



WOMEN IN SPORTS JOURNALISM

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Abstract

This study is an exploration of women in sports journalism and the challenges they face when entering the journalism. It focused on the history of women in sports journalism. The various challenges the women have faced. Many of the early female sports reporters were physically assaulted. Others were sexually abused or challenged by the players in sexually inappropriate ways. The paper focuses on those types of moments in journalism history and explores how they shaped the industry and the character of women working in sports journalism. This paper includes women currently working in sports journalism in order to find out the differences between those early years and today.

Keywords: Sports, Journalism & Women.

Introduction

Journalism: Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities. Journalism can be distinguished from other activities and products by certain identifiable characteristics and practices. Journalism can be distinguished from other activities and products by certain identifiable characteristics and practices. These elements not only separate journalism from other forms of communication, they are what make it indispensable to democratic societies. History reveals that the more democratic a society, the more news and information it tends to have.

Sports Journalism: Sports journalism is the essential element of many news media organizations. While the sports department (along with entertainment news) within some newspapers has been mockingly called the toy department, because sports journalists do not concern themselves with the 'serious' topics covered by the news desk, sports coverage has grown in importance as sport has grown in wealth, power, and influence.

Female Reporting: There has been an ongoing debate as to whether or not female reporters should be allowed in the locker rooms after games. If they are denied access, this gives male reporters a competitive advantage in the field, as they can interview players in the locker room after games. If locker room access is denied to all reporters - male and female - because of this controversy, male journalists would likely resent female reporters for having their access taken away. Before the 1960s, women were a rare sight in the world of sports reporting. If there were women reporting on sports, it was primarily for women's sports teams. In the 1970s, more women began playing sports, which enabled more women to report on sports. They soon discovered the

success and prestige was not in reporting on women's sports, but in reporting for the big money-making sports such as men's professional football, baseball, and basketball. As time passed, women started to use their sports reporting expertise to get into reporting on major sports. Unfortunately, some newspaper editors did not want women reporting on those professional sports. Too much money was invested in them, and there was a general sense that women did not belong in male-dominated sports. One major hurdle women journalist faced was getting into the locker room. Some sports organizations had firm rules about women in the men's locker rooms, while others simply had unwritten rules. Women who attempted to report on teams that enforced these rules were stopped at the locker room door and told to wait outside for their interviews with the players and coaches. The problem with this policy was that their male counterparts were allowed to go into the locker room to conduct interviews. Once the players conducted their interviews with the group of waiting male reporters, they were reluctant to go outside the locker room to give an interview again to one individual reporter. Women were often left no option but to do their articles without quotes from the stars of the game.

In the late 1970s, newspapers and magazines began to insist the teams allow reporters to enter the locker rooms regardless of gender. In 1978, Time Magazine sued the New York Yankees, forcing them to allow its female reporters into the locker room. After this action, it became almost fashionable to have women on the sports-reporting staff. The case had an affirmative-action-type effect on the demographic of the reporters on many sports staffs. However, as more and more women began to enter the locker rooms, reports of abuse of female reporters by players began to surface. Throughout the 1980s, there were many cases of players acting out negatively against women reporters. It is important to look at these early years so there is a sense of understanding of how far the industry has come since allowing women into the locker rooms.

Background of Journalists

Journalists who entered the industry in the 1970s and 1980s were able to point to Title IX (Education Amendments Act of 1972 in US) as the reason they were able to go into sports journalism. It opened a number of doors for the journalists that would not have been open previously. During those days, not a single journalist interviewed mentioned Title IX directly. All of the journalists spoke of a love, or passion, for sports. The majority of them had played one or multiple sports. All of the women believed their passion for sports and their journalism skills eventually led them to a role in sports journalism. Most of them were too young to have taken direct advantage of Title IX. For them, being involved in sports was a natural career choice.

Current Treatment of the Journalists

The journalists were all asked how they are treated inside the locker rooms and whether or not there were any issues with the players due to gender. The majority of the journalists had a story relating to gender discrimination, but very few could cite something that happened in recent years. Most of the journalists believed they had a good relationship with the players. Some players actually seem more comfortable speaking with women. Many journalists equated their treatment with the personalities of whom they were working with at the time. "It is all personality driven. Every personality is different.

Conclusion

In this paper we see what changes have taken place in sports reporting since the early days of women being allowed in the locker room. How do players in professional sports currently feel about women reporting in the locker rooms? What changes have taken place in sports reporting since the early days of women being allowed in the locker room? The main change that has taken place is the general acceptance of women in the locker room. They are no longer looked at as a novelty or a threat. They are simply part of the work environment, and most of the players do not think twice about them being there.

Most of the women believe the problems with the audience are not getting any better, and because of the Internet they might be getting worse. This study demonstrated that women are equal in the eyes of the players, but they have a long way to go to have the same acceptance by the audience.

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