

History of sports journalism media essay



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Sports journalism is a form of journalism that reports on sports topics and events. While the sports department within some newspapers has been mockingly called the toy department, because sports journalists do not concern themselves with the 'serious' topics covered by the news desk, sports coverage has grown in importance as sport has grown in wealth, power and influence.

Sports journalism is an essential element of any news media organization. Sports journalism includes organizations devoted entirely to sports reporting - newspapers such as L'Equipe in France, La Gazzetta dello Sport in Italy, Marca in Spain, and the defunct Sporting Life in Britain, American magazines such as Sports Illustrated and the Sporting News, all-sports talk radio stations, and television networks such as Eurosport, ESPN and The Sports Network (TSN).

History Of Sports Journalism

Known as the Golden Age of Sports, the decade or so between the end of World War I and the beginning of the great depression was described as a decade of change. America and the world wanted to put the memory of the Great War behind them and enjoy life. The economy was booming because of the war and the automobile was becoming a more common means of transportation. This freedom allowed America to fall in love with sports through the exploits of Jack Dempsey, Man O' War, The Four Horseman of Notre, and the biggest name of all, Babe Ruth.

Sports journalism's roots developed long before Sports Illustrated and ESPN. Sports writers, although mocked in early days for not being serious writers,

now revel in an industry worth billions. From the Internet, newspapers, radio and television to the movies and magazines, content is vast and packed with heart racing photos and videos of games, plays, moments, and victories and losses. Athletes jockey for a place in the news and the cameras always seem to be rolling, and now for the history of sports journalism.

1789 IN THE BEGINNING

Horses, which some paleontologists believe may have originally evolved from dinosaurs, may have the right to claim the first glimmers of sports journalism. In 1727, *The Racing Calendar* offers information about races and their results. In 1791, *The General Stud book* is added. The site *History World*, www.historyworld.net explains that the English were curious about the lineage of their horses too.

Boxing is a popular sport in London. Champion Daniel Mendoza writes a book about the sport. It is called *The Art of Boxing*. Mendoza goes on to lose the title from John Jackson, known as Gentleman Jack. According to the site, his name "is more for the circle of friends than his fighting style."

From these times, the publications for men told of great battles between men and if they fought for fun, exercise or settling a wager. Even back then, the details involving blood, bruises and broken bones excited men. The sport gained in popularity after readers caught on to the idea of beating someone without getting in trouble. Women were not allowed in any sports establishment in London, and most had no desire to change this rule.

In the 1800s, the idea of basketball is started and other sports follow. The times of America demanded attention to be placed on work and home, not recreational activities. In the early part of the 1900s, America dealt with the full impact of the Industrial Revolution and World War I. The times preceding the First World War brought a new life to the game of golf, which has its early origins in Scotland. The Scots claim they invented the game; however, there is some speculation that they may have evolved it instead.

1900s Early Days

Golf is a popular game and has several magazines devoted to it. This includes *The American Golfer*. Published by Conde Nast, it was founded in the early half of the 1900s. Its covers have featured golf greats, including Bobby Jones, Walter Hagen and Byron Nelson.

The Depression and World War II brought a halt to sports as scores of men and women left home to defend the country. Children and youth continued to play. Yet, it was after the war that sports celebrated a rebirth.

1954 THE BIRTH OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Sports Illustrated is arguably one of the most popular magazines for sports journalism. Even though its first issue was not released until August of 1954, the executives at Time, Inc realized its potential when World War II ended and sports became a major recreational activity. The first cover features slugger Eddie Matthews of the Milwaukee Braves.

Back then, executives did not know much about sports journalism. The magazine changed from one week to the next as they tried different ideas.

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Still, the topics offered readers a full range of information and photographs regarding different sports. These included everything from football and basketball to gymnastics and even bullfighting! The earlier issues featured how-to tips too.

Once the readership became established, executives enticed fans with “ a three-page centre foldout of 1954 Topps baseball cards.” Willie Mays, Jackie Robinson and Ted Williams were featured on the cards, which were “ printed on the same paper stock as the magazine.”

The term, “ Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue” dates back to the early 1960s when executives began pondering the idea. In January 1964, the first issue showing a woman with a white two-piece suit caused an instant reaction. The picture is “ tame by today’s standards.”

In the early days of the magazine African Americans did not have equality or respect. Through time, and many long fights, this is changing. Sports Illustrated is one place to feature the black athletes. These include two popular personalities, Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan. It was claims that “ They have been featured on the front cover more times than any other athletes.”

The front cover of SI, as it is called by many readers and fans, featured non-athlete faces, including Bob Hope, Ernest Hemingway and President John F. Kennedy. These issues, if they can be found and in top condition, have enormous value.

SPORTS JOURNALISM NOW

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Today, Sports Illustrated is branching out with an issue for youth. Its content is designed to encourage involvement in sports, provide information about reducing injuries, and highlighting major names like Michael Johnson and others. The editors know the youth are influenced by what they include in each issue. In response, they often include ads by stars that encourage youth to avoid drugs and alcohol, stay in school and remain clear of trouble. It is one of the few magazines geared towards youth.

Newspapers provided sports journalism from the first days of publishing. The coverage was basic and sparse. Writers often did not know much about the sports themselves. Occasionally, a sportswriter would actually have a working knowledge of the game.

Times changed when accuracy and details became more important than yellow journalism. This was when the focus was on the sensational bits of news and facts often went unverified, if they were facts at all. As credible papers debuted, sportswriters needed more knowledge of the sport they covered. Now, many companies and stations want actual experience from their writers. This makes former athletes more valuable and offers them a chance to stay “in the game” instead of disappearing from sight.

The Internet, radio shows and television offer sports journalism. The depth of coverage is intense and high point players garner attention and fame. The stories by sportswriters cover more than scores and highlights; they also cover future plays, fears of coaches, personal snapshots of players, typical road life adventures, issues with recruiting and trades.

It is not just the fans who pay attention to the sportswriters. Coaches from around the country, scouts and even advertisers watch and listen. Nike, Spalding and other big names use the information provided by the sportswriters when looking for the next big idea. They want to see who will be the next star. The whole wants to know too, and sportswriters have plenty of answers.

A Sports Journalists

A sports writer has the responsibility to both entertain and inform people about what is occurring within the world of sports. Some sports writers focus on one particular sport whereas others write on all sports within a given area. Some sports writers are syndicated or are published in more than one newspaper and others may write for a local newspaper or even for a website, blog, magazine or TV show.

Sports writers may work freelance and sell individual stories to various news outlets or they may work for a given publication. Those sports writers that do freelance work pick their sporting events to cover, whereas those that work for a publication are usually assigned stories. Both types of sports writers have to be able to capture the excitement and interest of the reader as well as provide an accurate depiction of the sporting event or issue that they are writing on.

A sports writer must be willing to work long hours and still make deadlines for printing. Most writers now use computer word processing programs that make editing and revising a bit easier, and also allows for submissions by email to meet tight deadlines. Creativity, a very complete understanding of

the sport, good rapport with athletes, coaches and managers as well as an ability to write are all important for a sports writer. An interest in news as well as keeping up-to-date on all issues with regards to the sports community is also important on a daily basis.

Common work activities include:

Attending games and sporting events to be able to write accurately and effectively on the events of the game.

Writing insightful, informative and original stories on various aspects of sports from human interest on up to game day results.

Researching, networking and developing contacts in the sporting world that can provide accurate and up-to-date information on various aspects of the sport.

Meeting with publishers, editors and writing teams to develop and obtain assignments or ideas for possible stories.

Keeping in constant contact with athletes, owners, coaches and managers and using high ethical standards to avoid compromising the writing.

As the name suggests, Sports Journalism reports on sports topics and events and it is an essential element of any news media organization. Today career in sports is at its boom and which also brings wonderful career opportunities for sports journalists as well. Television, radio, magazines, internet have become an integral part of people's life. Many of them are ardent fans of different sports; they switch to TV, websites, newspaper for getting latest

updates and news in their sports. Thus, the scope of sports journalism is increasing gradually. Sports Journalism prepares students to sports reporting career and also introduces them with the writing of a sports writer and media professionals use.

But still a lot to done in this field, it is disappointing to say that there are not enough good sports magazines in Indian languages. A couple of English sports magazines are available in the market which cater with the need of limited sports fans but many sports loving people who are not comfortable in English do not enjoy this privilege.

Today it is a rewarding vocation which requires talented and skilled sports media professionals. To be a sport journalist you need to know inside out of your subject and have a passion to make a mark in this vocation.

It also demands lot of hard work and onus. However, rewards are lucrative, a sport journalist gets box seats at the games, meets international sports star, gets lot of exposure while travelling from one country to another, getting to know the people who train Olympics athletes and fame appreciations from the readers and fans.

Today, internet has become an important part of sports journalism. Almost all journalists have to start from ground zero. So if you are an aspiring Journalist, you can start with your own blogs on your favourite team or particular sport. This helps you to build up your portfolio of self-published clips and if any sports organization finds your blog interesting then you could also get a chance to work with them.

Today Sports Journalism has turned into long form writing, it also produces popular books on sports which include biographies, history and investigations. Many western countries have their own national association of sports journalists. In India there has been recent growth in Sports Journalism. The sports column in various leading newspapers is widely popular among readers. Indians today not just appreciate cricket but they have also understood the importance of other sports also like football, hockey, wrestling, boxing etc.

You could go for a degree in sports journalism which could enhance your writing and reporting skills and also trains you efficiently in the areas sports. You would learn to write technical details about a sport in a simple manner. One could also opt for journalism and match reporting course which deals with going to sport games, sporting events, and venues, meeting with players then reporting all this to sports crazy audience.

The career opportunities in sports journalism are match reporter, freelance sports journalist and sports writer. You would get to work in newspaper, radio, TV, magazines and online journalism.

As the conclusion, sport is one of the well-published issues in the Net. Sport issues gain a lot of publicity and discussions in the media. The examples are numerous: thousands of football news article depict the reactions of trainers to a particular event. Important soccer games are an everyday issue in TV channels. New technologies are used everywhere in coverage of sports: tennis streaming video presents the particular strokes of favoured tennis stars, such as Rafael Nadal and Maria Sharapova. At the days of serious

matches, fans enjoy watching the game of their favoured teams in tennis or football online. We might ask ourselves: what is the role the Media plays in Sport?

One probable answer would be that the media successfully exploits the public need for entertainment. People have always felt the need to be entertained, starting from the days of gladiators, when the public' general demand was to see people die in front of them in exchange for their money. As the years went by, the forms of the entertainment changed and became less cruel, but the principle of the crowd asking for Panem et circenses (i. e. "bread and circuses") remained the same. In this matter, sports news is the best possible entertainment, and watching sport online or on TV is the best possible way to witness the actual thing happening.

And here comes the next possible answer: media adheres to the needs of the wide public, fulfilling the desire to watch the "actual thing" on-line. Although a football match might occur in Milano, and tennis game may take place in Moscow, media brings the tennis game and the football match straight to your living room, without the need to get up from sofa and buy the ticket to Milano or wherever you want to get to. Media makes use of our need to witness the actual thing by serving as a mediator between the sporting event, which happens somewhere out there, and us, the viewers.

Being a central part of our everyday experience, media brings sports coverage to our living room and shows it to us whenever we choose. I'd say it's a good thing, but you - choose for yourselves.