

The sports industry in the 21st century media essay



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As we continue to move firmly into the twenty first century, industrialization has brought an increase in leisure time to the people of the UK, leading to more time for people to attend and follow spectator sports, greater participation in athletic sports activities and increased accessibility. This report will look at how these trends continued with the advent of mass media and global communication. It will also examine how in the new millennium electronic media outlets including satellite television, mobile phones and the internet largely satisfy cravings for immediate information and leisure activities, as sports fans can now follow the exploits of professional athletes through them. This report will also examine the growth of the sports and leisure industry and the advancements in technology.

In 1957 the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) established a committee to examine the factors affecting the development of games sports and outdoor activities in the UK, and to make any recommendations as to any practical measures which should be taken by statutory or voluntary bodies in order that these activities may play their full part in promoting the general welfare of the community (Wolfenden 1960). The committee was chaired by Sir John Wolfenden, this led to the report being named the Wolfenden report. One of the recommendations subsequently shaped the future administration of sport in the UK. The recommendation sought the establishment of a Sports Development Council which would receive finance from the government and disperse it in the most appropriate directions. Indeed in 1961 the Ministry of Education which provided grants to the CCPR, significantly increased that support, and additional money was also made available to assist other voluntary projects to help promote sport and

recreation. The Wolfenden report did much to influence government policy of the time, with both the Labour and Conservative parties producing manifestos that gave a prominent role to games and sport more generally as a social good for all. The same faith in power of sport as a force of social good is expressed in a number of more recent government reports. Indeed Prior to the 1997 General Election in Britain the labour party stated that sport can be crucial for the social and personal development of young people, and by participating in sporting activities they can learn to differentiate between good and bad behaviour. According to (Crabbe 2000) the labour party declared that if elected they would develop sporting opportunities for young people to help foster a sense of their value to society and help tackle problems of youth crime. Indeed after the Labour Party was elected in 1997 the British government started supporting sport programmes for at risk youth.

In the 1970's the average working week was 50 hours but according to the Office of National Statistics this had dropped to 35 hours a week in 2008. This is due to a combination of higher productivity and a gradual rise of part time workers as more women enter the work force. Another fall in the average is believed to be that people have been seeking a more positive work life balance. (Clutterbuck 2003) defines work life balance as being aware of the different demands on time and energy and having the ability to make choices in the allocation of time for work and leisure.

Television has played a significant part in the growth of sport, especially during its emergence as a dominant global medium between 1960 and 1980.

(Whannel 2009) states that television, together with commercial
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sponsorship, transformed sport, bringing it significant new income and promoting changes in rules, presentation and cultural form. According to (Scannell 2009), increasingly, from the 1970's, it was not the regular weekly sport that commanded the largest audiences but, rather, the occasional major events, such as the Olympic Games and football's World Cup. In the past two decades deregulation and digitalization have expanded the number of channels, but this fragmentation, combined with the growth of the internet, has meant that the era in which shared domestic leisure was dominated by the viewing of the major channels is closing. Yet, sport provides an exception, an instance when around the world millions share a live unpredictable viewing experience.

It is generally accepted that the media have become some of the most powerful institutional forces in society. (Sage 1998) states that although we all use media in different ways, the media are responsible for directing attention and shaping cultural attitudes and values. According to (Harris and Clayton 2002), most aspects of life in contemporary societies have an impact on the media and, reciprocally, are influenced by the media. How the media represent a social group gives important clues to understanding their social status, social values, norms and attitudes toward that group. Thus, the dominant electronic and print media narratives about elite female and male athletes helps to define, normalize, influence, and reflect mainstream beliefs about them.

Sky television has had a massive impact on the sport and leisure industry.

Sky has hundreds of different channels showing: movies, music, children's programmes, wildlife and many more including four major sports channels
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which in high definition makes the viewer believe they are at the game from the comfort of their own chair, and with a number of camera angles, and action replays they never miss a thing, Sky has also had a rapid growth, here is a time line of the growth of Sky since its birth in February 1985, by 1990 Sky had 1 million subscribers also in 1990 Sky formed into British Sky broadcasting. In 1991 the sports channel changed its name to Sky sports one, in 1992 Sky signed the rights to show F. A. premier league matches, and in 1994 five new channels including Sky sports two were formed. In 1996 Sky signed an extension of premier league rights worth £670 million, 1998 saw Sky digital launch and in 2001 Sky signed its 5th million customer, which by 2003 went up 50% to 7.5 million. In 2006 Sky HD launched ten channels and by 2009 Sky had over 9 million customers in the UK. Sky sports now shows hundreds of different sports not associated with this country, for example, American football (N. F. L), baseball, basketball (NBA), Ice hockey (NHL), Ultimate fighter, WWE and many more that without sky, the viewer would not have access to. (Sky. com)

According to (Sport England) the number of adults in England who regularly play sport has risen by more than half a million over the last two years, with the number of men reaching 4.04 million regularly taking part. The media devote the majority of their coverage to male athletes although, according to (Vincent 2004) recent studies indicate that female athletes are receiving a more balanced and equitable amount of media coverage particularly in major international events. This is thought to be partly to the increase in more women participating in sport which has reached 2.81 million regularly taking part, but mostly to the media actively promoting female athletes who

have a heterosexually feminine appearance, such as Anna Kournikova.

(Bernstein 2002) argues that the recent trend to provide elite female athletes with more coverage is undermined if the narratives are replete with gender stereotypes, trivialisation and sexual innuendo.

The internet is another reason for the growth of the sport and leisure industry and according to National Statistics online in 2009 18. 31 million UK households had access to the internet this represents 70% of the UK households and had increased by 13% since 2006 when 14. 26 million households had access, the internet is a world of information and with the click of a button you have access to: on line banking, shopping, social networking, your favourite football team official website, E-Bay, E mail accounts and anyone doing college or university courses would be lost without the use of the world wide web. Before the invention of the internet course work would be done by use of books and newspaper articles making life so much harder, all these features are now available to the student without leaving the comfort of their own home, which frees up time for other activities.

Sports sponsorship has played a big part in the rapid growth of the sport and leisure industry, sport sponsorship is a tool used increasingly by corporations to generate awareness, alter attitudes and attempt to influence consumer behaviour patterns. According to (Dolphin 2003) sport sponsorship is the fastest growing form of marketing and has achieved impressive benefits for both small and large companies. (Sims 2005) adds that the best forms of sponsorship are: sponsors brand appearing on the championship title, official merchandise rights, media partnerships, sponsoring broadcasts of sport on <https://assignbuster.com/the-sports-industry-in-the-21st-century-media-essay/>

TV, and more recent naming rights of stadiums. In 2006 a report valued the UK market at £428 million which is over 5% of the world wide industry and the market has grown year on year. According to (Drewer 2006) this growth is characterised by the industry turning to distinctly fewer but larger sponsorship deals. The UK industry has nearly doubled in size between 1992 and 2005, and (Lester 2005) states that instead of the market maturing and perhaps declining in the future, the prospect of London holding 2012 Olympics means that sponsorship deals are likely to reach new heights in future years, accelerating growth dramatically within the industry.

Sport tourism has been a factor for the growth of the sport and leisure industry and according to (Collins 1991) this is down to the heightened interests in health and fitness since the 1970's. (Getz 1998) states the growing interest in the prominent roles played by sports and sports events in urban and urban imagery, has the potential to leverage tourism opportunities associated with sports events. (Nauright 1996) states these processes have been driven by economic and political forces as well as a change in social attitudes and values. According to (Halberstam 1999), they have also been facilitated by technological advancements such as satellite television broadcasting that have influenced the sportification of society. (Faulkner 1998) states that as a consequence of developments, the geographical extent and volume of sports related travel has grown exponentially. (Glyptis 1989) states that a study of Great Britain showed strong growth in recreational sport during the 1980's, furthermore participation was increasing in all social strata, most sports were receiving participation from expanding social spectrums, and all recorded significant

increases in youth holidays, short breaks, and second holidays. According to (Hall 1992) the two decades that have followed have served to strengthen these trends.

Car ownership is another major reason for people taking part in out of home leisure activities and although it is not the cheapest mode of transport it is often the most convenient. According to (National statistics online) the percentage of households in Great Britain with access to two cars more than quadrupled between 1971 and 2006 rising from 6% to 26 %. This gives us the opportunity to go and watch sporting events such as: football matches, rugby and cricket. Attendances at sporting events are rising all the time with Manchester United's average attendance rising from 58. 014 in 2000 to 75. 304 in 2009 and Arsenal also rising from 38. 184 in 2000 to 60. 040 in 2009. (European football attendances 2009) The reason for this is that both clubs extended the capacity of their stadia, although both teams had the need as tickets were in demand. Furthermore (Stevens 2001) states that premier league games played at Old Trafford regularly attract between 4000 and 6000 international tourists to the Greater Manchester area.

In conclusion the growth of the modern sport and leisure industry started with the Wolfenden report and government policy's on sport, and continued with its strong links to commercial enterprise. Stadiums and arenas bear the names of businesses that pay to buy the naming rights to these venues. Commercial sponsor's logos appear on athletes clothing and equipment and on the facilities in which they compete. Media companies spend vast amounts of money on rights to broadcast sporting events, and advertisers pay to promote their products and service in the commercial breaks during <https://assignbuster.com/the-sports-industry-in-the-21st-century-media-essay/>

the screening of these events, cities invest large sums of money, often at the expense of other more important social projects, to stage major sporting events, and promote tourism. Star athletes are sold for millions of pounds and even recreational athletes are subject to a constant barrage of pressure to improve their game by purchasing the latest high tech sports equipment. This combined with the advancements in modern technology and the increased amount of free time people have for sports and leisure, can only mean even more growth for the industry in future years.