then go ahead, because they will not take you serious. This is where I see the issue with the whole social media in sports, because some fans abuse it and take some things out of the realm of reason. Am I saying that sports stars, college students and high school recruits not use social media? No, I just think that especially for the recruits, they should keep all their information under the most strict privacy policy. I think the use of twitter and facebook in sports has hurt the overall enjoyment of the sports experience, because now people go to sporting events and spend as much time looking at their phone as opposed to watching the actual event Another evil with twitter especially is the fact that one person will say something based on a rumor, or something they heard and then it will get retweeted and passed along until it creates a major story that may or may not be true. This ends up happening almost on a weekly basis and then everyone has to retract their thoughts or question why it became a story when it never was to begin with. Am I hypocritical for saying this? Probably. The media has enforced several 'cosmetic' changes within sporting events. Mainly to

suit a television audience, these range from trivial changes such as names on the back of players shirts to make them identifiable to commentators and fans watching via media. Large numbers are now also pinned to runner in athletics so that commentators can distinguish them. There have also been changes in the equipment used by sportsmen and women. In tennis, for example, the ball colour changed from white to yellow, to benefit television audiences. A white ball would be more visible for the players themselves, so the change of colour puts them at a disadvantage. Media coverage also impacts upon the times that sport is viewed, gone are the days of traditional 3pm Saturday afternoon kick-offs in football. Now the kick offs are spread across the week in order to be televised. This season in 16Premiership matches, Manchester United have had one 'traditional' 3pm kick-off. This of course impacts upon the players. There are more games in a shorter amount of time. Players fatigue quickly, causing loss of form, impacting upon the clubs fortunes. Some fans are unable to travel to 8pm kick-offs on a Wednesday so they stay at home, choosing to watch from their armchairs. During the football World Cup in 1994 the television companies

Attempted to introduce quarters instead of the usual halves. This was in an attempt to fit in more Advertisements. In Gridiron every stoppage is filled with an advertisement break even if it is less than thirty seconds long. This disrupts the flow of the game and the experience of the viewer (Williams, 1994). The media has impacted upon how players are viewed. Media's involvement in sports has resulted in "sport's mutating into an entertainment medium on par with show business." Without the intense media interest in sport would those that compete have ever reached the level of celebrity that they have achieved? The media representation of players is such that they can determine what a nation thinks of them. The English press particularly is renowned for 'building players up, only to knock them down.' For instance after David Beckham's dismissal in World Cup '98, the media instigated what was effectively a 'hate campaign' against him. Now he is a media darling and can do little wrong in their eyes, or the eyes of a fawning public. Media coverage has created 'superstars', more celebrity than sportsperson. They adorn the front pages as well as back and appear in glossy magazines (Whannel, 2000).

### Media's Influence on Athletic Performance

Many athletes are targets of media prey. Win or lose, their performance and life is publicly dissected by the media. Winning brings about media glorification and expectation, and/or jealousy and criticism. Losing brings forth negative judgment and more criticism. Howard Ferguson (1990) in his book, *The Edge*, said, "Criticism can be easily avoided by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing. Mediocre people play it safe and avoid criticism at all costs. Champions risk criticism every time they perform." One such athlete who risked media criticism was Miki Ando. Miki Ando was a two-time Japanese national figure skating champion and 2004 Junior World champion. She also became the first female skater to successfully complete a quadruple jump in competition. Ando is very popular in Japan and receives a lot

of attention from gossip magazines and other Japanese media. Ando's athletic performance struggled in 2005 and 2006, and media coverage turned negative. When the Japanese Skating Federation (JSF) selected her to be on its 2006 Olympic woman's figure skating team, the press said she did not deserve to go to Torino. They also frowned on her for wearing mini skirts. The JSF was so concerned media coverage would negatively affect Ando as she prepared for the Olympics, they sent formal written requests to several magazine publishers asking them to cut back on their coverage (NBC, 2006).

### Conclusion

The study of media and sport has developed mainly since 1980, flourishing in the 1990s. Over the past decade interest in sport in general and specifically its interaction with the media has grown immensely, as the long list of publications in this area testifies. There are many non-academic books in this area, including biographies and autobiographies of athletes like Michael Jordan<sup>3</sup> and broadcasters like Les Keiter,<sup>4</sup> and there are a variety of professional guides aimed at teaching the 'techniques, skills, and operations necessary for successful entry into the field of sports casting' (Hitchcock, 1991) <sup>[6]</sup>. Multi-disciplinary approaches to mediated sport, such as Garry Whannel's marshalling of media studies and sociological/cultural studies perspectives, have been increasingly common. <sup>13</sup> Whannel considers the ways in which masculinity and male identity are represented through images of sport and sport stars. This historical and case study based book traces media narratives of sporting stars from the pre-radio era to the present specialist television channels, newspaper supplements and websites, exploring a range of masculine types, from muscular Christians to 'New Lads'. In his contribution to the present collection, Whannel argues that, in an era in which both moralities and masculinities are perceived by many to be in crisis, sport holds a central place in contemporary culture and sports stars become the focal point of discourses of masculinity and morality (Whannel, 2002). The examples and cases above support the premise that media does impact athletic performance. The cases also reveal or recognize that athletes have two choices: 1) they can succumb to the challenges of media distractions, or 2) they can meet the challenges of media.

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