

Media and Sports Full Paper

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I. INTRODUCTION

Media is the collective communication outlets or tools that are used to store and deliver information or data. It is either associated with communication media or the specialized mass media communication businesses such as: print media and the press, photography, advertising, cinema, broadcasting (radio and television) and publishing. Sports and the mass media enjoy a very symbiotic relationship in Indian society. The “very symbiotic relationship” between the media and sports has profoundly affected both participants. And the advertising industry forms an important part of the relationship. 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).

The press is the oldest medium regularly informing people about sports. From the beginning, sports teams showed keen interest in print media coverage: Newspapers formed the principal means of bringing news of coming events and results of past events.

Sport refers to a playful self-development, self actualization, and competitive use of physical and mental skills. The history of sport activities is as long as the history of humans. Fitness played an important role in human evolution. For example, hunting, one of the main adaptive problems in evolutionary history, requires physical fitness and good teamwork. For hunters, these qualities meant more and/or better food; better and/or more food meant better chances in the battle for survival. Good physical, mental, and social shape improved the chances to successfully protect groups and tribes from other groups of aggressive intruders. Because of this connection, we can say that the first sportsmen were hunters and soldiers. Indeed, there are strong theories of sports being symbolic hunts, either for other humans or for animals. Most civilizations know sport activities of an elementary nature: running; boxing; wrestling; animal fights; horse races; throwing the javelin, the discus, or stones; archery; swimming; dancing; etc. No wonder contemporary players and fans still find sports very attractive. The development of sports from pre-historic times until now is a function of industrialization, modernization, and telecommunication. In themselves, sports provide reliable mirrors of societies. They reflect social values that can extend from individual values like discipline, asceticism, and self control to collective values like sportsmanship and fairness, and generally accepted values like the belief in effort and productivity, the advantage of competition, and—following the logic of capitalism—the survival of the fittest

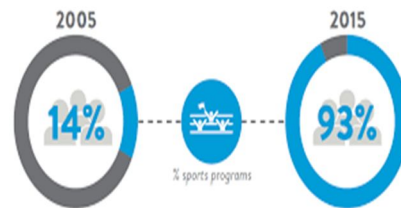
Sports also act as seismographs of social and cultural changes within social units of any size. They are strongly linked to the prevailing lifestyles in modern societies. Sports, to a certain degree, can even replace a

function of religions by defining a specific set and hierarchy of values. Sports are integrative and image building elements for individuals, segments of societies, and entire societies. They act as unifying forces and strong factors of socialization, improving the social acceptance of athletes and their fans. Sports can also support social and cultural identities and the construction of national identities.

News of coming events built audiences for sporting contests and, together with the results of past events, helped to sell newspapers. Lamprecht and Stam distinguish three categories of print media dealing with sports:

- sports pages in daily newspapers
- sports papers and magazines (with general topics or specialized in certain kinds of sports)
- Periodicals published by sport clubs and associations.

Sports pages in daily newspapers, The first newspapers were published in the beginning of the 17th century and about 150 years later the first sports-related articles appeared. In the middle of the 18th century sports became a topic in newspapers of the United States: In 1733 the Boston Gazette described a local boxing match between the athletes John Faulcomer and Bob Russel. Such reports about sporting events originally formed a part of the newspapers' local section. The first newspaper with a special sports section was the Morning Herald in England (1817), followed by other English and American papers.



II. SPORTS AND THE PRESS :

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III. SPORTS AND RADIO.

Up to the early 20th century, the only way to share the immediate drama of a sports event was either to play or to attend. But then came radio. The added value of the radio—compared to the printed media—is the opportunity of live reporting. From the very beginning the radio took advantage of this asset. Live radio reporting gave the impression of being there, of being a witness of something emotional and suspenseful. Announcers learned very quickly to give the impression of dense and dramatic events. Another advantage of the radio was and still is its very fast speed. Results and scores can be diffused instantaneously in a very flexible program. And the radio medium can reach people at any time anywhere, i.e., in the car, at the workplace, on the beach, etc. Technically, radio stations and their reporters can very easily be interconnected so that radio listeners can virtually move from one place to another. Finally, radio reporting excels at interviews, one genuine genre of radio.



IV. SPORTS AND TELEVISION

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, the different angles from different cameras, and cameras that follow the action. It can be more exciting to be a spectator in front of the television screen than to be a spectator in the stadium, far away from the playing field or the arena floor. And, what is most important, television shows live people, sports-men and -women, usually perfectly built, completely fit, attractive, and highly trained young people. The “meaning a trois”—i.e. sports, media, and advertising—produces a highly marketable service: showbusiness.



V. 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 capacity 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. Statistics, plans, and background information can be consulted without any problems because of the almost unlimited memory capacity of the World Wide Web. So the new medium may be used as a sports encyclopedia. Furthermore, the Internet is a platform on which athletes can present themselves: Almost all sports clubs and successful athletes have their own websites. And finally, the Internet is an interactive medium, so sports fans can also act as web publishers. Some of them collect information about their idols and publish it on the web; others use discussion forums; and sometimes fans place their bets at online betting offices. All in all, it can be said that the Internet has become a popular medium for sports fans, too. 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 (Settele, 2002). Independent sports portal sites are also frequently used. But many of the free services can hardly recover their expenses.



VI. SPORTS JOURNALISTS:

Sports journalists face a very demanding job. They have to make their comments quickly and precisely, and a large audience closely follows their work. Still, for a long time, many newspapers considered the sports section as the “toy department”, with the sports journalists being the “outsiders in the editorial office”. Sports journalism had little prestige. Possible reasons for this situation included the alleged popularity of the sports section among the lower classes (although there were always sports fans in all social classes) and the lower education level of sports journalists in comparison to other journalists. Some journalists also criticized their sports journalist colleagues who made friends with athletes, thus causing a lack of professional distance. The lack of training in journalism could in fact be a problem among sports journalists. Even some decades ago, a personal relationship to sports and knowledge about sports were much more important than knowledge or training in journalism for many media companies seeking to hire a sports journalist. In the 1950s and 1960s, the *Berner Tagblatt*, a Swiss daily newspaper, boasted about the fact that the articles in its sports section were written by active athletes. For many years, this information could be read on almost every sports page of this paper. Many sports journalists felt they occupied an isolated position at work: They had more contact with sports journalists working for other media than with their colleagues working for other sections of the same medium. Furthermore, as the qualifications for sports reporting and other reporters were quite different, it was hardly possible for a sports journalist to change departments and to write about other topics



VII. CONCLUSION:

The rise of the mass media is the most significant development in modern sports, a development in the context of market forces. The relationship between sports, media, and the advertising industry is symbiotic a mutually dependent relationship. This means that all elements in that system get a fair share, a share everyone only gets with the help of others while helping others. One could also say that the cooperation of the above mentioned partners is crucial for the survival of the three of them. Sports generates news as well as entertainment values. That makes it highly attractive for the media. And the history of the media shows that they exploited that lucrative source from the very beginning. Following their own logic, they added highly marketable qualities to the business of sports reporting. Sporting events underwent dramatization and personalization, and became producers of sensations and stories of human interest. The medium of radio—following the telegraph—allowed live transmissions and added speed to sports reporting. Television added the personal experience of authenticity and offered the possibility of witnessing sporting events without going to the stadium or arena. In addition to that, with the help of different techniques (close ups, slow motion), it created new media realities. At the end television changed sports into a money-making show business. The importance of televised sports made it also interesting for media studies. The long list of books and articles on sports and television gives evidence for the growing interest of media scholars in what has become the most important non-important issue in contemporary societies. The development from sports news in the local columns of newspapers to the creation of sports-only television channels gives further evidence of the importance of sports in leisure societies. Since the category “sports” plays such an important role for the media, they improved the professional competence of the persons who cover sports events and their actors. Sports reporters became well regarded and highly respected journalists in their media concerns. Their main good is entertainment. Sports has the capacity of creating strong and long lasting images for athletes and their countries. Performances of sportsmen and -women quite often are the filters through which the whole world sees a nation, a country, a society, or a party. No wonder that politicians show interest in apolitical events. Good performances, fine success, and glorious athletes create with the help of the media identity and integration. And this, after all, is something every social unit needs.