

# “It’s Dude Time!”: A Quarter Century of Excluding Women’s Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows

Communication & Sport  
1-27  
© The Author(s) 2015  
Reprints and permission:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/2167479515588761  
com.sagepub.com  


Cheryl Cooky<sup>1</sup>, Michael A. Messner<sup>2</sup>, and Michela Musto<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The last quarter century has seen a dramatic movement of girls and women into sport, but this social change is reflected unevenly in sports media. This study, a 5-year update to a 25-year longitudinal study, indicates that the quantity of coverage of women’s sports in televised sports news and highlights shows remains dismally low. Even more so than in past iterations of this study, the lion’s share of coverage is given to the “big three” of men’s pro and college football, basketball, and baseball. The study reveals some qualitative changes over time, including a decline in the once-common tendency to present women as sexualized objects of humor replaced by a tendency to view women athletes in their roles as mothers. The analysis highlights a stark contrast between the exciting, amplified delivery of stories about men’s sports, and the often dull, matter-of-fact delivery of women’s sports stories. The article ends with suggestions for three policy changes that would move TV sports news and highlights shows toward greater gender equity and fairness.

## Keywords

gender, media, sport, *SportsCenter*, content analysis

---

<sup>1</sup> Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, USA

<sup>2</sup> Department of Sociology and Gender Studies, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

## Corresponding Author:

Cheryl Cooky, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, Purdue University, 100 N. University St., Beering Hall, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA.

Email: ccooky@purdue.edu

Viewers of TV sports news broadcasts watching Los Angeles local news affiliates KNBC, KABC, and KCBS on the evening of July 14, 1989, saw no coverage of women's sports. Instead, several shots of female spectators were shown, including one of a large-breasted woman wearing a tank top at a Minnesota Twins baseball game. The commentator queried, "Isn't baseball a great sport? Just brings out the best in everyone! Okay, I know we'll get complaints, but it's not like we snuck into her backyard and took her picture. We're talking public place here!" That same month, during the July 25, 1989, broadcast, the only mention of a female athlete was essentially a gag feature. Footage showed golfer Patty Sheehan driving her ball straight into the water. The commentator said, "Whoa! That shot needs just a little work, Patty. She was out of the hunt in the Boston Big Five Classic." The following story showed a man making a hole in one at a miniature golf tournament, and the rest of the broadcast covered only men's sports.

On July 21, 2014, a day on which none of the Los Angeles network affiliate news shows devoted a second of time to women's sports, KNBC spent 44-s covering Lakers star Kobe Bryant playing in a celebrity softball game. "He showed his home run swing!" the commentator gushed as viewers saw footage of Bryant's "towering shot!" The same sports news segment devoted footage and coverage of National Basketball Association (NBA) player LeBron James' 9-year-old son who, the commentator predicted, in 7 years "will likely be recruited by every college basketball program in the country." Later that week, on July 26, during their extended weekend broadcast, KNBC embedded in its coverage of mostly men's baseball, football, and basketball a bland-but-respectful story on women's NBA (WNBA) games, and KABC concluded its 11 p.m. show with a segment on the world series of pro beach volleyball that included this commentary:

Your weekend wouldn't be complete without a little volleyball. Kerri Walsh Jennings and April Ross taking on team Slovakia in the semi-finals, looking for their 4th win of the tour. Easily dispatching the Slovaks in the first set, they lost the 2nd set, so it was decided in three. And team USA advances to that gold medal game, so if you've got nothing else to do, cool off tomorrow down at the beach in Long Beach.

At first glance, the presentation of gender in the televised sports news and the ESPN *SportsCenter* broadcasts we have now studied for the past 25 and 15 years, respectively, does not appear to have changed much. The shows cover men's sports nearly all the time, even to the point of featuring stories on out-of-season men's sports. However, the two segments we highlight above hint at some qualitative changes over time. Over the past 10 years, portrayal of women athletes has become increasingly "respectful," and news and highlights commentators have become far less likely to joke about women or portray women as sexual objects. Advocates of equity and fairness for women's sports will likely applaud the near disappearance of overtly sexualized and insulting coverage of women. The "good news" of the increasingly respectful coverage of women's sports is, we will show, more than

eclipsed by two factors: The deepening quantitative dearth of coverage of women's sports and the ways in which the continuous cacophony of exciting coverage of men's sports is counterpoised with the tendency to present most of the few women's sports stories in a matter-of-fact, uninspiring, and lackluster manner.

In this study, we present the findings of the most recent iteration of our now 25-year longitudinal study of gender in televised sports news and highlights shows. In highlighting continuities and differences in the quantity and quality of coverage of women's and men's sports over time, we suggest these patterns are best understood as indicators not of some "stalled revolution" but rather of the unevenness of social change. We end with several policy implications of our findings and analysis.

## The Gender in Televised Sports Study

The longitudinal research for this study was first gathered in 1989, with follow-up studies conducted in 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014, with each report from these studies published in the year following the data gathering. The Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles (1990, 1994, 2000, 2005), now called the LA84 Foundation, published the first four reports. The University of Southern California's Center for Feminist Research (2010) published the most recent study. The research reports, intended as public advocacy social science research, were widely distributed, reported in the mass media, featured in documentary films, used by organizations like the Women's Sports Foundation, and taught in schools of journalism.

The research from past iterations of this study was also disseminated in various scholarly publications (Cooky, Messner, & Hextrum, 2013; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Messner, Duncan, & Wachs, 1996; Messner, Duncan, & Willms, 2006). The study has also been replicated by scholars both inside and outside the United States (Koivula, 1999; Turner, 2014). The ongoing study contributed to a growing body of scholarly literature that explores the implications of gender inequitable and gender-biased coverage in sports media (e.g., Adams & Tuggle 2004; Bernstein, 2002; Billings & Young, 2015; Caple, Greenwood, & Lumby, 2011; Cooky, Wachs, Messner, & Dworkin, 2010; Daniels, 2009; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Etling & Young, 2007; Fared, 2000; Kane, LaVoi, & Fink 2013; Kian, Vincent, & Modello, 2008; Koivula, 1999; LaVoi, Buysse, Maxwell, & Kane, 2007; Rightler-McDaniels, 2014; Sheffer & Shultz, 2007; Tuggle, 1997; Turner, 2014; Webber & Carni, 2013; Whiteside & Hardin, 2012). This body of research, which includes studies of the coverage of live televised sports events, print, online, social, and televised news media coverage of sports as well as the implications of media coverage for women's sports, consistently find that, with minor exception for quality of media coverage, particularly during the Olympics (Billings & Young, 2015; Hardin, Chance, Dodd, & Hardin, 2002), and for some collegiate-based media outlets (Kane & Buyssee, 2005; McKay & Dalliere, 2009), the vast majority of media coverage centers on men's sports and male athletes. For example, in their recent study comparing coverage of ESPN's

*SportsCenter* and Fox Sports 1's *Fox Sports Live*, Billings and Young (2015) found that each program featured women's sports coverage less than 1% of the time, with some "modest gains" during the month of February during the Olympics. Moreover, women's sports continues to be covered in ways that convey the message to audiences that women's sport is less important, less exciting, and, therefore, less valued than men's sports (Cooky et al., 2013; Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009).

Our central aim of this study is to examine change and continuity over time. As such, in 2014, we replicated previous iterations of the study. The design and methods of data collection and analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) were identical to those of the 1989, 1993, 1999, 2004, and 2009 studies (see Cooky et al., 2013). As with prior studies (see Cooky et al., 2013), several research questions inform the 2014 study: In what ways do televised sports news media cover men's and women's sports events? What is the amount of coverage given to men's sports and to women's sports? Do the production values of men's sports differ from that of women's sports? If so, how? What is the quality of commentary of men's sports? What is the quality of commentary of women's sports? Are women's sports covered in ways that highlight athletic competence or in ways that trivialize women's sport? Does the coverage focus on the competitive aspects of women's sport, including games/matches, game highlights, scores and statistics, outcomes, and significance? Does the coverage sexualize, trivialize, or portray women as objects of sexualized humor? Does the coverage focus on women as wives, girlfriends, and mothers? Has the coverage of women's sports in this data sample changed or remained the same since prior data collection years? In other words, what are the continuities or discontinuities in the coverage over the past 25 years?

In Stage 1 of the data collection and analysis, we recorded each broadcast of the 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. sports news and highlights segments on the local Los Angeles network affiliates (KCBS, KNBC, and KABC) and the 11 p.m. broadcast of ESPN's *SportsCenter*. Also following the methodology of previous iterations, the sample was stratified by sport season and included three 2-week blocks (the second and third calendar week of each month) of televised news: March 16–29, July 13–26, and November 9–22. In addition to the local affiliates, we recorded 3 weeks of the 1-hr 11 p.m. ESPN *SportsCenter* broadcast. These 3 weeks corresponded with the first week of each of the three local network news segments: March 16–22, July 13–19, and November 9–15. As with previous iterations of this study, during our March sampling period there were fewer 6 p.m. news broadcasts from KCBS because their parent network (CBS) broadcasts the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men's basketball tournament games, which frequently preempted the news broadcasts.

In Stage 2, the research assistant (third author) received training on coding data, so as to ensure continuity in the analysis with past iterations of the study. The third author viewed all recordings and independently coded the quantitative and qualitative data for the month of March. Two undergraduate research assistants also received training on the quantitative coding and independently coded quantitative data for March. The percentage agreement (calculated using Holsti's formula) for

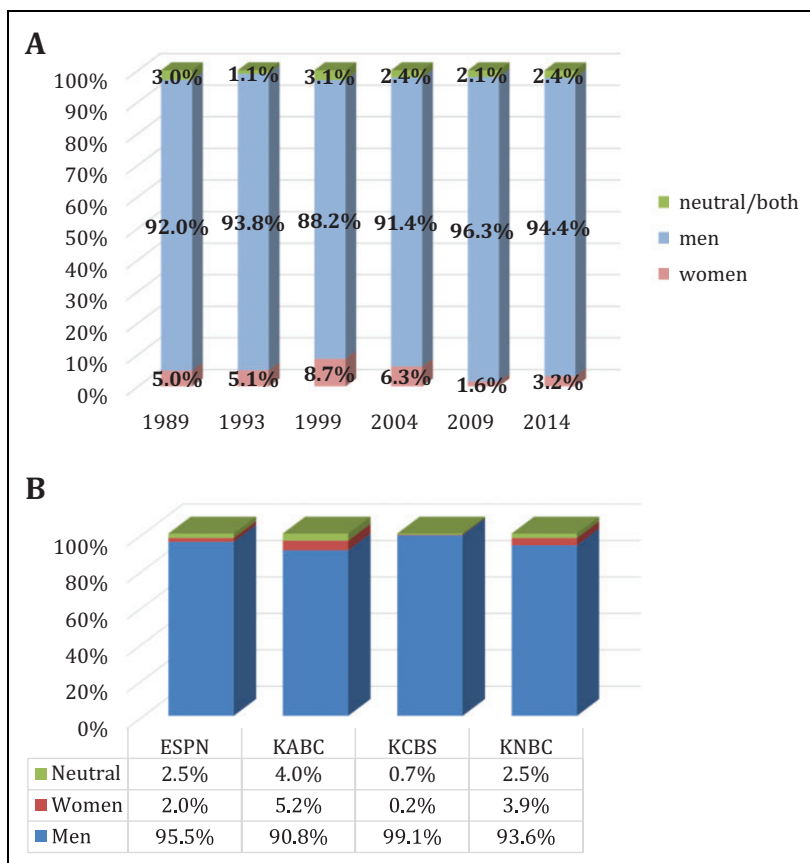
inter-rater reliability on the quantitative codes (including visual and verbal commentary) was determined to be approximately 95%, well above what is considered an acceptable level of concordance (Fleiss, Levin, & Paik, 2005). We included all categories in this measure, rather than calculate individual reliability scores for each code, as most codes were easily determined, for example, type of sport and competitive level. While few, any discrepancy in coding was resolved through a discussion with the authors until consensus was achieved. Once inter-rater reliability was established, the third author and the undergraduate research assistants completed the quantitative coding for the July and November broadcasts.

The study's codebook drew upon previous iterations of the study and included over 20 distinct codes including gender of sport (male, female, and neutral), type of sport (basketball, football, golf, tennis, etc.), competitive level of the sport (professional, college, high school, youth, recreation, etc.), type of coverage (main, ticker, and score box), and time of the segment (measured from the start of an individual segment reported in total minutes/seconds, segments were defined based on the type of sport covered, timing of segment ended when either the competitive level of the sport changed or the gender of the sport changed). Codes were also included to quantify production values (coded as yes/no), including the presence or absence of music, graphics, interviews, and game highlights. We also coded the name, race (we acknowledge the limitations of determining race based on visual cues), and gender of each broadcast's sports anchor, ancillary anchor, and/or analyst. As in 2004 and 2009, most of the 2014 sports news and highlights programs (with the continued exception of KABC) in our sample included a continual running "ticker" at the bottom of the TV screen. The ticker's written text displays game scores, headlines, and breaking sports news that may or may not be reported through the main conventional verbal commentary and visual images. We analyzed the ticker coverage for gender, time of the segment, type of sport, and competitive level of the sport.

In Stage 3, the third author independently viewed all recordings and, sensitized to themes from the quantitative findings, qualitatively analyzed the commentary, including visuals and verbal commentary. In Stage 4, the first author viewed all recordings and further developed the qualitative analysis from Stage 3 to confirm and expand upon the themes. In Stage 5, the first author ran descriptive statistics on the coded data. The first and second author then compiled an interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative results.

## A Deepening Silence

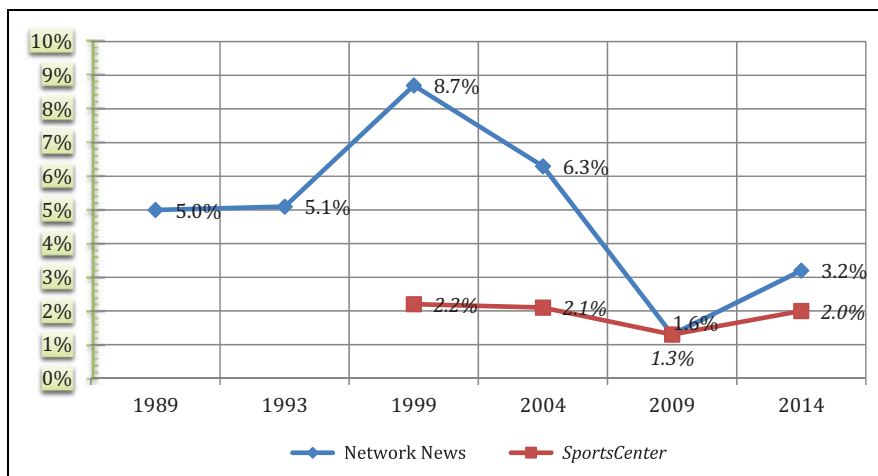
As with previous iterations of our study, viewers of the news and highlights shows in our sample rarely see any mention of women athletes or women's sports. Among the three local network affiliates, only 3.2% of coverage was dedicated to women's sports. As Figure 1 shows, however, there is considerable difference in this regard among the three network affiliates we studied, with KABC devoting 5.2% of its main broadcast coverage to women's sports and KNBC 3.9%. Over the same



**Figure 1.** (A) Local network affiliates (KCBS, KNBC, and KABC) main coverage, by gender. (B) Local network affiliates and ESPN *SportsCenter* 2014 main coverage, by gender.

6-week sampling period, KCBS included only one story on women's sports—a scant 0.2% of its total sports news time. ESPN's *SportsCenter* did no better, devoting a paltry 2% of its hour-long highlight show to women's sports.

How do these 2014 findings compare with past studies? As Figures 1A and 2 illustrate, the three local affiliate news shows together devoted about 5% of their main broadcast coverage to women's sports in 1989 and 1993. In 1999, their coverage of women's sports jumped to 8.7%. The coverage of women dipped slightly in 2004 to 6.3% and then plummeted to its nadir of 1.6% in 2009. The slight increase to 3.2% in our 2014 findings indicates that the news shows' coverage of women's sports remains substantially lower than its coverage in 10, 15, 20, and 25 years ago. *SportsCenter's* coverage, over the 4 time periods it was included in our sample which spans 15 years (1999–2014), has remained remarkably flat, never rising above



**Figure 2.** Main coverage of women’s sports (percentage), 1989–2014.

2.5%, and in 2014, women’s sports on the main broadcast coverage hovers at a paltry 2.0% of the total broadcast coverage.

Moreover, the dearth of coverage of women’s sports is evidenced by the low number of segments (i.e., stories) in our sample. Of the 934 local network affiliate news segments (over 12 hr of broadcasts), 880 were on men’s sports (or approximately 11½ hr), 22 segments (or nearly 18 min) were on gender-neutral sports (e.g., a horse race, coverage of the Los Angeles [LA] marathon, and a recreational sports event), and only 32 segments (about 23 min) featured women’s sports. *SportsCenter’s* numbers were similar. Of the 405 total *SportsCenter* segments in our sample (nearly 14 hr), 376 covered men’s sports (slightly over 13 hr), 16 segments were on gender-neutral sports (just over 20 min), and only 13 segments featured women’s sports (approximately 17 min).

As in past studies, there was little or no difference between the 6 p.m. and the 11 p.m. editions of the three local network affiliate news shows, in terms of coverage of women’s sports. Also consistent with past studies, the November period of the 2014 sample included the least amount of coverage of women’s sports. There was no coverage of women’s sports in the month of November on the local network affiliates and only 44-s of women’s sports coverage (two short segments on University of Connecticut’s women’s basketball) on ESPN’s *SportsCenter*. The scant coverage of women’s sports was clustered in the March (3.0%) and July periods (4.6%).

### Lead Stories, Teasers, and Tickers

In addition to counting the total number of stories and amount of time devoted to women’s and men’s sports, we analyzed three other quantitative indicators of

equity/inequity in coverage. First, every broadcast of sports news or highlights begins with a lead story, chosen by broadcasters because it is viewed as the most important story of the day and/or because it is deemed to be the most interesting “hook” with which to engage and hold the audience. As with previous iterations, none of the news and highlights shows in our 2014 sample led with a women’s sports story. Second, transitions before commercial breaks in news and highlights shows are often marked by “teasers” that are intended to build interest and hold the audience for an exciting upcoming story. Of the 145 teasers we analyzed in the local network affiliate broadcasts, only one teaser alerted the audience to an upcoming women’s sports story. Similarly, only three of *SportsCenter*’s 199 teasers were about women’s sports.

*SportsCenter* and two of the local network affiliate sports news shows we analyzed (KCBS and KNBC) deployed running tickers at the bottom of the screen throughout the broadcast. Tickers display scores and breaking sports news, many of which are not covered in the sports anchor’s main coverage. In 2014, *SportsCenter* devoted 2.0% of its ticker time to women’s sports, similar to the show’s proportion of main coverage devoted to women. The two network affiliates, on the other hand, devoted substantially more ticker time to women’s sports, 6.1%. This proportion of ticker coverage represents an increase from the 3.2% ticker time devoted to women’s sports by the two local affiliate news broadcasts in our 2009 study. But it is also notable that in 2014, KCBS and KNBC devoted far less of their main coverage to women’s sports—0.2% and 3.9%, respectively—compared to KABC’s 5.2% coverage of women’s sports. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that this increased ticker coverage on KCBS and KNBC in 2014 is a dubious sign of “progress.” Instead, it could be surmised that the scrolling ticker on these shows functions as a kind of visual and textual ghetto for women’s sports, allowing the sports anchors to focus their main coverage almost entirely on men’s sports, while relegating women’s sports literally to the margins of the screen.

### *Men’s Big Three: “It’s Never Too Early,” “Too Soon,” or “Too Late”*

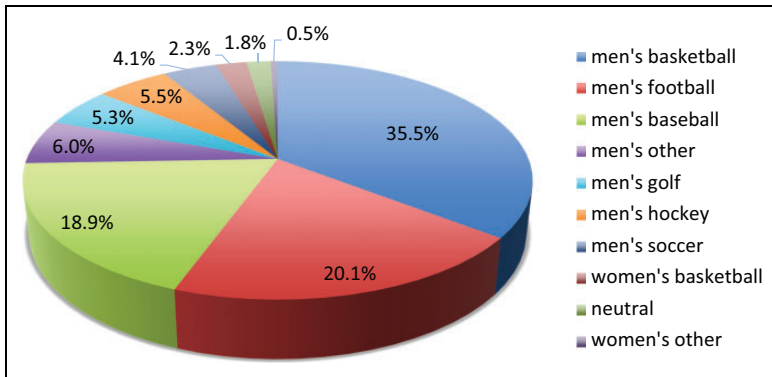
The coverage of sports on the local network affiliate news broadcasts typically comprises only a few minutes of the total news broadcast (extended sports shows on weekends, like KCBS’ “Sports Central” are an exception). As a result, producers can only choose to cover a fragment of all of the sports taking place in a typical day. The findings of this study demonstrate that in nearly every broadcast, network producers decide to focus on men’s sports, rather than the many women’s sports that are taking place daily (see Appendix for a sample of the women’s sports events that occurred during the 6 weeks of this study). Moreover, as with previous iterations of the report, we found that even with broadcast time constraints, networks do find time to include frequent “human interest” stories on men’s sports. Here are four examples that are appeared during broadcasts wherein there was no coverage of women’s sports:



- KNBC's March 18, 6 p.m. sports news included a 30-s segment about a swarm of bees invading a Red Sox versus Yankees game and a 20-s segment about an 18-in. corn dog available for purchase for US\$25 at the Arizona Diamondbacks stadium.
- KCBS's March 26, 11 p.m. sports news devoted 45-s to the ribbon cutting ceremony for a new restaurant that opened at Chavez Ravine owned by former Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda.
- KNBC's July 22, 11 p.m. broadcast devoted 40-s discussing whether recently traded Lakers player Kendall Marshall will be able to find a good burrito in Milwaukee. This segment included a full-screen graphic showing a map from the Milwaukee basketball arena to a Chipotle restaurant, while the commentator gave Marshall directions.
- KNBC's March 18, 11 p.m. broadcast included a 55-s segment about a stray dog that fans and players subsequently named Hank who wandered into the Milwaukee Brewers' stadium. The story is about his adoption and the dog's new role as the "spring training mascot" for the Brewers.

These examples illustrate three dynamics that shape how news broadcasts build audiences for men's sports while positioning women's sports as unimportant and less interesting than men's sports. First, while being event driven, sports news is also presented as entertainment, often including stories that humorously portray the lighter and human side of men's sports. Second, if sufficient time exists to cover US\$25 corn dogs, swarms of bees, the proximity of Chipotle to basketball stadiums, and stray dogs wandering into a professional sports stadium, it is simply untrue that there is not enough time to cover women's sports. Instead, producers and commentators actively chose to construct an exciting and pleasurable experience for consuming the coverage of men's sports, while ignoring women's sports. Third, as the case with the rest of the sports news coverage, most of these stories focus only on certain men's sports. Put another way, it is not just women's sports that are ignored on these shows. There is inequitable coverage across different men's sports as well. Billings and Young (2015) observe men's sports other than the "big three" like golf, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, and tennis are often relegated to sports news secondary platforms (ESPN3, ESPNU, and other regional networks). Similarly, as with previous iterations of this study, the vast majority of reporting in 2014 was devoted to the big three—men's basketball (professional and college), men's football (professional and college), and men's baseball (mostly professional). As Figure 3 shows, the combined (main and ticker) coverage of all of the news and highlights broadcasts in our study devoted 74.5% of their time to the big three. This is slightly higher than the 68% proportion of coverage received by men's big three in our 2009 study.

As we noted in our 2013 publication (Cooky et al., 2013), although some argue that there are fewer women's sports events to cover, news and highlights shows keep



**Figure 3.** Total sports coverage (main plus ticker) on local network affiliates and *SportsCenter*, 2014.

the focus on the big three even during their off-seasons. Four examples illustrate this pattern:

- On KABC's July 23, 6 p.m. broadcast, the news anchor introduced the sports anchor saying that he was "Gonna talk about college football, it's never too soon!" The sports anchor agreed and began discussing a 77-s story that previewed University of California, Los Angeles's (UCLA) and University of Southern California's (USC) season-openers set to take place in late August.
- On KCBS's July 17, 6 p.m. broadcast, the sports anchor introduced the broadcast explaining to viewers, "When I say never, I mean it's never too early to start talking about the National Football League!" which began a 78-s story about the National Football League (NFL) media tour for Thursday Night Football.
- On KABC's July 15, 6 p.m. broadcast, the main news anchor introduced the sports anchor by saying, "And yep, it is a bit early in the year, but it's never too soon to think about the NBA." The sports anchor replied, "That's right, it's just around the corner." Although it was still midsummer, he acknowledged, "it's never too early to talk about opening night," which is "161 more shopping days" from now.
- On the July 17, broadcast of ESPN's *SportsCenter*, embedded in a longer segment on the NBA Cleveland Cavaliers' deal with LeBron James and an offer extended to Kevin Love, 25-s was spent on a story about a wedding in Akron, Ohio. ESPN featured a picture of a groom in his tux, standing in front of his groomsmen, all of who wore various LeBron James' jerseys.

Such gender asymmetries of out-of-season and in-season coverage of sports were especially evident in coverage of the NBA versus the coverage of the WNBA. During the playing season (and especially during the playoffs), the NBA receives

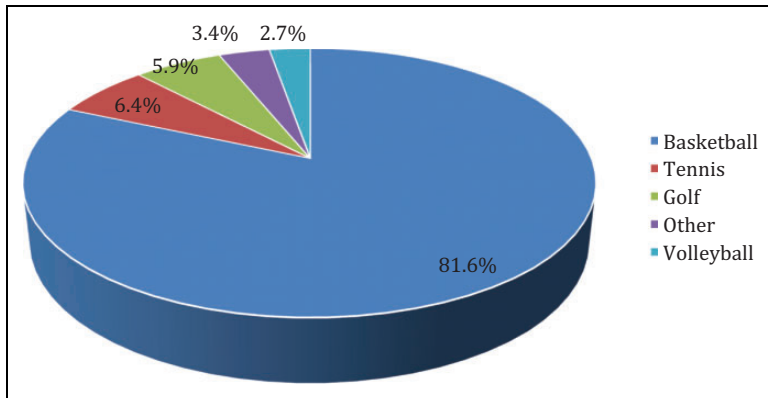
**Table 1.** NBA and WNBA Stories, In-Season and Out-of-Season, 2014.

	March	July	November
WNBA on KABC, KNBC & KCBS	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	<b>(in season)</b> <b>10 stories; 7:11</b>	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00
WNBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	<b>(in season)</b> <b>4 stories; 5:59</b>	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00
NBA on KABC, KNBC, & KCBS	<b>(in season)</b> <b>76 stories;</b> <b>47:59</b>	(out of season) 68 stories; 48:53	<b>(in season)</b> <b>71 stories;</b> <b>01:10:23</b>
NBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	<b>(in season)</b> <b>56 stories;</b> <b>1:12:23</b>	(out of season) 16 stories; 40:05	<b>(in season)</b> <b>20 stories;</b> <b>50:05</b>

Note. Shading in row indicates the difference between WNBA and NBA. NBA = National Basketball Association; WNBA = women's National Basketball Association.

bounteous daily coverage on news and *SportsCenter*, but it also receives frequent off-season coverage.

As Table 1 shows, the WNBA received neither this lavish in-season coverage nor a single instance of off-season coverage. Even the local angle for the Los Angeles WNBA team tended to deliver little positive news coverage. For example, on July 24, KABC included a rare story about the Los Angeles Sparks WNBA losing that day's game. The commentator joked with the news anchors, "Mark and Michelle, the Sparks: 3 and 9, their worst start in quite some time. They keep that up, we might not show 'em again! This is a town of winners!" The sports anchor's threat, however, jokingly intended, stood in stark contrast with KABC's and the other news shows' continued fidelity to one of that year's biggest losers, Los Angeles Lakers. Despite performing poorly for the season, the Lakers still received consistently high levels of airtime by all three local news stations, regardless of whether they were in or out of season. On the KABC's 6 p.m. broadcast on November 18, for example, the sports anchor lamented, "Watching the Lakers this year, you know, it's been really, really tough. It's kind of like ripping a band-aid off slowly." But anticipating the Lakers game to be played that evening, he added hopefully, "Well let's throw that band-aid away tonight, right?" Similar to the lived experience of racial minorities wherein they confront the expectation to be twice as good to receive half the credit, women's sports are held to a higher standard than men's: Women's sports are deemed deserving of coverage only if and when they are winners. Ironically, the sports media used this same logic to justify their own lack of coverage of women's sports, for example, women's college basketball was presented by some sports anchors as less interesting because "everyone knows UConn (or, in previous seasons, Tennessee) is going to win."



**Figure 4.** Women's sports coverage (main plus ticker) on local network affiliates and SportsCenter, 2014.

On the rare occasion that women's sports were covered in 2014, basketball was by far the most commonly featured sport, with 81.6% of the combined main and ticker coverage, as shown in Figure 4.

This continues a shift toward attention to women's basketball that we noted in our 2009 study. In our past studies, women's tennis was most likely to receive coverage: 43% of all women's sports coverage in our 2004 study was devoted to tennis. By 2014, tennis had shrunk to 6.4% of women's sports coverage, a distant second to basketball (golf, at 5.9%, was third). This increased coverage of women's basketball may be attributed to the growth of live NCAA women's basketball TV coverage during the past decade as well as some increase in live coverage of WNBA games. Yet, as we will see in the following section, while women's basketball comprises the majority of women's sports coverage, when compared to the coverage of men's basketball, the gender disparity in the quantity and quality of coverage of basketball is evident.

### *March Madness, Still Mostly for Men*

As in past iterations of our study, we found it useful to compare news and highlights coverage of the women's and men's NCAA basketball tournament. Unlike many sports, where there are major structural asymmetries that at least partly explain differences in reportage, for example, the existence of no women's equivalent to men's college football, the NFL, Major League Baseball (MLB), National Hockey League (NHL), or the fact that the WNBA has a far shorter season than the NBA and is scheduled during a different time of the year (summer), the women's and men's NCAA tournaments are equivalent events, played during the same several week span. As such, they provide a source ripe for quantitative and qualitative comparison.

**Table 2.** Men's and Women's NCAA Basketball Stories, March 2014.

	Men's NCAA Basketball	Women's NCAA Basketball
KABC, KNBC, and KCBS, main coverage	120 Stories; 1:26:06	9 Stories; 03:37
KABC, KNBC, and KCBS, ticker coverage	108 Stories; 1:14:10	24 Stories; 08:43
<b>ESPN SportsCenter</b> , main coverage	83 Stories; 2:21:32	8 Stories; 09:24
<b>ESPN SportsCenter</b> , ticker coverage	180 Stories; 3:00:55	18 Stories; 15:05

Note. Shading in row indicates the difference between local affiliates and ESPN. NCAA = National Collegiate Athletic Association.

As Table 2 shows, the coverage of the women's and men's NCAA tournament during our March 2014 sample was highly uneven. Neither the local network affiliate news broadcasts nor *SportsCenter* devoted many stories in their main coverage to the women's tournament. There were 9 stories or 3 min and 37-s of coverage of the women's NCAA tournament on the local affiliates compared with 120 stories or 1 hr, 26 min and 6-s of coverage of the men's. ESPN had more coverage of the women's tournament than the local affiliates, 8 stories or 9 min and 24-s but spent 2 hr, 21 min and 32-s covering 83 stories on the men's tournament. For the most part, these shows relegated coverage of the women to the ticker, though even that coverage was scant compared with ticker coverage of the men's tournament. For example, ESPN had just over 3 hr of coverage of the men's tournament on their ticker and only 15 min of the women's tournament. This gender asymmetry echoed our findings in previous studies, but was a bit surprising, for two reasons. First, as we noted above, in recent years basketball has become by far the most reported-on women's sport (in the United States). Second, given that live coverage of the women's NCAA basketball tournament games (and regular season NCAA basketball games) has become far more prevalent over the past decade (ESPN has broadcast the tournament in its entirety beginning in 2003), and the quality of the women's live broadcasts has so vastly improved, we expected to see even more coverage of the women's tournament in our 2014 sample. Nevertheless, the coverage of the women's NCAA tournament remained dismally low, as it had been in 2004 and 2009.

Of the few times they did mention the women's tournament, commentators symbolically yawned at the predictable outcome of another University of Connecticut championship. Even the local angle for the Los Angeles news shows—appearances by USC's and California State University Northridge's women's team in the tournament—barely nudged the women's tournament into some local news broadcasts. On Monday March 17, for example, the KNBC 6 p.m. broadcast sandwiched a story about USC women's tournament game between two men's sports stories: on the front end, a 28-s segment about the grandson of St. Joseph's men's basketball head coach, Phil Martelli. The story included footage and commentary that described the

4-year-old “mini-Martelli” as “adorable” while mimicking his grandpa’s sport coat, tie, and gestures during the game. The story concluded with the news that “St. Joseph’s won the ball game earning a birth in the big dance!” In comparison, the 7-s segment on the women’s tournament included only this verbal commentary, “Sticking with USC, congratulations to the Women of Troy who learned tonight they are a ninth seed in the women’s basketball tournament. They’ll play St. John’s in the first round.” The broadcast then transitioned to a 78-s segment on college football spring training practice and the relationship between the new head coach of the USC football team, Steve Sarkisian and one of his assistant coaches. This broadcast illustrated two thematic patterns: First, news shows lavished a significant portion of their “March Madness” coverage time to a soft news story about the men’s basketball, specifically about a coach of a team located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, than to a local Division 1 women’s team that had made the NCAA tournament. Second, even when out of season, USC football received more coverage and higher quality coverage than a currently successful in-season USC women’s basketball team.

Meanwhile, on the men’s side, the local angle apparently could not have been more exciting. A March 26 KABC story about the UCLA’s men’s team illustrates how news programs generate interest for men’s basketball. The 73-s segment began in the newsroom, with one of the news anchors introducing the sports commentator, saying, “And tomorrow, oh boy, that game, UCLA, Florida, that could be a good one.” The sports commentator nods and says, “I think it is. I think it’s gonna’ go down to the wire.” The sports anchor then proceeds with a story that includes an interview with UCLA coach Steve Alford, on-screen graphics that show the team’s recent history in the tournament as well as game footage and commentary about UCLA’s opponent, the number one seed “sensational” Florida Gators. The commentator then gushes longingly about UCLA’s main hope for an upset, “6-foot 9 Kyle Anderson, a point guard, is a game-changer.”

## Building Excitement for Men’s Sports

Although news and highlights on women’s sports are still few and far between, the technical production and framing of these stories have improved over time. Unlike our early studies, when most women’s sports stories were short verbal-only reports, many women’s sports stories in 2014 supplemented verbal commentary with on-screen graphics and game footage in ways similar to reports on men’s sports. However, we found that men’s sports were presented with far more enthusiasm and excitement, the commentators consistently deploying vocal inflections, high-volume excitement, and evocative descriptors. Listening to commentators describe a women’s sports event was usually like hearing someone deliver a boring afterthought, with an obvious lack of enthusiasm. Watching stories of men’s sports was frequently akin to watching that classic 1960s “Batman” TV show—(*Bam! Pow!*)—with viewers treated to plenty of visual action accompanied by a barrage of exciting

spoken action descriptors. We collected many of the common action descriptors deployed by news and highlights commentators when presenting men's sports and present in the following paragraph. The reader should imagine male sports anchors delivering these descriptors in an excited, modulated, rapid-clipped, amplified voice—often literally yelling:

Bingo, a thriller, rabid fans, smoked a laser, a battle, big shot, huge, threw down the dunk, hit an absolute bomb, awesome, exciting, smoked one to right field, ripped a double, drilling a ball to center field, unloaded a hit, clawed their way back into the game, a commanding lead, draining a great shot, he nails it, going full throttle, dialed in and in complete control, sending a rocket over the wall, punished the opponent, mowed down the batter, toe-to-toe battle, flying through the air, a great grab, sensational, really unbelievable, a great one, attacking, drilled one from long-range, a heavy-weight clash, a thunderous dunk, amazing, simply mind-blowing, on fire, picture perfect, explosion, revved up and ready to go, gorgeous dunk—bam, spectacular, unbelievable, another beauty, electric, dominant, brilliant, outstanding, a master of the position, incredible, forceful, a weapon, a rock star, like a man possessed, that is just stupid good, instant awesome!

Such colorful commentary, so common in nearly every story about men's sports, plays an important role in generating excitement and ongoing interest in men's sports (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). *SportsCenter* is particularly adept at maintaining this level of enthusiasm for men's sports, a typical example of which came from their July 14, 2014, description of highlights from the MLB All Star Home Run Derby, during which one of the anchors says that a player brought José Bautista some Gatorade, "just to cool him down a little bit because he was on fire!" Later in the same segment, the sports anchor discusses a Giancarlo Stanton's hit, "Wow! Take another look at this one. He just absolutely destroys them! You can see the speed on that swing in real time. And you just stand and admire a shot like that." One of Stanton's home runs is described as "an absolute bomb." As viewers are treated to more footage, Yoenis Céspedes is described as hitting "bomb after bomb after bomb," and a sports analyst gushes, "Céspedes kept getting better and better, and the home runs kept getting longer and longer and the numbers got bigger and bigger."

By contrast, when women's sports were covered at all, they were typically couched in what can only be described as a "matter-of-fact" style of commentary, akin to the July 26 KABC story we opened this article with of women's beach volleyball, a segment that was presented as a brief and bland afterthought, with the accompanying commentary, "... if you have nothing else to do..." Frequently absent from such women's sports stories were the commentators' voluminous vocal inflections, exclamatory descriptions of athletic successes, and heartfelt laments of failures that saturate the commentary in men's coverage. The general lack of an excited tone and agentic language in most of the reporting on women's sports helps to mark women's sports as less interesting and, in many instances, even boring.

In our sample, there were a small number of exceptions that showed that commentators are capable of generating some enthusiasm for women's sports stories. For instance on KABC's July 24, 11 p.m. report of a WNBA game, the commentator declared, "the Mercury hotter than the weather! Diana Taursai setting the pace with 18 points, and DeWanna Bonner? Was *boomin'* from here, there, and everywhere!" And on March 25, KNBC delivered a high-quality, local angle story on the Cal Poly Pomona women's basketball team's ascent to the Division II Final Four. With accompanying action footage, the commentator declared, "Just give that ball to Janet Blackwell and get out of the way! She scored a game high 35, lifting the Broncos into the Division II Final Four, with an 81-61 win over Edinboro." Footage of the team celebrating afterward was shown. Combining good technical production with enthusiastic reporting, this was one of highest quality segments about women's sports in our local network affiliate news sample.

## Ambivalent Delivery

On several of the rare occasions when commentators mustered high technical production along with enthusiastic delivery for a women's sports story, they also infused a level of ambivalence into the story's frame. One of the longest (2:37) and high-quality segments on women's sports in our sample was a July 22, KNBC story covering former USC (college) and LA Sparks (professional) basketball star Lisa Leslie's induction into the women's basketball Hall of Fame. The story featured some visual player footage and included respectful commentary that noted Leslie's many championships and awards. At the end of the segment, however, Leslie is shown holding her baby, as the commentator reports that Leslie "... retired from the league in 2009, and now she enters the Hall of Fame!" Footage of her dancing on the court with her child is shown as she says, "Being a wife and a mom is just my favorite title. People always ask me if I miss playing basketball and I'm like, absolutely not, because I love being a wife, cooking and being home. I'm kind of a stay at home mom even though I have about ten jobs." She laughs as the segment ends. Similar versions of this story ran on the July 19, 11 p.m. broadcast (37-s) and again on the July 22, 11 p.m. broadcast (63-s), which represented nearly half (4:17 of 10:30 min) of the total main coverage of women's sports on KNBC in our study. Thus, an ambivalent story about a prominent, successful female athlete that framed her accomplishments alongside motherhood was the dominant representation of women's sports, both qualitatively and quantitatively, on KNBC.

*SportsCenter's* July 18th broadcast ran an in-studio interview with WNBA star Candace Parker, similar to the Lisa Leslie story in its length (1:38), its high quality, and also in its gender ambivalence. The segment opens with game footage clips of Parker scoring a basket, along with commentary from the game, "Wow! Candace Parker! What a move!" Another clip of Parker holding a trophy above her head is shown. A graphic with her picture and "Candace Parker" in text along with the Sparks logo appears across the screen. The camera then transitions to interviewer Stan Verrett with



Parker (in a dress and full makeup) in studio sitting in two chairs. As she is interviewed about the recent season and about her WNBA team's financial vulnerabilities, an on-screen graphic appears at the bottom of the screen showing Parker's statistics, including 2-time WNBA most valuable player and 3-time All Star. The interviewer then asked, "We always see you with your daughter, Lailaa [Parker, off camera, replies, "Yeah"], How do you balance being the centerpiece of a franchise with being a centerpiece of a little girl's life as well?" Parker replies, "It's a lot of work. It's the hardest job I've had to do, but you know, seeing her smile and realizing, you know, when you walk through the door, basketball doesn't matter. She just wants me to be mom."

These two stories on Lisa Leslie on KNBC and on Candace Parker on ESPN were long segments with very high production values and respectful commentary. Both Leslie and Parker were featured because of their dominance and stature in the sport of women's basketball. But we found it notable that each piece eventually meanders to the theme of motherhood. Scholars have noted how professional women's sports are frequently framed by commercial interests and media in ways that highlight women athletes' heterosexual attractiveness and/or roles as mothers (Kane et al., 2013). "Other" women—those who are single, or who are lesbians, or who might not be viewed as conventionally attractive—are rarely given the same attention by media, sports promoters, or advertisers (Cooky et al., 2010). It is difficult to imagine a sports anchor or journalist questioning a prominent male athlete—say, a LeBron James or Derek Jeter—"How do you balance being the centerpiece of a franchise with being a centerpiece of a little girl's [or boy's] life as well?" Yet, as with previous iterations of the report, the framing of women as mothers is quite frequent, and yet it is a far cry from the overtly sexist and insulting stories that were found in our studies of 15 and 25 years ago. However, such framings of high-profile, successful women athletes, when juxtaposed with the fact that such issues are rarely, if ever, brought into stories about men athletes, reveal a gender asymmetry that subtly communicates ambivalence about women athletes (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Indeed, we began to see this shift from overt sexism to ambivalence in our 2009 study, where we observed women athletes increasingly depicted not as sex objects or as jokes but as mothers, girlfriends, or girls next door (Cooky et al., 2013). When contrasted with the excited commentary and agentic tone utilized in the coverage of men's sports, this ambivalent delivery further marginalizes what little coverage of women's sports exists within the broadcasts, and as we noted in our 2009 study, does little to build audiences for women's sports and reaffirms men's sports as the institutional center of sports (Messner, 2002).

### **"It's Dude Time"**

During a November 14, 2014, broadcast of *SportsCenter*, the sports anchor introduced the show's NHL analyst, exclaiming, "It's dude time!" While it is common for sports anchors to present ice hockey as one of the more extremely aggressive masculine sports, the sports anchor's comment made us wonder, when are these

**Table 3.** Race and Sex of Anchors and Coanchors on Local Affiliate Networks and ESPN, 2014.

	WM	BM	LM	AM	WF	BF	LF	AF	Other	Total
KNBC	55	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
KABC	36	1	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	78
KCBS	13	48	0	0	11	0	2	0	0	74
ESPN	24	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Total	128	61	26	41	11	0	2	0	0	269
Percentage of total count	47.6	22.7	9.7	15.2	4.1	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	100.0

Note. WM = White male; BM = Black male; LM = Latino male; AM = Asian/Asian Pacific Islander; WF = White female; BF = Black female; LF = Latina; AF = Asian/Asian Pacific Islander; Other: for example, Indian male, Armenian male.

**Table 4.** Race and Sex of Ancillary Announcers on Local Affiliate Networks and ESPN, 2014.

	WM	BM	LM	AM	WF	BF	LF	AF	Other	Total
KNBC	2	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
KABC	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
KCBS	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
ESPN	39	4	2	0	9	2	0	0	1	57
Total	48	5	11	0	9	2	0	0	1	76
Percentage of total count	63.2	6.6	14.5	0.0	11.8	2.6	0.0	0.0	1.3	100.0

Note. WM = White male; BM = Black male; LM = Latino male; AM = Asian/Asian Pacific Islander; WF = White female; BF = Black female; LF = Latina; AF = Asian/Asian Pacific Islander; Other = for example, Indian male, Armenian male.

shows *not* “dude time?” After all, nearly all of the segments we analyzed on *SportsCenter* and on the local network affiliate newscasts covered the major men’s sports. Moreover, sports news and highlight anchors remain, as in the past, racially diverse but mostly male. Table 3 indicates that of all the news and highlights shows we analyzed, over 95% had male anchors and coanchors at the helm (all of the women anchors in our sample appeared on KCBS, which included 11 of its 74 sports broadcasts anchored by a White woman and 2 by a Latina woman).

As Table 4 shows, at 14.4%, women are only slightly better represented as ancillary reporters on sports shows. During our sample period, sports shows (most often *SportsCenter*) also included “sports analysts” in the broadcasts, 96% of who were men.

“Dude time,” therefore, is created in news and highlights shows by a nearly constant configuration of three intertwined patterns: (1) almost entirely men’s sports content, (2) delivered almost entirely by men commentators, and (3) deploying an amplified, excited style of delivery. Together, these patterns give *SportsCenter* and the local network affiliates’ sports news shows the consistent feel of what we refer to as a “mediated man cave”—a place set up by men for men to celebrate men’s

sensational athletic accomplishments. Based on the dearth of coverage of women's sports across a quarter century of analysis, it seems apparent that, similar to the sports talk radio studied by Nylund (2004), women are not welcome in the mediated man cave of televised sports coverage. Indeed, KNBC's March 22, broadcast included zero coverage of women's sports but did include a message to women fans: don't get too close to the action. In a segment about the men's hockey match, Columbus Blue Jackets versus Montreal Canadiens, viewers see a woman fan banging on the glass and cheering. She suddenly gets sent flying back into her seat from the force of two hockey players colliding into the glass. The shot is replayed several times, in slow motion and from multiple angles, as the commentator says, "the force of that sends the fan flying back into her seat. Hockey is a tough sport for players and fans, and you gotta' bet she'll think twice about getting that close again!"

## The Unevenness of Social Change

More than four decades after the passage of Title IX, girls have dramatically increased their participation in youth and high school sports (Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell, & Sabo, 2005; Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Yet stubbornly persistent conservative gender ideologies, structured inequities, and sex segregation continue to limit girls' challenge to boys' hegemony in sports (Cooky, 2009; Messner, 2011; Musto, 2014). As a tidal wave of girls' and women's participation from youth sports to college sports continues to swell, the waters of women's sport leadership as coaches and athletics directors have receded (Acosta & Carpenter, 2015; Messner, 2009). The larger picture of girls' and women's progress in sport, in short, looks less like a stalled revolution than a picture of the *unevenness of social change*, with truly dramatic, perhaps even revolutionary changes continuing in some sectors, while little or no change happens in others.

The mass sports media is certainly a site of such uneven social change in gender relations. Over the past 25 years, we have witnessed impressive growth in the quantity and quality of live televised coverage of some women's sports. Notably, when we began the gender in sports media study in 1989, there was almost no live coverage of women's NCAA basketball—even the NCAA Final Four games were, at best, televised on late-night tape-delay shot, with extremely low production values. Today, ESPN, several national networks, and regional cable channels (like the Big Ten Network) broadcast many regular-season women's NCAA games, and a large number of the women's NCAA tournaments. What's more, the production values of these broadcasts are improving dramatically, though still falling short in quality when compared with the broadcasts of the men's games. Viewers can also regularly watch live televised women's college volleyball, softball, and gymnastics, women's professional tennis, WNBA games, and other sports.

However, such growing media attention to women's sports, our study has shown, has not migrated to the nightly TV news or to highlights shows like ESPN's *Sports-Center*. This has two broad implications. First, sports news and highlights shows are

part of a larger media apparatus that actively builds audiences for men's sports (Cooky et al., 2013). As long as these daily shows remain mostly silent about women's sports, the building of enthusiastic and knowledgeable fan bases for women's sports will remain stunted. Second, news and highlights shows' continued silence about women's sports has implications for broader gender relations (Daniels, 2009; Messner, 2002). Modern men's sport has played a key historical role in bolstering ideologies of "natural" male superiority during a historical moment when girls and women have been moving affirmatively toward equality in many social institutions (Burstyn, 1999). The daily news and highlights shows' failure to equitably cover women's sports shrouds in silence women's historic movement into sport and the impressive accomplishments of women athletes, thus retaining sport as a potent site for the reproduction of ideologies of male superiority.

In another example of uneven change, despite the deepening dearth of coverage of women's sports in our study, we have found some notable changes in the quality of TV news and highlights coverage over the past quarter century. In 1989, TV news shows devoted only 5% of their time to women athletes. And when they did cover women, it often was commonly either in the role of comical object of the sports anchor's joke or as a sexual object. In fact, these two roles were often overlapping and were given significantly more airtime than were serious and respectful stories about female athletes. For instance, in 1989 by far the longest single story (3 min, 50 s) on a woman in the 6-week period focused not on a female athlete but rather on "Morgana, the Kissing Bandit," a woman with enormous breasts who had made a name for herself by running out onto baseball fields and kissing players. What was most striking about these local network affiliate news broadcasts was the confluence of, on the one hand, the conspicuous absence of coverage of women athletes with, on the other hand, the ways that women were consistently placed in the role of sexualized comic relief.

Twenty-five years later, some things have changed, while others have not. Similar to our observations in 2009, we saw little if any insulting and humorously sexualized stories about women athletes in 2014. Yet we found this "improvement" comes at a cost: the decline in the overall amount of coverage of women's sports over the past 25 years. It would appear that the sports media covers women's sports when it can do so in ways that conform to conventional gender norms that position women as either objects of men's (hetero)sexual desire or mothers, wives, or girlfriends. We suspect that the toning down of overtly sexist treatment of women on sports news and highlight shows is a result of public calls (including, we hope, our past research reports) for respectful coverage of women's sports. But a decline in overt sexism, while certainly welcomed by many, is not synonymous with respectful coverage.

What would respectful coverage of women's sports on news and highlights shows actually look like? Not simply, we emphasize, a lack of sexist verbal abuse directed at women, but instead an active agenda of positive change that includes three policy benchmarks that producers, commentators, and sports anchors could achieve over the next 5 years:

1. Present a roughly equitable quantity of coverage of women's sports. Defining "equity" in this context would account for the fact that there are still more men's sports—especially big-time college and professional spectator sports—than equivalent women's sports. We suggest that a reasonable benchmark for equity would be to have proportional news broadcast coverage to the live broadcast coverage of women's sports. One reviewer suggested that approximately 6–9% of live broadcast coverage of sports events features women's sports. Under this rubric, the recommendation would be for the sports news media to triple their current coverage of women's sports from 2% to 6% on ESPN *SportsCenter* and from 3.2% to 9% for the local news. However, considering our longitudinal analysis, coverage of women's sports has been at 6–9% in 2004 and in 1999 and yet has declined in 2009 and 2014. Arguing to go back to what we argued in previous reports was dismal coverage seems unsatisfactory. As such, we recommend doubling the peak numbers and recommend women's sports coverage encompass 12–18% of broadcast coverage. A broadening conception of equitable coverage could also nudge producers of these shows away from their timid drift toward ever-increasing coverage of men's big three sports, instead including not only more women's sports but also a wider range of men's sports.
2. Present women's sports stories in ways roughly equivalent in quality with the typical presentation of men's sports. This refers, of course, both to the technical quality—deploying ample game footage, graphics, music, and interviews to accompany a story—and to the quality of the sports anchor's verbal presentation, including amplifying the enthusiasm in reporting women's sports to a level on the excitement meter that is equivalent with the usual presentation of men's sports.
3. Hire and retain on-camera sports anchors that are capable and willing to do #1 and #2. We find it notable that two of the three of the sports anchors on the network affiliates we studied are the same men who anchored the sports shows in 1989. While career longevity is not in and of itself a bad thing (Full disclosure: The second author of this study has held his same university position for nearly three decades, more than spanning the life of this televised sports study.), these men have shown little change over the years, besides becoming less overtly insulting to women, and devoting ever-larger proportions of their broadcast time to covering men's big three sports. Sports news and highlights shows need to open the occupation to more women (Tuggle, 1997; Sheffer & Schultz, 2007; Whiteside & Hardin, 2012). Perhaps just as important, hiring and retention decisions should prioritize anchors and analysts—women and men—who are knowledgeable about and love women's sports. It is unlikely that one can easily or effectively fake the sort of enthusiasm today's male commentators routinely show for men's sports and men athletes' accomplishments.

Twenty-five years is a long time for so little change to have taken place in sports news and highlights shows, especially against the backdrop of massive gender transformations and reforms in other areas of sport and society. To begin finally to move themselves into the 21st century, ESPN's *SportsCenter* and TV sports news shows should take the three above benchmarks into account in their future decisions about hiring, retention, and programming.

## Appendix

### *Selected Women's Sports Events During the Study Period*

#### 1. Intercollegiate Sports

March 20–22, D1 NCAA Swimming Championship, University of Minnesota, MN.

March 20–22, D1 NCAA Ice Hockey Championships—Frozen Four, Minneapolis, MN.

March 20–23, NCAA Fencing Championship, Columbus, OH.

March 22–23, First Round NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship.

March 24–25, Second Round Division I Women's Basketball NCAA Championship.

March 29–30, Third Round (Sweet Sixteen) Division I Women's Basketball NCAA Championship.

November 22, NCAA Women's Cross Country Championship, Terre Haute, IN.

November 21–23, NCAA Women's Field Hockey Championship, College Park, MD.

#### 2. Professional Basketball

July 13, WNBA, Indiana @ New York; Minnesota @ Tulsa.

July 14, WNBA, San Antonio @ Connecticut; Los Angeles @ Phoenix; Atlanta @ Seattle.

July 16, WNBA, San Antonio @ Washington.

July 17, WNBA, Tulsa @ Seattle; Atlanta @ Los Angeles.

July 18, WNBA, Chicago @ New York; Phoenix @ Los Angeles.

July 19, WNBA, Washington @ Indiana; Minnesota @ San Antonio; Connecticut @ Tulsa.

July 20, WNBA, New York @ Chicago, Connecticut @ San Antonio; Los Angeles @ Seattle.

July 21, WNBA, Indiana @ Washington; Atlanta @ Tulsa; Minnesota @ Phoenix.

July 23, WNBA, New York @ Indiana.

July 25, WNBA, New York @ San Antonio, Indiana @ Tulsa; Seattle @ Los Angeles.

### 3. Golf

March 20–23, Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), JTBC Founders Cup, Tempe, AZ.

March 27–30, LPGA, Kia Classic, Rancho Mirage, CA.

July 11–14, RICOH Women's British Open, LPGA, London, England.

July 17–20, Marathon Classic presented by Owens Corning & O-1, LPGA, Toledo, OH.

July 24–27, International Crown, LPGA, Owings Mills, MD.

November 7–9, LPGA, Mizuno Classic, Tokyo, Japan.

November 13–16, Lorena Ochoa Invitational Presented by Banamex, LPGA, Guadalajara, Mexico.

November 13–16, LPGA, Lorena Ochoa Invitational, Jalisco, Mexico.

November 20–23, CME Group Tour Championships, LPGA, Naples, FL.

### 4. Tennis

March 24–April 9, Sony Open Tennis, WTA, Miami, FL.

March 16–23, Innisbrook Women's Open, USTA Pro Circuit Event, Innisbrook, FL.

March 24–30, The Oaks Club, USTA Pro Circuit Event, Osprey, FL.

July 14, Swedish Open, WTA Tour, Båstad, Sweden.

July 21, Baku Cup, WTA Tour, Baku, Azerbaijan.

### 5. Other

March 15–16, Gymnastics Junior Olympic National Championships, Des Moines, IA.

March 10–16, World Junior Figure Skating Championships.

March 21–22, Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association (PRCA) Rodeo, Nashville, GA.

March 21–22, PRCA Rodeo, Ocala, FL.

March 21–22, PRCA Rodeo, Springfield, MO.

March 21–22, PRCA Rodeo, Kalispell, MT.

March 22–23, PRCA Rodeo, North Fort Myers, FL.

March 27–29, PRCA Rodeo, Lubbock, TX.

March 27–29, PRCA Rodeo, Nacogdoches, TX.

March 27–29, PRCA Rodeo, Graham, TX.

March 24–30, World Figure Skating Championships.

July 7–13, General Tire World Cup 9, USA Softball, Irvine, CA.

- July 15–21, Canadian Open Fast Pitch International, Softball, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.
- July 15–19, USA Gymnastics Championships, Louisville, KY.
- July 16, PRCA Rodeo, Hampton, IA.
- July 16, PRCA Rodeo, Monroe, WI.
- July 16, PRCA Rodeo, Cumberland, MD.
- July 17, PRCA Rodeo, Benton, PA.
- July 15–17, PRCA Rodeo, Nampa, ID.
- July 16–19, PRCA Rodeo, Woodward, OK.
- July 16–19, PRCA Rodeo, Pretty Prairie, KS.
- July 17–20, PRCA Rodeo, Mitchell, SD.
- July 17–20, PRCA Rodeo, Salinas, CA.
- July 25–27, North American Roller Hockey Championships, Estero, FL.
- November 19–23, Eastern Sectional Figure Skating Championships, Raleigh, NC.
- November 19–23, Midwestern Sectional Figure Skating Championships, Geneva, IL.
- November 19–23, Pacific Coast Sectional Figure Skating Championships, Spokane, WA.
- November 19–20, AQHA Horsemanship Challenge Preliminary/Finals, Equestrian, Oklahoma City, OK.
- November 21, PRCA Rodeo, Women's Professional Rodeo Association, Inverness, FL.

## 6. Professional Football

- July 12, Postseason Week 2, Independent Women's Football League.
- July 19, 2014, Playoffs—Final 4, Women's Football Alliance.
- July 26, Postseason Week 3, Independent Women's Football League.

## Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank Margaret Carlisle Duncan, Wayne Wilson, Emily Fogle, Randi Kass, and Orasio Becerra for their assistance on this and previous iterations of the study. Marj Snyder, Don Sabo, and the Women's Sports Foundation have been instrumental in providing support and we appreciate their advocacy efforts for improving the media coverage of women's sports. Thank-you to anonymous reviewers for their insightful reviews. A special thanks to Larry Wenner for his continued support of this project.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.



## Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was funded primarily through a grant from the University of Michigan's Sport, Health, and Activity Research and Policy (SHARP) center, with supplemental support from the University of Southern California's (USC) Center for Feminist Research, the USC Annenberg School for Communication, and the Purdue University Office of the Provost.

## References

- Acosta, V. R., & Carpenter, L. J. (2015). *Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal national study, thirty-seven year update, 1977-2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.acostacarpenter.org/>
- Adams, T., & Tuggle, C. A. (2004). ESPN's *SportsCenter* and coverage of women's athletics: "It's a boys' club." *Mass Communication and Society*, 7, 237–248.
- Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles. (1990, 1994, 2000, 2005). *Gender in televised sports report*. Retrieved from <http://www.la84.org/reports/>
- Bernstein, A. (2002). Is it time for a victory lap? Changes in the media coverage of women in sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 37, 415–428.
- Billings, A. C., & Young, B. D. (2015). Comparing flagship news programs: Women's sports coverage in ESPN's *SportsCenter* and FOX Sports 1's *Sports Live*. *Electronic News*, 9, 3–16.
- Burstyn, V. (1999). *The rights of men: Manhood, politics and the culture of sport*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Caple, H., Greenwood, K., & Lumby, C. (2011). What league?: The representation of female athletes in Australian sports coverage. *Media International Australia*, 140, 137–146.
- Center for Feminist Research. (2010). *Gender in televised sports, 1989-2009*. University of Southern California. Retrieved from <http://dornsife.usc.edu/cfr/gender-in-televised-sports/>
- Cooky, C. (2009). 'Girls just aren't interested': The social construction of interest in girls' sport. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52, 259–283.
- Cooky, C., Messner, M. A., & Hextrum, R. (2013). Women play sports, but not on TV: A longitudinal study of televised news media. *Communication & Sport*, 1, 203–230.
- Cooky, C., Wachs, F. L., Messner, M. A., & Dworkin, S. L. (2010). It's not about the game: Don Imus, race, class, gender and sexuality in contemporary media. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27, 139–159.
- Daniels, E. A. (2009). Sex objects, athletes and sexy athletes: How media representations of women athletes can impact adolescent girls and college women. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24, 399–423.
- Duncan, M. C., & Hasbrook, C. A. (1988). Denial of power in televised women's sports. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 1–21.
- Eastman, S. T., & Billings, A. C. (2001). Sportscasting and sports reporting: The power of gender bias. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 24, 192–213.

- Etling, L., & Young, R. (2007). Sexism and authoritativeness of female sportscasters. *Communication Research Reports, 24*, 121–130.
- Farred, G. (2000). Cool as the other side of the pillow: How ESPN's *SportsCenter* has changed television sports talk. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 24*, 96–117.
- Fleiss, J. L., Levin, B., & Paik, M. C. (2005). *Statistical methods for rates and proportions*. Malden, MA: Wiley InterScience.
- Greer, J. D., Hardin, M., & Homan, C. (2009). "Naturally" less exciting?: Visual production of men's and women's track and field coverage during the 2004 Olympics. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 53*, 173–189.
- Hardin, M., Chance, J., Dodd, J., & Hardin, B. (2002). Olympic photo coverage fair to female athletes. *Newspaper Research Journal, 2*, 64–78.
- Kane, M. J., & Buysse, J. (2005). Intercollegiate guides as contested terrain: A longitudinal analysis. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 22*, 214–238.
- Kane, M. J., LaVoi, N. M., & Fink, J. S. (2013). Exploring elite female athletes' interpretations of sport media images: A window into the construction of social identity and "selling sex" in women's sports. *Communication & Sport, 1*, 1–31.
- Kian, E. T. M., Vincent, J., & Modello, M. (2008). Masculine hegemonic hoops: An analysis of media coverage of March Madness. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 25*, 235–242.
- Koivula, N. (1999). Gender stereotyping in televised media sports coverage. *Sex Roles, 41*, 589–604.
- LaVoi, N. M., Buysse, J., Maxwell, H. D., & Kane, M. J. (2007). The influence of occupational status and sex of decision maker on media representations in intercollegiate athletics. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal, 15*, 32–43.
- McKay, S., & Dalliere, C. (2009). Campus newspaper coverage of varsity sports: Getting closer to equitable and sports-related representations of female athletes? *International Review of the Sociology of Sport, 44*, 25–40.
- Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men and sports*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Messner, M. A. (2009). *It's all for the kids: Gender, families and youth sports*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Messner, M. A. (2011). Gender ideologies, youth sports, and the production of soft essentialism. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 28*, 151–170.
- Messner, M. A., Dunbar, M., & Hunt, D. (2000). The televised sports manhood formula. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 24*, 380–94.
- Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Cooky, C. (2003). Silence, sports bras, and wrestling porn: The treatment of women in televised sports news and highlights. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 27*, 38–51.
- Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Jensen, K. (1993). Separating the men from the girls: The gendered language of televised sports. *Gender & Society, 7*, 121–137.
- Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Wachs, F. L. (1996). The gender of audience-building: Televised coverage of men's and women's NCAA basketball. *Sociological Inquiry, 66*, 422–439.

- Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Willms, N. (2006). This revolution is not being televised. *Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds*, 5, 34–38.
- Miller, K. E., Melnick, M. J., Barnes, G. M., Farrell, M., & Sabo, D. (2005). Untangling the links among athletic involvement: Gender, race, and adolescent academic outcomes. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22, 178–193.
- Musto, M. (2014). Athletes in the pool, girls and boys on deck: The contextual construction of gender in coed youth swimming. *Gender & Society*, 28, 359–380.
- Nylund, D. (2004). When in Rome: Heterosexism, homophobia and sports talk radio. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 28, 136–168.
- Rightler-McDaniels, J. (2014). Changes through the lens?: U.S. photographic newspaper coverage of female athletes. *Sport in Society*, 17, 1076–1094.
- Sabo, D., & Veliz, P. (2008). *Go out and play: Youth sports in America*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.
- Sheffer, M. L., & Schultz, B. (2007). Double standard: Why women have trouble getting jobs in local television sports. *Journal of Sports Media*, 2, 77–101.
- Tuggle, C. A. (1997). Differences in television sports reporting of men's and women's athletics: ESPN SportsCenter and CNN Sports Tonight. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 41, 14–24.
- Turner, J. S. (2014). A longitudinal content analysis of gender and ethnicity portrayals on ESPN's *SportsCenter* from 1999–2009. *Communication & Sport*, 4, 303–327.
- Webber, J. D., & Carni, R. M. (2013). Where are the female athletes in *Sports Illustrated*?: A content analysis of covers (2000–2011). *International Review for the Sociology of Sports*, 48, 196–203.
- Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2012). On being a “good sport” in the workplace: Women, the glass ceiling, and negotiated resignation in sports information. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 5, 51–68.