ANDREW C. BILLINGS • MICHAEL L. BUTTERWORTH

FOURTH EDITION

COMMUNICATION AND SPORT

SURVEYING THE FIELD

COMMUNICATION AND SPORT

Fourth Edition

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Surveying the Field

Fourth Edition

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SAGE

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PREFACE

Lao Tzu once claimed that, "Those who have knowledge don't predict. Those who predict don't have knowledge." We generally agree with this sentiment, yet we found ourselves attempting to do both more than ever in this fourth edition of *Communication and Sport: Surveying the Field*. We revised this book in the midst of a pandemic, which was then combined with a revived Black Lives Matter movement that resulted in considerable changes to the sports landscape. As we finalize this edition, plans for sports continue to be canceled, amended, or otherwise in flux. Meanwhile, there is an NFL football team dubbed "Washington Football Team" and NBA jerseys feature messages such as "Say Their Names" and "How Many More?" Things change and, particularly in 2020, they did so rapidly.

We obviously wish to have knowledge conveyed in the most accessible and accurate degree possible, yet decisions on *which* pieces of knowledge to disseminate involve a series of educated guesses. In the time of COVID-19, that also involved some postulations as to which trends might be permanent as opposed to temporary. Particularly with some of our new media information that is enhanced in this book, we attempted to paint a picture that would be useful for several years while acknowledging that communication and sport will have inevitably shifted in noteworthy ways even before the book goes to press. Our interviewee for Chapter 3, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, is known for being able to make prognostications about the future—and even he can only write the future story of communication and sport in pencil, not pen. Thus, with the most accurate eye toward the future that we can hope to possess, we offer this fourth edition as the closest representation of the issues pertinent to communication and sport, circa 2020.

THE BOOK

Communication and Sport: Surveying the Field is designed to bridge traditional divides between notions of speech communication (a tradition that includes interpersonal, organizational, and rhetorical approaches) and mass communication (a tradition that includes media studies, journalism, and cultural studies), and all of the potential divides and schisms inherently within. The aim was the creation of a book with enough breadth that it would be difficult to have one scholar who could truly claim expertise in all of the terrain. Thus, the combination of the two of us results in an empirically trained media scholar and a rhetorically trained communication studies scholar jointly canvassing what amounts to an amazing scope of work in the field that is now outlined, structured, and synthesized for an undergraduate to grasp the scope and importance of studying communication and sport.

NEW FOR THE FOURTH EDITION

The general structure that we used for the third edition was amended a bit—16 chapters became 14 chapters that run the gamut of communication and sport in a variety of forms from humanistic to interpersonal to mediated. Chapters on parent–child and player–coach interactions were fused into one focusing on interpersonal elements in sport; a concluding chapter on the future of sport was eliminated for reasons of unnecessary fortune teller guessing we note earlier in this preface. Cutting-edge case studies on issues are again updated for greater accessibility, while new interviews are advanced from people such as Sarah Spain, sports reporter for ESPN, and Tom Ricketts, chair of the Chicago Cubs. Even more prominently, the entire book is infused with a distinct sense of modern day, discussing everything from the pandemic to public protests to phrases we had never typed before such as "Los Angeles Laker LeBron James." Finally, we must note that relevant citations from recent years are part and parcel of the update, as we strive to make this textbook the most comprehensive and complete option available in the communication and sport marketplace.

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

The comprehensive focus on *communication* scholarship is one of the major features of this textbook. In particular, we orient readers to the enactment, production, consumption, and organization of sport. This entails a wide range of communicative processes, including mass communication productions, interpersonal interactions, family and relational development, public speeches, individual expressions of identity through sport performances, collective expressions of community through sport rituals, and much, much, more. The chapters within this textbook also feature communication scholarship that directs our attention to the ways that sport produces, maintains, or resists cultural attitudes about race, gender, sexuality, class, and politics.

The broad range of topical material is complemented by a pluralistic approach to communication and sport research. We survey scholarship that can be found in each of the major academic research paradigms: social scientific, humanistic, and critical/cultural. Each of these paradigms values different dimensions of intellectual inquiry. Social scientists, for example, are commonly interested in conducting research that allows scholars to explain how communication has worked in the past in order to offer some prediction of how it may happen in the future. Humanists, by contrast, tend to spotlight more particular instances of communication (rather than universal patterns) so that they may reveal deeper levels of understandings of human experiences. Meanwhile, critical/cultural scholars are committed to identifying relationships of power with the goal of sparking productive social change through academic inquiry. Although most researchers tend to identify with one of these paradigms over the others, they are not mutually exclusive, and, in the best cases, the insights from one approach may complement or supplement another. Communication and sport scholars also approach their research using different methodological tools, including content analysis, statistical modeling, ethnography, interviewing, experiments, survey collection, and textual criticism. Throughout this

textbook, we have included examples of each research paradigm and various methods of study. It is our hope, then, that we have truly represented the diversity of scholarship conducted in communication and sport.

Another feature of this textbook is the inclusion in each chapter of a series of inserts, including interviews, case studies, ethical debates, and theoretical connections. The interviews feature a range of experts in communication and sport, including renowned television figures such as Bob Costas, leading journalists such as *Outsports* co-founder Cyd Zeigler, prominent people within the sports industry such as Dale Earnhardt, Jr., and sports scholars such as crisis communication expert Natalie Brown-Devlin. These interviews help to contextualize and extend the ideas that are developed in each chapter. The case studies pick up on a specific dimension from each chapter in order to facilitate discussion about the communicative nature of sport. Ethical debates invite a consideration of various cultural, political, and social consequences of sport, while understanding niche sports hopefully broadens readers' conceptions of the breadth and depth of sport in society. Many of these issues are tied together in our "Theoretically Speaking" sections, and readers can expect all of these inserted features to clarify, extend, and challenge their understandings of communication and sport.

Finally, as those already familiar with sport are well aware, the relationship between communication and sport is one that is rapidly changing. New technologies, changing organizational structures, a pervasive sports media that now includes a multitude of social media formats, and the explosion of fantasy sports are just some of the ways that sport has been dramatically altered in recent years. The final chapter of this textbook arguably necessitated the largest number of updates, as American relationships with legalized sports gambling, eSports, and beyond all have shifted dramatically. Our fourth edition is our best attempt to synthesize a communication and sport landscape that is scattering far more than synthesizing. Yet that, we argue, is part of what makes this fun.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With each edition of this textbook, we approach a revision with a combined sense of apprehension (because of the time involved in completing it) and excitement (because so many new works have been published and examples have unfurled within the sports landscape since the previous edition). The goal is to keep the textbook fresh, up-to-date, and at its highest level of utility. This evolution of a project that, at times, could seem unwieldy could not have happened without a great deal of synergy among everyone involved, but we also recognize how fortunate we have been throughout this process.

First, we must salute the textbook author whose name is no longer on this fourth edition: Paul Turman. His current role as chancellor of the Nebraska College System precluded any time he could have devoted to edition four, but his work is still very much infused in this book. His additional insight for this fourth edition is missed, but his scholarship most certainly lives on.

Second, we must thank SAGE, as the people we have worked with over the years have been consistent in their knowledge, professionalism, and support. Todd Armstrong initially saw the value in this project, Matt Byrnie helped us to achieve that vision in our first edition, and Terri Accomazzo and now Lily Norton have shepherded revised editions. It is nice to have a publisher that is willing to be an advocate for the burgeoning field that is the combination of communication and sport.

Third, our universities (University of Alabama and University of Texas at Austin) have allowed us the leeway to pursue this project in the timeframe we wished, and for that we are thankful.

Fourth, we wish to thank all of the faculty and students who embraced the first three editions of our work, bringing it into classrooms across the country and, indeed, to other nations in an attempt to educate about the role of communication and sport in society. Without your endorsements, a fourth edition would not have been conceivable.

Fifth, we thank our graduate students who have assisted us over the course of all editions with the review of scholarship and other materials for this book. These students include Cory Hillman and Erin Paun from Bowling Green State University, and Aisha Avery and Sitong Guo from the University of Alabama.

Finally, we are grateful for our families as we try to keep our professional and personal lives in balance. Our children are now in middle school and high school, which means carefully working with and around active schedules that include baseball, basketball, karate, and soccer. We appreciate their understanding as we attended to this project, and we especially value the support we have received from our spouses. It is also worth noting that we completed the revisions for this edition in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, a public health crisis that has caused unprecedented disruptions and sorrow. We recognize how fortunate we are to pursue this work as we all navigate such unusual

circumstances. In short, the confluence of events and supporters has resulted in a revised and updated text of which we are proud, and we thank all of the people in our lives who allowed for it to happen.

Andrew C. Billings
Michael L. Butterworth

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Media, and the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Dr. Butterworth has served as an officer for the Communication and Sport Division of the National Communication Association and the Sports Communication Interest Group of the International Communication Association. He also was the founding executive director of the International Association for Communication and Sport. Dr. Butterworth earned his PhD in rhetoric and public culture at Indiana University-Bloomington and has an MA in communication and a BA in political science from Northern Illinois University. Before joining the faculty at Texas in 2017, he was at Bowling Green State University (2006–2013) and Ohio University (2013–2017). He is an avid Chicago Cubs fan and can easily be distracted with conversations about sports, politics, and music.

1

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION AND SPORT

When we published the first edition of this textbook a decade ago, we began with a simple provocation: "Imagine, for a moment, a world without sports." To be clear, we did not *want* such a world; we simply thought it offered a way to contextualize the many ways sport is integrated into our daily lives. As we present the fourth edition of *Communication and Sport*, we no longer have to *imagine* this scenario. 2020 will be remembered for many things—global climate disasters, a presidential impeachment, stirring protests for racial justice—but it will likely be the coronavirus pandemic that defines our understanding of the year (and years to come). Much as the Great Depression in the 1930s or the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the public health crisis affected every facet of American life, including sport.

In the early months of 2020, as Americans became familiar with COVID-19 as a global issue, the sports calendar moved forward with its normal certainty. Super Bowl LIV saw the Kansas City Chiefs win their first championship in half a century and vaulted quarterback Patrick Mahomes to superstardom. Major League Baseball (MLB) began spring training, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) looked forward to its annual "March Madness" tournaments. Athletes, fans, and media equally set their sights on sport's largest spectacle: the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. By early March, however, news from around the world was grim. Coronavirus infections spiked in countries such as China and Italy, and European football (soccer) leagues began suspending games. Then, in the United States, the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament

The Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV

in Indian Wells, California was postponed. On March 12, 2020, after President Donald Trump announced a ban on travel from many European countries to the United States and Tom Hanks, one of Hollywood's most beloved figures, announced he had contracted the virus, the National Basketball Association (NBA) suspended all games indefinitely. The combination of these three events arguably redefined the national perception of the public health crisis (Abbruzzese, 2020).

For many Americans, the disruption of the sports calendar was a clear sign that something was wrong. Suddenly, spring break pilgrimages to Arizona and Florida for preseason baseball were canceled. Millions of children who participate in youth sports saw their practices and games delayed, relocated, or dropped altogether. Sports media had no games to air in exchange for their billions of dollars invested in broadcasting contracts. Fans of various sports lamented the loss of their favorite events, parents mourned missed opportunities for their children, and sports media openly wondered, "What do we do now?" (Curtis, 2020). In short, the sudden absence of all these activities brought into sharp focus just how deeply embedded sport is in American culture.

Of course, sport did come back in 2020. The first glimpses of normalcy came from professional baseball in South Korea and the German Bundesliga (both played without fans in attendance). On June 26, the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) became the first U.S. league to return to action. Major League Soccer (MLS), MLB, the NBA, and the Women's National Basketball Association all followed in July. Each league faced unique constraints in their negotiations to return to play, and they also

had players opt out of the season or contract the coronavirus. None of it was ideal, but sports media and fans were largely grateful to have them back out of a sense of desired normalcy: this is what "normal" was supposed to look like, with sports a key component of our daily calendars.

It is tempting to conclude that the pandemic "changed everything" and therefore use it as a framework for every discussion in this book. Although we believe it is a compelling way to orient you to the various topics we cover, we will otherwise resist that temptation. Instead, we will argue that the pandemic "revealed everything"—some things communication and sport scholars had established for years and other things we merely suspected about sport in the American ecosystem. Coronavirus indeed constituted a public health crisis that will have ripple effects for years to come, but we do not want it to become the only way to make sense of the range of topics in communication and sport.

Having clarified that, consider how integral communication was during sport's response to the public health crisis. First, language and messaging were central to helping sport participants and fans make sense of the issue. Second, individual, community, and national identities all were destabilized. How does a young athlete such as 16-year-old tennis phenom Coco Gauff think about her self-image when the sport that has defined her cannot be played? When will fans of Dayton University have another chance to see their team earn a number 1 seed in the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament with a legitimate chance to compete for a national title? How is national pride affected by the missed opportunity to cheer on Team USA at the Olympics? Third, interpersonal communication shifted into virtual spaces and allowed teams and fan communities to stay in contact. Fourth, organizations had to develop strategic responses to the crisis and assure their publics that their actions prioritized health and safety. Fifth, political disputes about how best to manage the virus spilled over into sport, greatly influencing decisions about when and where to play. Sixth, sport media and organizations faced unprecedented financial losses, further complicating their decision-making processes. Seventh, sport media specifically had to reinvent the production of content, digging deep into historical archives, developing new forms of competitions (nationally televised games of H-O-R-S-E, for example), and shifting focus to sport stories happening away from competition.

Undoubtedly, you could add to the above list. Our purpose here is not to be exhaustive. Rather, it is to show the range of forms *communication* can take, from interpersonal contexts, to groups, to public and mass dissemination. This book is designed to highlight all of these phenomena, providing a comprehensive summary of communication and sport as a discipline.

Let us turn our attention away from the context of 2020 and be more specific about the impact of sport in American life. Youth sports, for example, are among the most common activities for children in the United States. The Aspen Institute (2019) reports that nearly 72% of children between the ages of 6 and 12 play an individual or team sport. While these numbers provide us with some appreciation for the extent to which sports are important, they cannot fully describe the range of sports in which young people participate or the ways children play sports informally. Sports are also significant because they provide models of leadership for young people, environments to develop interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, and stories of inspiration when children use sports to develop their individual skills and character. All of which is to say that *communication* is central to how we play, watch, interpret, and evaluate sports.

Members of the Army National Guard show their loyalties to Michigan and Ohio State

Of course, youth sports beget other forms of sport. A quick glance at your college classmates offers an appropriate example. How many of them wear a sweatshirt or hat that features their favorite team? Perhaps your own wardrobe has these articles of clothing? When you wear a collegiate sweatshirt, are you affiliating with an academic or athletic program? Both? Indeed, a positive affiliation with sports is one way that college students construct and communicate identity. Many students even choose where to attend college based on a campus culture organized around sports (Sperber, 2000). And, as the ESPN advertising campaign called "Never Graduate" illustrates, many of us maintain our allegiances to the colleges we attended. Using familiar rivalries such as Michigan–Ohio State or North Carolina–Duke, the ESPN commercials depicted adults who continue to be loyal to their undergraduate institutions. At the heart of the campaign was the idea that our college affiliation—*understood primarily as a sports affiliation*—communicates something essential about our identity. As much as it may be warranted, no university is likely to receive a parade when its business school moves into the top 10 of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings.

The stakes for understanding communicative practices may be even greater at the professional level. Especially because professional sports are inextricably linked to the media that broadcast, report, and opine about the games, it is next to impossible to escape the influence of professional sports. Consider that leagues such as MLB and the National Football League (NFL) routinely set attendance records during the 2000s, the expansion of digital services makes consuming live sporting events more available through satellite providers and Internet feeds, and television networks continue to invest billions of dollars in sports broadcasting contracts. Or, think about the fact that more recent "lifestyle" sports such as mixed martial arts have exploded

in popularity, fantasy sports have produced an entire industry that is dependent on (but also separate from) sport itself, community officials often insist that the key to urban development or city pride is to invest in a professional sports franchise and/or arena, and player salaries continue to rise, often driving up the cost of attendance in the process. There are many other ways our lives are affected by professional sport's popularity. What is critical, once again, is that communication practices are essential to the success of sports—from expressions of collective identity found at live events, to the images produced by sports media, to the importance granted to sports in the vitality of a community.

Across all levels of competition, and through the media that cover these events, the very language of sport has become commonplace in American culture. As early as 1959, when Tannenbaum and Noah coined the phrase "sportsugese," there has been an acknowledgment that sport influences how we think and talk. Inspired both by his experience as a sportswriter and the prevalence of sport language in the speeches of President Richard Nixon, Robert Lipsyte (1975) termed this phenomenon "sportspeak." Indeed, as Segrave (2000) has pointed out, sport metaphors are commonly used to communicate ideas and feelings about politics, war, business, and sex. For instance, during the 2008 presidential campaign, both Democrat John Edwards and Republican Mike Huckabee compared themselves to the racehorse, Seabiscuit, as both wished to embody similar qualities of determination characterizing the 1930s thoroughbred. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, General Norman Schwarzkopf famously referred to a military strategy as a "Hail Mary pass," a familiar football reference. Meanwhile, business meetings are routinely punctuated with platitudes such as "this ad campaign is a slam dunk." As for sex, American adolescence is commonly described through the quest to "get to first base" or "hit a home run." Sports media professionals, especially announcers, also regularly feature these metaphors and clichés. This is especially the case when announcers are under a great deal of pressure or when the action on the field or court is not following expected patterns (Wanta & Leggert, 1988).

While language use is one indicator of sport's prominent role in American culture, another is the fact that it is among the largest industries in the United States. Financial consultants Pricewaterhouse Coopers report that the North American sports market will be worth $83 billion by 2023 (Broughton, 2019). These revenues, coming from ticket sales, media rights, sponsorships, and merchandising, have remained steady or grown even as the worldwide economy has struggled. Meanwhile, we should point out that sport's ability to generate media interest is almost unparalleled. The two most watched television events in the world are routinely international sporting events—the Olympics and the men's World Cup in soccer (Tomlinson, 2005). With that popularity, television networks eagerly pay astronomical sums for the rights to broadcast sports. In 2010, for example, CBS and Turner Sports paid the NCAA $10.8 billion for a 14-year contract to broadcast the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament (O'Toole, 2010). In 2016, the contract was extended to 2032 for an additional $8.8 billion (Norlander, 2016). For the right to broadcast the Olympic Games from 2014 to 2020, NBC paid the International Olympic Committee nearly $4.4 billion (McCarthy, 2011). All of this demonstrates that the immense popularity generated by sports makes them among the most desirable commodities in the media industry.

INTERVIEW

BOB COSTAS, MLB NETWORK

Q: What do you think is the biggest change happening in sports media?

A: In the big picture, it is the Internet and social media. Obviously, there is some high-quality stuff to be found there and, in fact, some of the best people in sports media have migrated to the Internet. But any time you open the doors that wide, what comes marching through is going to be a hodge-podge. In most—although not all—cases, there is little to no oversight or accountability. No editor to answer to. Little peer pressure to hold you to a high standard. So much of what is out there is not credible and some is, in fact, blatantly false. Too many denizens of the digital world seem to be more concerned with how many Twitter followers they have than with the quality of their writing, reporting, or opining. Quaint as this may seem, there is a difference between an informed opinion and a hot take. As just one example of the downside of this new world, look at what's happened to *Sports Illustrated*, where those who now own and run it appear to be more interested in monetizing a digital brand than maintaining *Sports Illustrated*'s long-standing history of quality.

Q: With social media and other interactive applications, everyone now is a media producer. Does that change power structures between the athlete, the fan, the organization, or, in your case, the network?

A: For me, it had no effect. They knew that I wouldn't participate in it. I was grandfathered in, so I just went out and did what I always did. But I don't know that a 25- or 30-year-old person coming along today could follow that path. In fact, in many cases local stations and networks *require* broadcasters to have a social media presence. In any case, people can no longer be insulated from it. Before, if you agreed to go on a radio talk show in Albuquerque, New Mexico, it would be heard, in its context, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. But now, it can be posted and commented upon by somebody not in Albuquerque, but in Altoona, often hearing only 3 or 4 minutes of a 20-minute conversation. I've seen situations where someone posts something on Twitter that is a small portion of what I have said. As the great George Will once observed, "I am the foremost authority on what I just said." But if somebody posts a portion of it and then 100 people comment on that, what kind of *Alice in Wonderland*, "through the looking glass" world is that? So you have to be aware: once it is released into the larger world, countless numbers of people will pick it over like vultures. Social media is not the best place for those who favor nuance; it leans toward bumper sticker thinking.

Q: From media calls to "shut up and dribble" or "stick to sports," there is a debate on the degree to which sports are political. Haven't they always been?

A: I've never argued that sports is not primarily entertainment. And, in fact, somewhere between 95% to 99% of what I have done has been about the game or the event and nothing else. But anyone with even the slightest knowledge of history knows that there have been many, many times when larger issues have intersected with sports. In proportion and at the right time, it's the responsible thing to do to address those subjects. The proper time is not during the games themselves (other than possible quick acknowledgments), but in pregame or halftime segments or in programming that isn't attached to a game at all. When it comes to "stick to sports," those who raise that

objection would have more credibility if they applied it uniformly, but what they really mean is "stick to sports or shut up and sing unless you agree with me." In which case, we are happy to have you on and happy to have you pontificate. FOX News rather regularly welcomes sports and entertainment figures who share their worldview—which is most certainly their right—but then to turn around and tell LeBron James to shut up and dribble is striking in its hypocrisy.

Q: Football has many television advantages, one of which is that every game is a network game and even if regional games are not seen in every market, highlights of those games are part of the presentation of every game you are watching. Baseball plays virtually every day and doesn't have that particular advantage, which results in lower national ratings.

A: True. Unless you get a special circumstance like the Cubs in 2016, or when any World Series gets to a Game 7. Here's what's happened with baseball: it has gone from primarily a radio sport to a sport where almost every game is televised locally or regionally. And those telecasts—especially in the summer—are often the highest-rated programming in those local markets. That's great, but what doesn't translate, then, is if the Texas Rangers and Toronto Blue Jays are in the playoffs, most people who call themselves baseball fans in St. Louis or Atlanta don't know two players on either team. Plus, until you get to the World Series, much of baseball's postseason is on cable. That tends not to help in building an audience that feeds into the World Series.

Q: Throughout, broadcast television ratings have dropped because there's so much out there, but there's still only one Super Bowl. Only one Masters. Does that mean, in your estimation, that sports media has a larger imprint on the cultural conversation through media?

A: Yes, it does. For example, baseball makes a mistake when their sole metric is, "How does the World Series match up against [the] World Series of 20 years ago in terms of ratings?" In truth, the World Series still wins the night by a sizable margin every single time it's on. So, too, does the NBA Finals. These don't get as high of ratings as the NFL, but more people are watching than almost all of the acclaimed television shows except the Academy Awards. And even that has a shrinking audience. So, to your point, yes, the Olympics, big football games, and the *seventh* game of an NBA Finals, a World Series . . . something that feels like an event still can cut through in a fragmented universe.

Source: Reprinted by permission of Bob Costas.

COMMUNICATION AND SPORT

What should be clear by now is that we are interested in sports primarily as phenomena of *communication*. The academic field of "communication" or "communication studies" traditionally covers a range of interests including, but not limited to, intercultural, interpersonal, mediated, organizational, and rhetorical. Other academic publications and textbooks have studied sports through other perspectives. Indeed, the disciplines of

anthropology, history, kinesiology, psychology, and sociology have contributed greatly to our understanding of how and why people participate in sports. However, these disciplines tend to do so without emphasizing the communicative practices that precede and frame the ways people participate in sport. Communication scholars, meanwhile, focus specifically on symbols, messages, and meaning. For example, Kassing and colleagues (2004) suggest that people enact, produce, consume, and organize sport primarily as a communicative activity. Wenner (2015) further organizes these commitments into three "dispositions": "media, sports, and society," "sport communication as a profession," and "communication studies and sport." Following these leads, our focus in this text is to explore how and why sport can be understood and studied specifically from the perspective of communication, a field with a far-ranging set of interests and applications.

This is not to suggest that the field of communication hasn't benefited from other academic disciplines. Sociology, in fact, is likely the academic field that has done the most to promote the serious study of sports. In 1978, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport was founded, leading to the publication of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (*SSJ*). Just a few years later, scholar Richard Lapchick founded the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, then housed at Boston's Northeastern University. This led to the publication of the *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, which alongside *SSJ* publishes the leading scholarship on the sociology of sport. Meanwhile, other academic fields cultivated the study of sport through publications such as the *Journal of Sport Behavior*, the *Journal of Sport Management*, and *Sport in History*.

The field of communication developed its interest in sport around the same time period. In 1975, Michael Real published a study of the Super Bowl, called "Super Bowl: Mythic Spectacle." In that article, Real explained that the televised broadcast of the Super Bowl was arranged to emphasize the mythology of football as a ritualized expression of American identity. That sport could be used to communicate—and thus, affirm and extend—American values became one of the early themes of communication and sport scholarship. Other early studies in mass communication confirmed the importance of sports. Trujillo and Ekdom (1985), for example, analyzed sportswriters' accounts of the 1984 Chicago Cubs to reveal how journalism is a means by which "American cultural values are displayed, affirmed and integrated" (p. 264). Meanwhile, Farrell (1989) recognized that the mediated production of the Olympic Games used international politics to create dramatic narratives that fostered national identity. By the time that Wenner's *Media, Sports, & Society* was published in 1989, it was clear that there was much to be gained through the communicative study of sport. These early studies were significant not only because they demonstrated the significance of sport but also because they blurred the traditional divisions of communication scholarship, therefore making the study of communication and sport a truly interdisciplinary endeavor.

The relationship between communication and sport further developed in the 1990s with studies featuring an increasingly diverse set of topics and scholarly methods. As Trujillo (2003) notes, "[D]uring the 1990s, communication students and scholars became very serious about studying sport" (p. xiii). This attitude stood in contrast to previous decades, during which many academics dismissed the study of sport as being trivial, much like the traditional view in news media that ridiculed the sports page as a "toy department" (Rowe, 2007). By the turn of the century, this seriousness prompted a robust interest in communication and sport that now cuts across virtually every area

of inquiry in the discipline. Throughout the 2000s, communication scholars found new avenues for engaging in sport-based research, resulting in numerous conferences and publications, including several special issues of communication journals dedicated exclusively to sport. Such growth leads us to the contemporary moment in which the "field of sport communication now has its own coherent body of knowledge and a community of scholars who are advancing the field" (Abeza, O'Reilly, & Nadeau, 2014, p. 308). This book, therefore, is an effort to synthesize that knowledge and offer a comprehensive survey of the field.

Before we proceed, we should note that this text is not a handbook for practitioners. We know that many of you are interested in careers in "sports communication," perhaps working for the marketing department for a sports franchise or in communications at a university athletic department. We make relevant connections to these professional interests throughout this text. However, primarily we take up how communication and sport can be studied and what they can tell us about one another. The emphasis on *study* over *practice*, therefore, is the logic by which we have chosen to feature the phrase "communication and sport" over "sports communication." With this distinction in mind, but before we offer an overview of the material covered in this book, let us turn our attention to some matters of definition.

Communication

It is virtually impossible to find a definition of "communication" that everyone can agree upon. If you have taken a public speaking course or an introduction to communication theory, you've likely encountered some of the more common definitions of the term. These definitions involve key concepts such as "sender," "message," and "receiver," all of which emerged from telecommunications research in the 1940s (Shannon & Weaver, 1948). Communication scholars have used these simple concepts to develop increasingly sophisticated models of communicative practices. Today, communication is largely understood as a process, wherein meaning is constructed and exchanged through a variety of symbols and media. Thinking of communication as a *process* instead of a *product* allows researchers to examine more than the content of the "message" or the intention of the "sender." Instead, scholarship may examine message construction, interpersonal influence, small group dynamics, mass media, rhetoric and persuasion, and the performance of identity. Accordingly, in this book we adopt a broad and inclusive approach to communication, recognizing that different definitions and methods allow for greater understanding. Thus, if there is any single definition we would endorse, it is one in the spirit of Alberts, Nakayama, and Martin (2012), who define communication as "a transactional process in which people generate meaning through the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages in specific contexts, influenced by individual and societal forces and embedded in culture" (p. 20).

Communication is a broad discipline. As we noted earlier, communication scholars study areas such as intercultural, interpersonal, mediated, organizational, and rhetorical phenomena. Each of these labels is insufficient on its own, however, as there are various subfields of interest. An interest in interpersonal communication, for example, might include studies of family relationships, friendships, romantic relationships, or workplace interactions. Mediated communication, meanwhile, encompasses studies of audiences,

industries, and productions across an array of forms, including print media, television, and "new media" (which often refers to the Internet, social media, user-generated media, or some combination). In fact, our very understanding of "media" has changed with these technological innovations, as we now regularly integrate broadcast, streaming, and social media in our sport experiences. Another way to think about communication research is to focus less on the means of communication and more on the contexts. From this view, we might think about topical interests in areas such as environmental communication, health communication, or, yes, communication and sport. It is also important to note that oftentimes these areas and topics of interest interact and overlap, truly reminding us that "communication" is a fluid term.

In addition to the range of topics, communication scholars conduct research from different intellectual traditions, namely social scientific, humanistic, and critical. *Social scientific* scholars are those who value objective studies of observable communication behaviors. Their research seeks to test, predict, and generalize communication phenomena, typically through quantitative forms of analysis. *Humanistic* scholars take a more subjective view of communication, using qualitative forms of analysis to explain particular (as opposed to general) examples as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of how and why people communicate as they do. *Critical* (or critical/cultural) scholars prioritize ideologies and power as influences on communication practices. They view both human behavior and scholarship as unavoidably political, using scholarship as a means to facilitate positive social change. Between the two of us as authors, we have expertise across these orientations to communication research. Our approach in this book is therefore inclusive, as we survey broadly the topical and methodological issues addressed by communication scholars of sport.

Sport

If it is important that we have a shared basis for understanding of the term "communication," then it is equally important to define "sport." You may have noticed by now that although the word "sports" is used in the opening pages of this book, we have chosen "sport" for the title. Before we explain this distinction, let us first settle on what makes something a sport in the first place. Guttmann's *From Ritual to Record* (1978) is written in the sociological tradition of sport scholarship. Nevertheless, it provides a typology that helps define and delimit the scope of sport. Guttmann wants to distinguish between four levels of activity: play, games, contests, and sports. Play, he suggests, is "nonutilitarian physical or intellectual activity pursued for its own sake" (p. 3). When that play becomes organized, we have "games," and when games have winners and losers, we have "contests." Not all contests are games, however. As Guttmann notes, a war is a contest with winners and losers, but it is most certainly not a game.

Are all contests sports, then? Guttmann doesn't think so. For example, he notes that just because *Sports Illustrated* writes about it, it doesn't mean chess is a sport. Thirty years later, we could amend this to say that just because ESPN televises it, it doesn't mean the spelling bee, poker, or cornhole is a sport. What is required, Guttmann (1978) claims, is that sports involve a *physical* component. Therefore, sports are defined as "'playful' physical contests, that is, as nonutilitarian contests which include an important measure of physical as well as intellectual skill" (p. 7). Following this definition, when we talk of

specific contests such as basketball or golf, we will likely use the term "sports." However, and much more frequently, when we refer to the institutional arrangement of leagues, teams, officials, players, fans, and media, we will use the term "sport." In similar terms, we might also think of Bell's (1987) definition, which states, "Sport is a repeatable, regulated, physical contest producing a clear winner" (p. 2).

PERSPECTIVES AND APPROACHES

This book builds on the foundation we have detailed above. We cast a broad net in the effort to survey the field of communication and sport across its methodological, theoretical, and topical diversity. Let us now provide an overview of the chapters to follow.

Sport is a central feature of life in countries around the world. Our focus in this textbook, however, is primarily on the United States and the study of how Americans participate in the community of sport. With that in mind, what does it mean to study the "community of sport?" Krizek (2008) states that it "is a diverse community with often disparate interests that compel us to employ a wide variety of research practices and theoretical frameworks" (p. 105). Thus, on the one hand, the "community of sport" is about those who study it from perspectives we have described above. However, this community is less about communication scholars and more about those who are invested more directly in the community of sport. Accordingly, in Chapter 2 we examine how this community is constituted by participants, organizations, media, and fans. For example, think about the discussion that emerged when MLB introduced a rule change in 2014 that sought to minimize the risk of collisions between baserunners and catchers at home plate. The new rule came in response to injuries that occurred from collisions some saw as unnecessary, but the change raised questions about the game's traditions and the toughness of its players. First and foremost, the rule was designed to protect the players (participants), which in turn protected the teams (organizations) from losing a player to the disabled list. Meanwhile, MLB (another organization) promoted the decision as being in the best interest of the game. Broadcasters and sportswriters (media) then debated the virtues of the rule, while observers (fans) watched to see how players would adapt to the change. Collectively, these four constituencies adapted to the new rule and deliberated over whether or not it was good for baseball. Although all four groups represent different interests in the community of sport, those interests overlap, revealing the interdependence of participants, organizations, media, and fans.

Much of the community of sport is influenced by media. Especially when talking about sport at the collegiate and professional levels, it is all but impossible not to think about how the media constructs, delivers, and digests sporting events. Therefore, we provide an overview in Chapter 3 of the role of media in sport, including traditional forms such as newspapers to "new" media such as Twitter. Twitter and other social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are still relatively new platforms. The rapid emergence of these sites has changed communication practices in a variety of contexts, including sport. Sanderson (2011) contends that social media is especially relevant to sport because it breaks down some of the barriers that previously prevented fans from interacting with the sports they follow. As he notes, "Fans are capitalizing on the interactivity offered by social media channels to directly engage athletes and sports organization

personnel" (p. xiii). As Clavio (2020) describes, social media has democratized sports media, providing new opportunities for creative control. He writes, "Athletes, leagues and teams, all of whom were forced to rely on mass media to carry their messages to the public during the 20th century, can now create and distribute their own content, in many cases competing directly with journalistic entities for audience attention" (p. xii). All of them, however, merit our attention if we are to understand how sport affects our lives.

Communication and sport scholarship is also interested in understanding how sport constructs, maintains, or even threatens the communities in which we live. Fans often tell us a great deal about sport's impact on community. Thus, we turn our attention more specifically to sports fan cultures in Chapter 4. As an example, consider the fan culture of MLS's Portland Timbers. The team began play in 2011 and has sold out every regular season and playoff game since, with more than 12,000 people on the waitlist for season tickets (Goldberg, 2016). The dedication to the franchise can be explained in part by the fact that Portland is a large metropolitan area that long had only one major league franchise (the NBA's Trail Blazers). However, between the launch of the Timbers and the founding of the Portland Thorns of the NWSL in 2012, there is also a specific passion for soccer in the community. A visible symbol of this passion is the popular "Timbers Army" fan club, a group that dates back to a previous professional soccer franchise in the city and is rooted in Portland's identity as a progressive, creative city. As the team prepared to join MLS, the organization launched a "Timbers Army" promotional campaign featuring

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Crowd, including the "Timbers Army," at a Portland Timbers soccer game

a diverse array of local fans on billboards throughout the region. The only other content on the billboards was a small Timbers logo. By spotlighting the fans, the campaign channeled local passions and helped establish an immediate connection to the franchise (Dean, 2014). This is only one view of fanship, of course. In Chapter 4 we examine various forms of fan behavior, including other motivations guiding fans to identify with certain sports or teams as well as the technological changes that have altered the terrain of sport spectatorship and consumption.

Connections to the community of sport are commonly cultivated through mythologies linking fans with their communities or sports in particular ways. As we discuss in Chapter 5, myths are stories that are not necessarily true, but their communicative effect is that they feel true. Thus, they provide order and guidance for how people should navigate their worlds. Some myths are local. Grano and Zagacki (2011), for example, demonstrate how civic leaders in New Orleans used the Louisiana Superdome as a site for rehabilitating the city's image after devastation suffered in 2005 because of Hurricane Katrina. The rituals enacted during the ESPN Monday Night Football game that reopened the stadium spoke to sport's ability to create a mythic unity, in this case enacting a "spiritual obligation for the community as a whole" (Grano & Zagacki, 2011, p. 214). Other myths are national. Consider, for instance, the continued resonance of the 1980 Olympic men's hockey team and their "Miracle on Ice." The highly underrated USA team defeated the Soviet team on its way to Olympic gold, and this game continues to affirm the myth of American exceptionalism four decades after it took place. Or, myths may transcend such communities by taking on more cosmological, or religious, significance. Hence, some of the more pervasive sport myths are those equating sports with religion: the "church of baseball" or the idea that the Super Bowl is a "religious festival" (Price, 1992). In each case, myths depend on heroic figures and universal values to impart their lessons. As a result, when we subscribe to a myth's lessons, there are substantial consequences to our attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

Communication scholars have revealed that sport is one of the primary sites for the construction, maintenance, and contestation of identity. In a series of chapters, therefore, we turn our attention to the relationships between sport and both individual and collective identities. We begin in Chapter 6 with a discussion of gender and sport, focusing both on the substantial increase in participation of women in sport since the landmark adoption of Title IX and the problematic representations of female athletes, especially through the media. Overt expressions of sexism are increasingly rare; however, many more subtle iterations of sexism remain. This includes the tendency to provide different coverage to men's sports over women's sports (Billings, 2007), the need to define women first as "feminine" and second as "athletic" (Shugart, 2003), and the all too common emphasis on female appearance over other characteristics.

We clarify as well that "gender" is not a synonym for "women." Although the role of women in sport is a central focus of communication and sport scholarship, we must also attend to sport's role in the construction of masculinity and sexuality. The concept of "hegemonic masculinity," for example, helps explain the dominant features of masculinity for a given culture. These features are often based on power, strength, and control, and they frequently come at the expense of women or gay men (Trujillo, 1991). Thus, in Chapter 6 we are careful to acknowledge the multiple identity positions that are implicated by the concept of gender.

Simone Biles at the 2016 Olympics in Rio

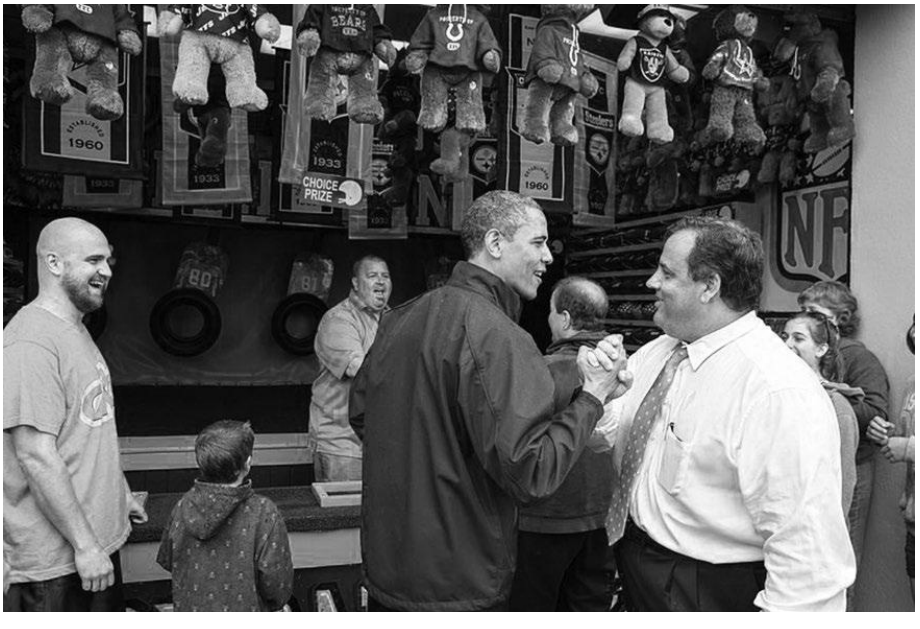
If the media have been guilty of sexism with respect to representations of women, then a similar problem arises with respect to race and ethnicity. On the one hand, sport has been the rare institution in American history where racial minorities or non-U.S. natives have been visible, successful, and celebrated. A century ago, when African American Jack Johnson claimed the heavyweight boxing championship, the victory touched off nationwide riots and precipitated cultural anxieties about the diminishment of white cultural authority. Today, American sport is an arena of diverse races, ethnicities, and nationalities. Indeed, often the most beloved stars—Simone Biles, LeBron James, Patrick Mahomes, Serena Williams—are racial minorities.

The presence of these athletes, however, does not mean that Americans have transcended racial biases or even reached an understanding of what "race" means. Is race equitable with skin color? Ethnicity? Blood? Questions such as these can threaten the harmony that sport has the potential to cultivate. Despite the apparent level playing field offered by sport, racial minorities are often subjected to questionable portrayals and remain marginal participants in managerial and ownership ranks. Meanwhile, what is communicated by a sport like college football, which consistently fields teams that are composed largely of African Americans yet rarely coached by them? What about MLB, where players of Latin American and Asian descent are now commonplace but the overwhelming majority of owners are white? These kinds of questions, and many others, characterize our approach to Chapter 7.

Moving from the individual identity positions of the previous two chapters, Chapter 8 evaluates the mutual influence between sport, politics, and nationalism. One of the most deeply held misconceptions about sport is that it is "apolitical," or that it offers *only* an

escape from the "real-world" concerns of politics. However, if you have ever attended a live sporting event in the United States, you have likely participated in a political ritual that few of us would question. Specifically, most of us take for granted that the performance of the national anthem before a game is simply standard procedure, and few of us would think of it as "political." Yet consider the uproar that has been caused over the years when someone dares to threaten the sanctity of the ritual. José Feliciano, for example, was widely reviled after he delivered what is believed to be the first nontraditional rendition of the anthem at Game 1 of the 1968 World Series. Years later, Division III basketball player Toni Smith attracted much criticism for her refusal to face the American flag during the anthem ceremony during the 2002–2003 season.

Both Feliciano and Smith earned scorn for "politicizing" sport. This charge does not stop elected officials from hoping to exploit sport for their own purposes, however. Presidents routinely throw out pitches at baseball games, invite championship teams to the White House, and appear for interviews during broadcasts in order to foster identification with American citizens. This can generate great favor (President George W. Bush was widely praised when he threw out the first pitch at Game 3 of the 2001 World Series, just weeks after 9/11) or result in embarrassment (such as presidential candidate Mitt Romney's ill-fated attempt to connect with National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) fans by talking about his friendships with NASCAR team owners). Less formal uses of sport also have political implications, such as the "rare bipartisan partnership" shared between President Barack Obama and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in 2013 after they played a game of "Touchdown Fever" during a tour of a New Jersey boardwalk that had been damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012 (Shear &



The White House

Barack Obama and Chris Christie play "Touchdown Fever"

Leibovich, 2013). International sport also raises various political issues, from the metaphorical contests of events such as the Olympic Games to heated disagreements about human rights and national ideologies. Recent Olympiads, for example, have spotlighted these concerns, such as the public protests against the Brazilian government's investment in the Rio Summer Games in 2016 and the visible resistance Vice President Mike Pence showed when seeing the unified North and South Korean Olympic team during the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang. In many cases, the mixing of sport and politics sparks controversy about the degree to which they should remain apart from one another.

In the cases of gender, race, and nationality, the construction of identity is often produced, or at least guided, by the media, sports organizations, or politicians. Because *athletes* are also part of this process, we turn our attention in Chapter 9 to the *performance* of identity in sport. What this means is that participation in sports is often a means for individuals to express who they believe themselves to be or to challenge conventional expectations about identity that they wish to change. The average sports fan, for example, assumes (probably unconsciously) that athletes are *exceptional* physical specimens, and that athletic performance requires a fully able body. Athletes with disabilities challenge this assumption through their participation in sport. Golfer Casey Martin, for instance, garnered significant attention in 1997. Martin had a degenerative leg condition that limited his mobility, and he sued the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) for the right to use a cart on the tour. The PGA insisted that his request undermined the integrity of its rules, but the Supreme Court ruled in Martin's favor. Although Martin's leg condition ultimately prevented him from pursuing a long-term career in professional golf—he is now the head coach of golf at the University of Oregon—the case helped redefine what it means to be an "athlete."

Sexuality can also be understood as a matter of performance. Scholars influenced by the academic field of cultural studies view terms such as "gender" or "sexuality" on a continuum, meaning that there is no such thing as pure "masculinity" or "femininity," but rather people *perform* their identities in more or less masculine or feminine ways. Performances can take many forms, from choosing types of clothing, to using specific words, to participating in one sport over another. What is communicated, for example, when a teenage boy opts for figure skating over hockey? As we noted above, one of the common expectations about sport is that it privileges hegemonic masculinity, through which men are expected to be strong, tough, and heterosexual. Thus, the presence of a gay male in sport represents a challenge to the conventions of gender and sexuality. In part, this is why the coming out narratives of Robbie Rogers (MLS), Jason Collins (NBA), and Michael Sam (NFL) were such big news stories in 2013 and 2014. A discussion of the extent to which our performances reinforce or redefine identities, therefore, concludes our focus on negotiating identity in sport.

Sport is often celebrated for its ability to foster relationships, develop teamwork skills, and find creative outlets for resolving conflict. Our attention to these issues begins in Chapter 10 with a discussion of interpersonal communication in sports. As participation in youth sports continues to climb, its impact on the family takes on growing importance. For many, sports are seen as means to socialize children. Kremer-Sadlik and Kim (2007), for example, revealed that family interactions during sports activities promote the idea that sport communicates and develops important cultural values. Meanwhile, sport also

leads to more troubling phenomena, such as parents who identify too strongly with their children's athletic achievements. The emergence of the so-called "helicopter parent" can arguably be traced to parental involvement in sports, as parents have long obsessed over issues such as playing time or the treatment their children receive from their coaches. For some, the stereotypical figure of the overly demanding father as depicted in the film, *The Bad News Bears*, remains a cautionary tale about the line between support and pressure.

In some ways, the relationship between players and coaches mirrors the relationship between children and parents. Coaches are often surrogate parental figures, and they are charged with communicating lessons about discipline and hard work, even as they are expected to lead their team to victory. Accordingly, communication scholarship has attended to the ability of coaches to motivate players, including an assessment of different motivation strategies. Although stereotypical portrayals of coaches in television shows and movies—such as the *Bad News Bears* portrayal we referenced—tend to emphasize the role of anger and punishment, Kassing and Infante (1999) discovered that aggressive behaviors commonly lead to unfavorable perceptions of coaches, which leads to weaker performances. In Chapter 10, we also explore coaching communication strategies, as well as the significance of the "coach" as a model for organizational leadership.

Coaches can affect the team environment, as well. Communication scholars emphasize the term "small groups" over "teams," but the terms share many traits. Teams are relatively small units that depend on organization and the distribution of tasks across the group's membership. In this way, team sports are appropriate metaphors for understanding small group communication processes that are found in organizations of every kind. Chapter 11 evaluates various issues related to group communication, including cohesion, leadership, and organization. Turman (2003), for example, showed that coaches were instrumental in fostering team cohesion. Meanwhile, Cranmer and Goodboy (2015) demonstrated that coaches are more effective with their athletes when they use prosocial power and avoid coercive behaviors based on the power of their position.

Small group communication is often considered a part of organizational communication studies. In Chapter 12, we shift our attention to organizations and the specific set of issues prompted by crises. A crisis can occur at multiple levels: it can be macro level, such as the national crisis in the United States precipitated by 9/11, or it can be micro level, such as the Formula One racing industry's response to a tire controversy. Brown (2004) addressed the first kind of crisis in his study of the role played by sports leagues in the healing process after terrorists attacked the United States. Organizations such as MLB or the NFL, Brown suggests, served as positive and unifying forces for Americans shocked by the tragedy. Pfahl and Bates (2008), by contrast, analyzed the various responses from Formula One teams, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Michelin, and others when a dispute over tires threatened to discredit the sport. Their study offers models for communication students and scholars to see how sport provides both positive and negative examples of image repair strategies. Billings, Coombs, and Brown (2018) explore multiple theoretical approaches to show why sport is a unique site for exploring crisis and image. Similarly, in Chapter 12 we seek to understand crisis communication both for what it does well and for the lessons it invites us to consider.

One challenge in writing a textbook about communication and sport is trying to keep up with changes and new developments. In the final chapters of this book, we address two particular issues that continue to change the landscape of sport: commodification

and gaming. We do not suggest that commodification is entirely new to sport. Despite the contrary claims made by nostalgia buffs, sport has been a commercial enterprise just about from the beginning. Nevertheless, changes to the economy in the late 20th and early 21st centuries have produced new relationships between sport and commerce, which have subsequently altered player contracts, how sports are broadcast, who can afford to attend games in person, and what kind of facilities are built to host sporting events. Even as many are comfortable with these developments in professional sports, there are growing concerns about the increasingly blurred lines between commercialism and amateur sports. Thus, in Chapter 13, we hope to identify the key communication issues that have emerged out of the growing economic reach of sport.

One example of the commercial possibilities of sport can be found in the explosion of fantasy sports. Although many fantasy sports developed in the 1980s, the emergence of the World Wide Web in the 1990s made fantasy sports a widespread phenomenon. With fantasy sports now a multibillion dollar industry, there is little question that it is as much a part of the contemporary landscape as sports themselves. Fantasy sports allow for a new form of fandom and provide an outlet for friends, family, and sometimes complete strangers to communicate and connect with one another. Meanwhile, fantasy sports also raise questions about addiction or threaten to distract employees who should be working instead of checking their fantasy statistics online. Similar temptations are found with sports video games and gambling. Sports video games are played by millions, some of whom are not even sports fans, and gambling is a multibillion dollar industry. These various forms of games are industries unto themselves and they have helped to change the way fans consume and interact with sports. For example, not only can fans gamble

League of Legends eSports Tournament in Brazil

on a full range of sports thanks to Internet access, but they can also make (presumably) informed decisions about their bets thanks to an associated electronic gaming (eGaming) industry, symbolized by publications such as *EGR* (*eGaming Review*). With these issues in mind, we approach Chapter 14 with the intention of viewing sports gaming as an integral part of the communication and sport relationship.

It should be evident that the relationship between communication and sport is one that requires multiple approaches. The chapters in this book are as comprehensive an overview as is available. Yet we understand that additional topics and questions could be raised. It is our hope that the following chapters provoke you to consider how we might best understand communication and sport. Each chapter incorporates numerous examples and definitions of key terms. We also include four features found throughout the book: an interview with either a communication and sport scholar or a practitioner with experience in sports media; an example that provokes discussion about the role of ethics in communication and sport; a representative case study that demonstrates the central concepts introduced in the chapter; and a "theoretically speaking" box that expands on a given academic concept.

We close this introduction with one final observation about our approach in this book. We are scholars and critics of sport, yes, but we also are fans. We have strong allegiances to our teams, from the Green Bay Packers to the Chicago Cubs to the Indiana University Hoosiers. We played sports as kids, continue to play as adults, and are committed to supporting the athletic activities of our children. And, yes, we even participate in fantasy sports. In short, we are invested in the community of communication and sport in multiple ways. Throughout this book, we hope you will join us.

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2

COMMUNITY IN SPORT

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, it was fair to assert that no major part of everyday life was left untouched by sport. We joined bowling leagues with our coworkers. We played softball with church members against teams representing other denominations. Our schools held pep sessions to support teams bearing the same school logo and nickname. We attended horse races by the thousands. We advance this chapter while still in the malaise of a global pandemic with an uncertain sense of where such sports events will land within the "new normal" we all seek. However, it is fair to argue that whatever the "new normal" consists of, people will desire the same forms of community that sport readily facilitated. Thus, we write in the hope that such communal aims could still be attained since they have always been so far-reaching.

In many ways, the topic of this chapter—the community of sport—would be easier to canvass if one were to discuss what does *not* constitute the community of sport. Within American society (and most of the modern world), sport impacts the very manner in which our typical day unfolds. Moreover, it always unfolds within a communicative context. It could involve the interpersonal communication between coach and player, parent and child, or producer and director. It could incorporate the rhetoric of a radio announcer or the bombastic nature of a coach's halftime speech. It could involve intercultural communicative notions of in-groups and out-groups and certainly can be embedded in notions of communication theories that deal with silenced or muted groups or with violations of social expectancies.

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Communication informs, persuades, and permeates how we play, how we consume, and how we incorporate notions of sport into our daily lives. The myriad ways in which sport permeates virtually all forms of society make it important to recognize who the various "players" within the mingled communication and sport process are. This chapter will outline the major entities that jointly influence the manner in which sport is communicated in the United States and globally. Trujillo (2003) notes that sport is a "billion-dollar industry and an important purveyor of cultural values" (p. xii). Fiction writer Frederick Bachman (2017) describes the power within such a role of sport in society, claiming: "It's only a game. It only resolves tiny, insignificant things. Such as who gets validation. Who gets listened to. It allocates power and draws boundaries and turns some people into stars and others into spectators. That's all" (p. 53). In other words, the community of sport is immersive, is entrenched in daily life, and wields considerable influence over many other things we value.

Decades ago, a prevailing attitude was that sport was a microcosm of society; in the modern day, there are many instances in which the inverse also holds true as society is often a microcosm of sport. This chapter is about how these attitudes, ideas, and behaviors are simultaneously influenced by many crucial "players" who collectively constitute the community of sport. More specifically, we will explore the players who jointly influence sport and society in increasingly conjoined manners: (1) **participants**, (2) **organizations**, (3) **media entities**, and (4) **fans**.

PLAYER 1: THE PARTICIPANT

Nearly all of us have played sports—mandatory physical education classes ensure that if nothing else. Games we play range from organized (Amateur Athletic Union [AAU] basketball leagues, school teams, and YMCA clubs) to spontaneous (playing pick-up basketball games at local parks, throwing a Frisbee with family members in the backyard) (see Guttman, 1978). As we grow older, the games become more sophisticated and the perceived stakes of participation become higher, allowing for a differentiation between play, games, and sports as articulated in Chapter 1 (which is why responses to athletics becoming too intensely serious often involve the rhetoric that "it's just a game"). Relatedly, the decision to continue participation in a given sport is often determined by whether a person is willing to pledge an increased level of commitment. We often hear of the professional player who has forgotten the sheer youthful joy of playing a sport. Thus, to understand our first player, *the participant*, we must begin with childhood play.

INTERVIEW

TOM RICKETTS, CHAIR, CHICAGO CUBS

Q: All major sports offer connections to their communities in particular ways. What are the unique community-centered features of baseball?

A: Local sports teams are a powerful way for people to feel that they are part of a community. And I think baseball has that at the highest level. First, baseball is by far the most family-oriented sport. You can go the game with your parents or your grandkids. Second, the pace of the game, and the style of the game, lends itself to being with other people. It is the game you go to when you want to talk to the people you're with. Baseball is probably the most localized sport—it's a very different kind of relationship that a community has with its baseball team.

Q: When former MLB Commissioner Bud Selig was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2017, he said, "It is also true that baseball is a social institution with social responsibilities, and it is in that area where I am most proud of the role baseball has played." How do you interpret Selig's comment?

A: Baseball was the first game to play the national anthem, it was part of a lot things in the collective bargaining history. But, what I think Commissioner Selig was probably thinking about is the integration of baseball in 1947. One thing he was very proud of was the fact that he, as a young kid growing up in Milwaukee, made the trip down in May of 1947 to see Jackie Robinson play at Wrigley Field, which to this day is a record for the number of people inside Wrigley Field [for a regular season crowd]. So, I think that when he talks about baseball as [a] social institution, I think he's very proud of our history of being a leading sport in the integration of African American players.

Q: What responsibilities do you think the Cubs organization has to the Chicago community as a whole?

A: When we started with the Cubs, we had three goals: to win the World Series, to improve Wrigley Field—and the third goal was to be a better neighbor in Wrigleyville and do more for our city. We've grown our community efforts 10-fold from when we got here and we're one of the most charitable and involved teams in all of sports. I think it's not just an opportunity, but it's also a responsibility. You have a city that has lots of needs, and our goal is to help kids—to help kids through sport and education. And I think if you don't follow through on that, then you've missed a golden opportunity.

Q: You mentioned Wrigleyville. After your ownership group purchased the Cubs in 2009, you made several changes to the ballpark and the surrounding landscape, many of which prompted criticism. Can you describe the process of making those changes and how you communicated with the public to navigate their concerns?

A: I think more so than any other sport, how your fans feel about your ball club is related to how they feel about the game-day experience. So it's critical that the game-day experience is as good as it can be. And it's not just the experience at Wrigley Field when you walk through the turnstile, it's the whole neighborhood. All you can do is communicate with the public, just try to be open, be very direct, and be as transparent and consistent as possible with your message.

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You have to talk to people one on one, you have to build relationships. And over time, if you're consistent, if your message is clear and you're talking to the right people, you can get enough support to move forward.

Q: I know that many fans were willing to accept those changes—like the giant video board in the outfield—if it meant the team could win a championship.

A: To be part even a small part of an organization that got them that payoff is very special. Give all the credit to the guys that won the game on the field—but, I do feel that I helped put some [of] the pieces in place. Words can't describe how much it meant to so many people. Everybody remembers not only watching, but who they were with and it's just a powerful, emotional thing. And it all goes back to that sense of community that baseball teams create.

Q: Aside from winning another World Series championship, what are your goals for the Chicago Cubs organization and the Wrigleyville neighborhood in the next decade?

A: Maintaining competitive teams is always going to be number one. Maintaining the incredible, special experience at Wrigley Field is number two. Growing our charities is number three. But then I think about the changing nature of how people communicate, and how we can dig deeper to build a stronger relationship with all our fans. That's obviously related to social media, but it's really about creating great content no matter the channel.

Source: Reprinted by permission of Tom Ricketts.

Casual Play: Sport as Leisure

By no means is casual play limited to children, but it does represent the formative steps in most people's initiation into the sporting world. Even if children are not indoctrinated into formal types of sports, they naturally create them within the realm of play (such as playing catch with a ball). Four factors influence the degree to which we choose to begin or continue playing sports: personality characteristics (rudimentarily on the continuum of active vs. passive), resources (chances to play and improve via coaching and varied environments), interactions with close contacts (sport-loving parents are more likely to yield sport-loving children), and athletic ability (both inherent and developed in initial experiences). However, variations of these primary four factors occur; for instance, parents who may not overly enjoy sports may nonetheless believe that sport can aid in socializing a child, making the child less likely to participate in delinquent behavior (see Trulson, 1986, for evidence this is true in certain situations). In addition, Chapter 11 will focus on the intergroup dynamics involved in sport that tend to masculinize or feminize the social roles of those who play.

The desire for casual sports play remains for adults, yet the opportunity to participate wanes as life progresses. Whereas children have recess and both informal and structured playdates and parties, these types of occasions rarely naturally occur for the hyperkinetic 21st-century adult. When adults do find occasion for casual play, it is most frequently

Athletics: Often ritualistic and social

with their children. Regardless of age, casual sports represent a substantial portion of all athletics and communicate many foundational messages: (a) sport should be a vital and healthy part of anyone's life, (b) sport is a primary means for functioning socially, and (c) participation in sport is more likely to yield high character and enhanced opportunity for those involved.

Intramurals: Introductions to Organized Sport

The transition from spontaneously played sport to organized activities comes earlier in a person's life now than ever before. Children begin "smart start" programs as young as age 3 and recreation leagues often feature leagues for preschool children. At this stage, the focus of the sporting activities is on understanding rules and basic levels of sportsmanship. Children are often funneled into these types of structured sporting activities because of the proven correlating benefits between participation in intramural sports and higher grades, lower dropout rates, and greater success in attending and completing college (Lipscomb, 2006). While some experts have been skeptical of these benefits, scholars such as Hartmann and Depro (2006) find positive relationships between activities such as midnight basketball and property crime rates and other forms of deviant behavior. However, research currently has been relegated to finding correlations between intramural activities and positive social benefits; little scholarly attention has been devoted to the communication processes enacted to create this perceived cause-and-effect relationship, making this a ripe area for sport analyses in the future.

Amateur Athletics: Altruism and Idealism

For much of organized sports' history in the United States, being a professional athlete was often equated to being second rate, as the "true" athletes were the amateurs. They were held in the highest regard largely because they were playing the game because they loved it, not because they needed to in order to make a living. Obviously, the working classes had a much more difficult time staying at the amateur level because of economic realities, so upper classes held to the notions of amateur athletic superiority at least partially because it shut out other classes of people who would be relegated to the professional ranks. For instance, even in the early 1930s, golf's Grand Slam events consisted of the U.S. Open, British Open, U.S. Amateur, and British Amateur Championships, showing just how elevated amateur competition was compared to other professional events. Similarly, tennis's "Open Era" did not start until 1968, when professional players were allowed to compete against amateurs.

Things have obviously changed since then, as now even the Olympics allows professionals to compete, while other sports allow players to earn money but place a monetary cap on the amount of prize allotments players can receive while still retaining their amateur status. College athletes do not receive formal paychecks, but they do receive everything from room and board to tuition waivers/allowances, clothing, and spending money at college football bowl games in exchange for their participation. If all goes as planned, the year 2023 will bring additional potential revenue for these college athletes, allowing them to profit from their name, image, and/or likeness (McCollough, 2019). Still, debates remain as to whether such resources constitute adequate compensation for athletes, particularly for prominent athletes in revenue-producing sports with amateurism upheld for idealistic and practical reasons. Indeed, most athletes participate because they enjoy the competition and nonmonetary compensation they already receive, yet others do so with their eyes on the ultimate goal of turning professional, with all of the perks that accompany that level of achievement.

CASE STUDY

JOE BURROW, COMING HOME

By the time Louisiana State University (LSU) quarterback Joe Burrow accepted the 2019 Heisman Trophy, most college football fans knew he had transferred from Ohio State (where he graduated after 3 years) and had played high school football in Athens, Ohio, where his father spent 14 years as Ohio University's defensive coordinator. During his Heisman acceptance speech, fans learned more about Burrow and the community in which he spent much of his youth. "Coming from southeast Ohio," he said, "it's a very impoverished area. The poverty rate is almost two times the national average. There's so many people there that don't have a lot. I'm up here for all those kids in Athens and Athens County that go home—not a lot of food on the table, hungry after school. You guys can be up here too."

Burrow's remarks were apparently unplanned, and they prompted a remarkable outpouring of support for his home community. Inspired by the Heisman winner's words, fellow Athens resident Will Drabold launched a Facebook effort to raise money for the Athens County Food Pantry, a local nonprofit with an annual budget of $80,000. In less than 10 days, the campaign had raised nearly $500,000. As NFL quarterback Kirk Cousins put it, "That's powerful. It goes to show the platform of football. . . . You can really make a difference in a high school, in a college campus, in a community, in a state like Ohio or nationally, like Joe did. What a great job by Joe."

LSU went on to win the 2019 national championship, led by a dominant Burrow performance. He was then selected as the first pick in the 2020 NFL Draft. His new team? The Cincinnati Bengals, located less than 3 hours from his hometown. ESPN's draft coverage spotlighted Burrow's Heisman speech, and the news that he was headed for Cincinnati gave Athens another morale boost. Burrow's successes have been celebrated by residents in southeast Ohio and, in turn, he has been able to use his platform to inspire hope and opportunity in the region.

1. Burrow's impromptu words during his acceptance speech led to impressive efforts to raise awareness and funds for important community needs. To what extent should athletes consciously use their platform for social causes?

2. Part of Burrow's appeal for Athens-area residents is that he, like many others in Appalachia, demonstrated resilience by overcoming disappointment at Ohio State before achieving success at LSU. How important is it that athletes can be seen as "one of us" by a local community?

Source: King (2019).

Professional Athleticism: Style and Substance

Finally, there are those who participate at the perceived highest level of athletics: the professional athletes. Given how jaded some views have become regarding the notion of pure amateurism in the 21st century, it is no surprise that some have similarly skeptical views about professionalism. Some athletes in high-profile sports can command eight- or nine-figure annual earnings (Table 2.1), leading fans to feel they cannot relate to the players or that the athletes play not for the love of the game but for a paycheck and the lifestyle that accompanies it.

Nevertheless, many professional athletes make much smaller amounts of money, often to the point that they need ancillary jobs to support themselves. For example, until 2009, Home Depot provided part-time, flexible-hour jobs to more than 600 future Olympians because, even though the Olympics now involves professional athletes, most could not fulfill their athletic dreams without outside employment. USA Wrestling has implemented their "Achieve the Dream" campaign, which awards $1 million to any USA wrestler who earns an Olympic gold medal, encouraging more seasoned athletes to continue in the sport while they are still in their prime.

TABLE 2.1 ■ Highest-Paid Athletes of 2019 (Salaries and Endorsements Combined)

Rank	Sport	Player	Amount
1	Soccer	Lionel Messi	$127,000,000
2	Soccer	Cristiano Ronaldo	$109,000,000
3	Soccer	Neymar	$105,000,000
4	Boxing	Saul "Canelo" Álvarez	$94,000,000
5	Tennis	Roger Federer	$93,400,000
6	Football	Russell Wilson	$89,500,000
7	Football	Aaron Rodgers	$89,300,000
8	Basketball	LeBron James	$89,000,000
9	Basketball	Stephen Curry	$79,800,000
10	Basketball	Kevin Durant	$65,400,000

Source: Lane (2020).

Despite economic and celebrity-oriented disparities, one commonality that occurs in professional sports is that athletes are playing the game at the highest level. Perhaps this involves pitchers making thousands of dollars for each pitch they throw, or maybe it involves professional bowlers; the nation's top bowler may make $200,000 a year, while most others make far less. Professional seasons are typically longer than amateur seasons, and some notions of athlete welfare are lessened because of the notion that people who earn a living playing a game could (or perhaps even should) endure some hardships in the process. Sports with strong unions are able to ensure some form of equity, but others do not have these bolstered structures in place.

Professionalism involves a ton of talent yet also is about marketability. When a player or sport is marketable, salaries increase along with other sponsorship opportunities. For example, star Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt wins $1 million Jamaican dollars for each gold medal he earns, which amounts to roughly $7,000 USD. However, he earns the equivalent of over $1.4 billion Jamaican dollars in endorsements each year, equating to $30 million USD (Wile, 2017). Thus, over 99% of Bolt's wealth comes from the fruits of his labor, not the actual labor itself. Careers of professional athletes tend to be short, and no two ever appear to be alike because of the deviations in talent, health, marketability, and other outside influences.

PLAYER 2: SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

Of course, these athletes could not begin to participate at these various levels without governing and organizing bodies to oversee these events. *Sports organizations* serve this vital role by coordinating efforts and providing spaces and events that advance opportunities for sport participation. These groups come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from large conglomerates to events coordinated out of one person's home. Some group types include *recreation clubs* that often serve as a lifeblood of a local community (see DiSanti, Post, Bell, Schaefer, Brooks, McGuine, & Erickson, 2019). Some may have ties to formal, structured sports (think YMCA), yet others regard themselves much more as fitness centers where sports are played in the form of pick-up basketball games and other casual events. These games are then supplemented with a heavy dose of activities that represent physical education in a noncompetitive format, such as aerobics classes and public swimming.

Related and yet quite different are *athletic clubs.* Sometimes, these organizations function in the same "go to the gym and exercise" manner, but they may not provide a specific, formal physical space in which sports are played. Instead, the focus is on local (and sometimes state and national) organizing as these groups work with city parks, city recreation departments, and other entities to use spaces for competitive games. A good example of an athletic club is the AAU, as the organization is now so well networked in the United States that AAU coaches can wield more influence on athletes than even their high school coaches. Groups such as these provide opportunities for organized play and regional tournaments.

Another type of sports organization involves *state and national federations.* For instance, each state has an organizing federation to handle high school athletics rules and competitions. These groups facilitate play but also aim to fulfill advocacy roles to ensure athlete equity and welfare. For instance, the U.S. Women's National Team filed an equal pay lawsuit, accusing U.S. Soccer of wage discrimination because the women's team (the number 1 team in the world and reigning World Cup champion) often made less for winning a game than the men's team (ranked 22 in the world as of early 2020) did for losing one. Centralizing national agencies (such as the NCAA) serve similar advocacy functions, intending to offer highly competitive sporting events within the realm of maintaining true amateurism. National groups such as the United States Tennis Association (USTA) function as federations to promote a certain sport, often by providing youth programs and structures that can aid and help promote sports to those with less access because of their economic or geographic circumstances. Sometimes such national groups must negotiate tensions with larger, global group standards and expectations. For instance, the USTA occupies a space that at least must not conflict with the International Tennis Federation and the two global tours under it. Similarly, a national Olympic committee (such as the United States Olympic Committee) must espouse the Olympic ideals advanced by the global entity overseeing it, the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

These groups, often dubbed *organizing committees*, also are integral to the grander sporting events. The biggest sports event of all, the Olympics, has an IOC specifically designed to coordinate the Games with a host city. Such a process is so involved for

the Olympics that host cities are selected 7 years in advance of the competition after several preceding years of a location vetting process by national Olympic committees. These organizing committees sometimes are designed to fulfill advocacy roles in a similar manner to federations, yet this is not always the case. College football bowl games have organizing committees that are centralized around a specific event for a specific sport, yet they do not determine rules or sport governance in any way. Instead, these groups work year-round to promote a game in which the two competing institutions won't even be known until a month before the game is played. Moreover, NCAA Final Four basketball host cities do not know which schools will be participating until 1 week before the tournament begins.

Finally, there are *team networks*. These types of organizations are not just focused on a specific sport; they are often elaborately designed groups with the intention of promoting a team that plays the sport. All college and professional teams have team networks designed to market and promote a certain team (such as the Cincinnati Reds) or institution with multiple teams playing with the same moniker (such as the Indiana Hoosiers). Branding, media exposure, and the potential for future athletic success are all part and parcel of what these team networks are charged with accomplishing.

THEORETICALLY SPEAKING

IDENTIFICATION

Although you might first think of identification in terms of verifying an identity—an ID card, for example—communication scholars who use the term are more likely to think of it as a *process*. In other words, identification refers to the process by which individuals come to see themselves as having things in common. This theoretical approach to identification originates with Kenneth Burke, author of numerous books on literature and rhetoric, including *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950/1969). In that book, Burke famously declares, "Identification is compensatory to division" (p. 22), meaning that it allows distinct individuals to communicate across their differences to achieve symbolic cooperation. This may happen in one-to-one interactions, but large groups also may form communities through the process of identification. For example, Gill (2012) examines *Gold & Black Illustrated* (*GBI*), a publication that covers sports at Purdue University. Through consistent references to the organizational history, *GBI* cultivates identifications that socialize fans into the Purdue community. As he concludes, "Historical messages reinforce socialization by providing knowledge and recounting experiences that indoctrinate fans into a particular organizational fanhood" (p. 153). Thus, through identification, fans learn how to participate in a given sports community.

PLAYER 3: SPORTS MEDIA ENTITIES

As sports have grown at all levels of society, so too has the plethora of media outlets that now devote substantial time to sport. We will discuss more of the minutiae of traditional, new, social, and user-generated media in Chapter 3. However, it is also important to discuss how media entities impact the community of sport. Aspects of sports media have changed substantially, such as the diminishing opportunities at local sports television networks as a result of increasingly regionalized coverage of sport via regional outlets (FOX Sports Net, New York's YES Network, SportsNet LA). Even with these changes, parts of *sports media entities* can still be subdivided into visibility jobs and production jobs.

Sportscaster Maria Taylor

Visibility Jobs

First, *visibility jobs* feature media players with whom many people are most familiar: Joe Buck commenting on a football game or Jackie MacMullan opining on the Celtics' off-season moves. These players in the sports media empire are well known and often beloved because fans welcome them into their homes on a regular basis. When Vin Scully retired as the voice of the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2016, his 67 years as the voice of the team made millions of fans nostalgic, including one who wrote to *Sports Illustrated* to indicate that he was in diapers when Scully began announcing and that he may be in diapers again when Scully finished his career.

In television, multiple visibility roles exist that are now integral to what is consumed at home. The *anchor* often functions as a host. Anchors are typically highly scripted (via teleprompter) even if the words are primarily written themselves (with the help of editors). An anchor's job is often to focus on the significance and scope of sports games and issues; in other words, anchors relay the "big picture." Yes, they may play a role Bob Costas labels a "traffic cop" where the goal is to get people from Point A to Point B (say, from pregame announcers to an injury reporter), yet their primary function is to relay a sense of meaning to their audience (see Billings, 2008). What would a win or loss mean within the overall scheme of things? Why should we be interested in today's starting pitching matchup? Anchors frame all of the discussion that will ensue.

At live televised events, commentary still tends to occur within paired broadcasting combinations of a *play-by-play announcer* and a *color analyst.* The play-by-play announcer describes the athletic contest largely in terms of observable facts ("Patrick Kane with a Game 5 hat trick"), while the color analyst interprets the game within a larger context ("LeBron James doing something Michael Jordan never did in the NBA Finals, leading

his team in nine statistical categories"). Several decades ago, a study found that 73% of all television commentary was play-by-play (Bryant, Comisksy, & Zillmann, 1977) and this percentage still holds true today, although the strict divisions of who provides which form of commentary are beginning to blur. Even though color commentary represents less than a quarter of all spoken words, color commentators continue to be of extremely high visibility because their dialogue can often be more interesting, memorable, and outside of the box of traditional thinking (consider Dick Vitale's college basketball coverage and his terminology such as a "dipsy-doo dunakaroo" and "diaper dandies").

Television also features another visibility player: the *sideline reporter.* These reporters have been found to be increasingly useful as audience appetite for more "inside" information escalates. More often than not, this role is filled by an attractive female—a topic that will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6. Whether it is an interview with a player's parents, an injury update, or a report on a coach's halftime rant, the sideline reporter offers a form of sports media with an even greater sense of liveness and immediacy.

Beyond television, several of these visibility jobs overlap, while others are functionally quite different. For instance, radio sportscasts usually still have play-by-play and color components, yet they are obviously done without video, resulting in even more play-by-play coverage. However, one visibility job that is starkly different from television is the *radio host.* The formats of shows differ, yet the host is rarely considered to be an anchor as much as a facilitator and/or resident expert. Many local shows are defined by a host taking a series of phone calls from fans and then discussing and assessing sports happenings. Others feature a group of people who are usually diverse in roles and backgrounds (studied sports enthusiast, former professional athlete, etc.) who jointly engage in sports talk. A few others, such as FOX Sports 1's Colin Cowherd, perform more of an anchoring function by taking very few calls and instead providing analysis of "big picture" issues. Still, the large majority of radio shows (local and national) are defined by a host who can create a sense of community (such as Jim Rome and his listeners "the clones," who participate in this radio "jungle"; see Nylund, 2007).

Newspapers and magazines also feature two other forms of visibility players: *print reporters* and *feature columnists.* Comparisons can be drawn as reporters often serve play-by-play functions and columnists provide the "color" commentary. Still, the benefit of time and hindsight makes these roles quite different. Print reporters often provide event recaps focusing on the chronology of events ("Leading 10–7, the Broncos effectively ended the game with a late touchdown pass"). These reporters also can provide "beat" stories, which involve ongoing commentary on full seasons and events (as these reporters often travel with a team or set of athletes continually). Feature columnists, on the other hand, function as color commentators, yet they often have even more freedom as they can seek out a story that perhaps no one has even thought about.

Production Jobs

Because there is less "glamour" in *production jobs* than in visibility jobs, substantially fewer people (often 10 times fewer) seek out these positions in sports media. Nonetheless, these jobs are critical to any sports media entity. Consider the *photographer* who must capture a single shot worthy of encapsulating a 3-hour game or the *producer* who must