

Role and Impact of Sports Journalism

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Abstract

Sports journalism plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and generating interest in sports. It provides extensive coverage of sporting events, personalities, and issues related to sports. Through various forms of media, such as print, broadcast, and digital platforms, sports journalists inform and entertain sports fans while also holding athletes, teams, and sports organizations accountable. The impact of sports journalism can be seen in the way it influences public discourse, inspires young athletes, and even shapes public policy. Overall, sports journalism remains an important component of modern journalism, with its ability to create engaging stories, foster debate, and connect with audiences around the world.

Introduction

Man has a great affinity towards sports since ancient times. Men and women belonging to each and every section of society were influenced by different types of sporting events. An account of different types of games and sports can be seen in ancient writings and scriptures. The narratives of various types of physical training and training of weaponry given to the sons of king Pandu and king Kuru by Acharya Drona and other competitions are found in various literary texts, which are a form of sports reporting. Instances of sports reporting can also be found in foreign lands as well. Roman philosopher and writer Homer (850 B.C.) has written about a wrestling match between Odysseus and Ajax in his epic drama Iliad. There has been a long tradition and history of sports culture in the western world since the beginning of the inaugural Olympic Games in ancient Rome.

The media has a great influence on sport in terms of generating money by supplying free publicity and advertisements. There are many positive aspects in the relationship of sports with media. Sports covering media can be divided in two broad categories, the print media and the electronic media. The beginning of 1950's saw television emerging as a dominant medium for sports delivery . It maintained it's position through the end of the century .At the end of the 20th century, the internet began to open new way to telecast sport news, and perhaps in the future it will dominate other media as technology opens up new

opportunities for sports fans. Both sports and mass media keep trying to reach people as spectators, fans, and consumers; both actively affect the audience as well as the advertising market (including the sponsors). We as consumers can be slotted as either direct or indirect viewers. Direct Spectators attend live sports competitions at a stadium, or some other venue. Whereas the indirect viewers are those that watch or listen to sports events by the medium of radio, television or the internet. Taking a cue from the British newspapers, Indian newspapers also started to give importance to the sports journalism. Initially, sports news were not given in a systematically organized manner in Indian newspapers, but now the situation has changed and almost every major Indian newspaper gives ample space to sports news in its publication.

Objectives and Evolution of Sports Journalism

The prime motive of sports journalism is to present the facts correctly in a proper manner and not to know about the environment of games or sports. A sports enthusiast's first concern is the statistics related to a sporting event. The integrity of sports writing depends on a clear and precise description of facts and data so that even a layman with minimal knowledge of sports could understand it. Sports journalism is not restricted to a single country. This is always done with an international perspective because everyone wants to know about the standards of the sportspersons belonging to other countries.

The growth of industrialization, modernization and telecommunication has led to the development of sports from pre-historic times to the present day. Radio transmissions of sport events began in the 1920s, which just happened to be the golden age of sports and eventually sports helped to make the late 1920s and early 1930s the golden age of radio. The second half of the 19th century saw the appearance of first sports pages in the big city dailies. William Randolph Hearst the publisher of New York journal takes the credit of establishing first modern sports section. Television soon took over as the leading medium with reference to sports. The feeling of being in scene is stronger for television as this medium allows live reporting along with sound and live images. 1950's saw television emerging as a greatest medium through out the United States. The end of 1950's emerged as what is considered "greatest game ever played" which was the 1958 NFL championship between The Baltimore Colts and The New York Giants. In the mid-1990s, Internet to captured the scene as it could transmit live pictures of sports events. However, the memory potential of personal computers and data transfer rates set the limits to this kind of sports broadcasting. Therefore television remained or dominant medium for sports reporting. But Internet still offers a lot of interesting variation for sports enthusiasts today. (Bieber,

Hebecker, &Schwier, 2000). With an upsurge of social media over the last couple years, it has taken a stalk on society and people at a more strongpace than before. But the sports arena remained drifted from it during its initial stages that really took a change in previous years and seems to build steam into present years . But as it is 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. As was seen in 2011 every team, league and sportsperson seemed to have their own facebook pages and twitter accounts. (Nazemi&Khoshemehr, 2012). The media has huge influence on how people view the sports persons. Media's participation in sports has resulted in "sport's mutating into an entertainment medium on par with show business." Without the fierce media involvement in sports the sports person could not have achieved the level of celebrity. The media portrayal of players is such that they can control what a nation thinks of them. The English press specifically is famous for 'building players up, only to knock them down.' For instance after David Beckham's defeat in World Cup '98, the media provoked 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. They cover the front as well as back pages of all fancy magazines.

Effects of media on sports

Few people would dismiss that the media can favorably affect sport. The media can affect the sports scene and provide free public attention to local teams, and present player personalities and build fan following for teams and single sportsperson .Also matches shown on the TV create more sponsorship, People get to know about the rules of the games after watching sportspersons on TV andseeing them in newspaper people make them their role models .Viewing matches on the TV can help us see how a technique should be performed which could help our presentation in matches. The popularity of professional sports increased with the T.V. viewing audience. People who had minimal interest in sports could not help watching the bits of game in their favourite T.V channels . Local business also played a crucial role in sports publicity by advertising about the local teams in an attempt to attract more customers who are fans . Media can also have a negative influence on sports . It can change the way sports is presented to the audience .Therefore traditional thinkers oppose any kind of change in sports as they claimed that changes can damaged the image of sports .The media can also have adverse effect on sports as only the popular sports get more audience on TV and in newspapers etc. It doesn't help encourage people into the less popular sports. Another one is for matches that are show on TV ticket sales often drop, There is a lot of sports on TV now a days. Some sports personalitiesoften

complain of paying more attention to their private lives than their game . Media can pressurize the organizers of competitions to make the viewing experience better for TV audiences. For example in last Olympics, the marathon race was held at a time which suited TV companies, inspite of it being the hottest time of day. Themajor issue with the whole social media in sports is that some fans abuse it and take some things out of the realm of reason. Am not saying that sports stars, college students and high school recruits should 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 most of time looking at their phone. The media has enforced several ‘cosmetic’ changes within sporting events. 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 affects the time that sport is seen, gone are the days of usual 3pm Saturday afternoon watching the football match. Now the kick offs are spread across the week in order to be televised. This season in 16 Premiership matches, Manchester United have had one ‘traditional’ 3pm kick-off. This of course impacts upon the players. There are various games in a shortduration of time. Players fatigue quickly, causing loss of form, impacting upon the clubs fortunes. Even the fans are not able to travel to 8pm kickoffs on a Wednesday so they remain at home, choosing to watch from their comfortable places .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). Many athletes are targets of media prey. There is a certain tension between sports journalists and the athletes they cover. Because they are looking for a story, many journalists will probe the personal life of an athlete and sometime share the less flattering aspects. Other journalists tend to be critical of teams, owners, coaches, and players in order to stimulate readership. Professional sports are so accessible on television that fans become spoiled watching superior athletes and often lose interest in the athletes on local minor league, college, or high school teams. (Leonard 1980). Gambling has always beena part and parcel of the sports world. Betting takes place between neighbors and friends, in office pools .More serious betting is aided by the media reports on odds set

in Las Vegas by bookmakers, picks by experts on television shows, injury and status report of players in daily papers, and articles online predicting outcomes. Those who worry about the unhealthy influence of gambling in society wish the media did less to accommodate those who gamble (brown, 2000; Jenkins, 2000). Sport sells mass media and media sells sport, therefore, the media has biased coverage because it assumes its consumers are men and aligns its coverage to suit its potential customers (Pederson, 2002).

Effect of sports on media

As is seen in the earlier section, that media has been a great support in rapid expansion of professional sport. However, it is not a one sided affair sports provide media with huge known audience that becomes lucrative to advertisers all around the world. Thus, the money generated from sports coverage has been a major source of income for all types of media like newspaper, television and sports magazines. Newspapers have thrived on comprehensive sports coverage section for more than a century. Reading sports pages has become the first priority for a large number of readers. This is the primary reason that some newspaper sell on. Even though the fans watch the sports event on television or in person they love to read the accounts of their favorite sports events in the next day newspaper. Advertisers for the products that are targeted to that number of population have captured the opportunity to reach their potential customers through appearing in sports section. Magazines that cover such sports have responded to growing interest in specific sports. Most of the magazine rarely cover sports events until there is a major human interest involved.

Conclusion

Sports journalism has become an integral part of modern journalism, it focuses on reporting amateur and professional sporting news providing extensive coverage and analysis of various sports and their related issues. Through its ability to inform, entertain, and engage audiences, it plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and generating interest in sports. The impact of sports journalism can be seen in the way it influences public discourse, inspires young athletes, and even shapes public policy. As the world of sports continues to evolve, sports journalism will undoubtedly remain a vital component of the media landscape, providing valuable insights, thought-provoking perspectives, and captivating stories for sports fans around the globe. It can influence audience by increasing their curiosity towards the game as well as their favorite sports personality. In the present electronic age media will continue to build public opinion and interest.

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