

Promoting gendered sports programming: An examination of magazine article and photographic coverage

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Introduction

- The Sport Industry
 - One of the fastest growing in U.S.
- Mass Media
 - ✦ Significant contributors to the size of the sport industry
 - Promotion
 - Corporate involvement

The screenshot shows a sports website with a red header. The main content area includes several articles and advertisements. On the left, there's a 'Sports' section with a 'USA TODAY' logo. In the center, there's a large article titled 'Does walk year equal career year?' featuring a photo of a baseball player. To the right, there are smaller articles and ads, including one for 'Fantasy 101' and another for 'Baseball Draft Guide'. The bottom of the page has a navigation bar with 'Fantasy 101' and 'Baseball Draft Guide' links.



Introduction

- **Media & Sport**

- Symbiotic relationship

- ✦ So closely associated that it is difficult to discuss sport without acknowledging its connection with the media (Bernstein & Blain, 2002)



- Gatekeeping function of the media

- ✦ Sports media coverage in the U.S. tends to focus on professional and intercollegiate male sports
 - ✦ Hegemonic message that certain sports are more important than others (Pedersen, 2002)

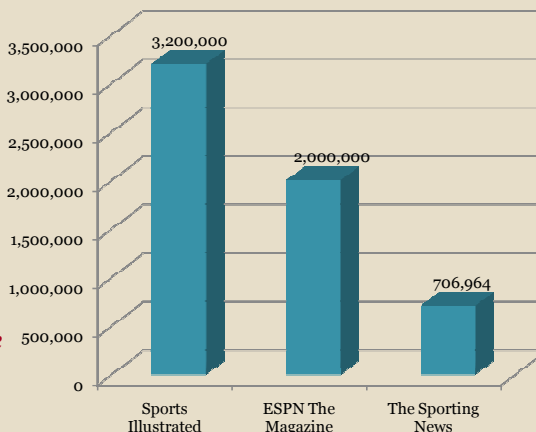
Introduction

- **Sports Mags in U.S.**

- 3 general pubs reach nationwide audience and have international presence:

- ✦ *Sports Illustrated*
 - ✦ *ESPN The Magazine*
 - ✦ *The Sporting News*

Circulation



Source: Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal

Introduction

- *ESPN The Magazine*

- Launched in 1998 to reach younger market than its competitors
- Over half of its readers are 18-34
- Serves as an extension of ESPN
- Only general interest sports magazine in the U.S. to experience advertising revenue growth in 2005 (Wintry Mix, 2006)



Introduction

- Scholarly attention given to the coverage of female sports is relatively recent (1970s) and limited in scope
- Several studies published regarding newspaper & television coverage of sports, but only a few magazines have been examined



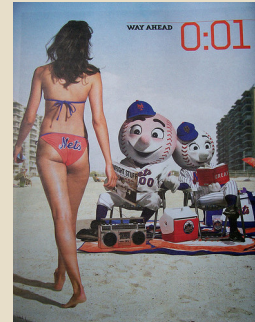
Review of Literature

- Many studies conducted on female sports in magazines have examined disparities in advertisements depicting women in sport

- (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1998; Duquin, 1989; Mass & Hasbrook, 2001; Poe, 1976; Slatton, 1970)

- Studies focusing on editorial photos/articles show under-representation and trivialization in the coverage given to sportswomen

- (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Bryant, 1980; Curry, Arriagada, & Cornwell, 2002; Duncan, 1990; Hilliard, 1984; White & Gillett, 1994)



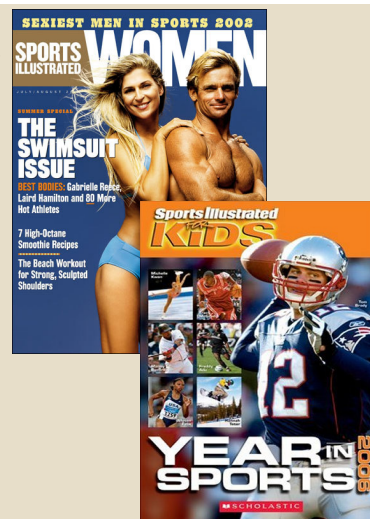
Review of Literature

- Studies of female-targeted and youth-targeted sport mags show the publications either:

- Trivialize sportswomen

- Promote male sports almost to the exclusion of female sports

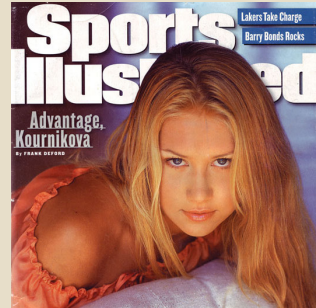
- ✘ (Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005; Rintala & Birrell, 1984)



Review of Literature

- *Sports Illustrated*

- Has received the most attention and criticism in the realm of gendered coverage. For example...
 - ✦ Males receive 90% of articles/photos (Fink & Kensicki, 2002)
 - ✦ Males on 782 covers; females on 55 (Salwen & Wood, 1994)



- Examine *ESPN The Magazine* to determine if its promotion of sports aligns with its counterparts

Purpose of Study

- Determine the extent *ESPN The Magazine* promotes male and female sports through the use of articles and photo.
 - Amount/type of written coverage given to males/females
 - ✦ Number of articles
 - ✦ Prominent placement of articles
 - ✦ Photographic accompaniment of articles
 - ✦ Length of articles
 - Amount/type of photo coverage given to males/females
 - ✦ Number of photos
 - ✦ Prominent placement of photos
 - ✦ Size of photos



Methodology

- Content analysis of articles & photographs
 - Every issue (N=203) from 3-98 to 12-05

- ✦ **Coding Units**

- **Articles:**

- All features in TOC with a byline

- **Photographs:**

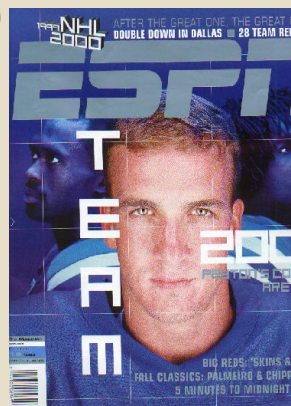
- Cover photos/“Zoom” section photos



Measures

- 8 measures for each article; 6 for each photo

- Coder identification (1, 2, 3, or 4)
- Date of publication (month, day, year)
- Title of the article
- Location of article or photo (front, back, middle, cover)
- Gender focus of the sport involved
- For articles, was there a photo?
- Length or size of the article/photo
- Page number of the article/photo



Coders & Reliability

- Four trained coders worked independently of each other to code the 203 issues

- Inter-coder reliability

- 42 issues (10%)
- Agreement
 - ✦ From 89.7% to 97.8% (articles)
 - ✦ From 84.4% to 90.7% (photos)
- Scott's Pi
 - ✦ From .927 to .978 (articles)
 - ✦ From .884 to .902 (photos)

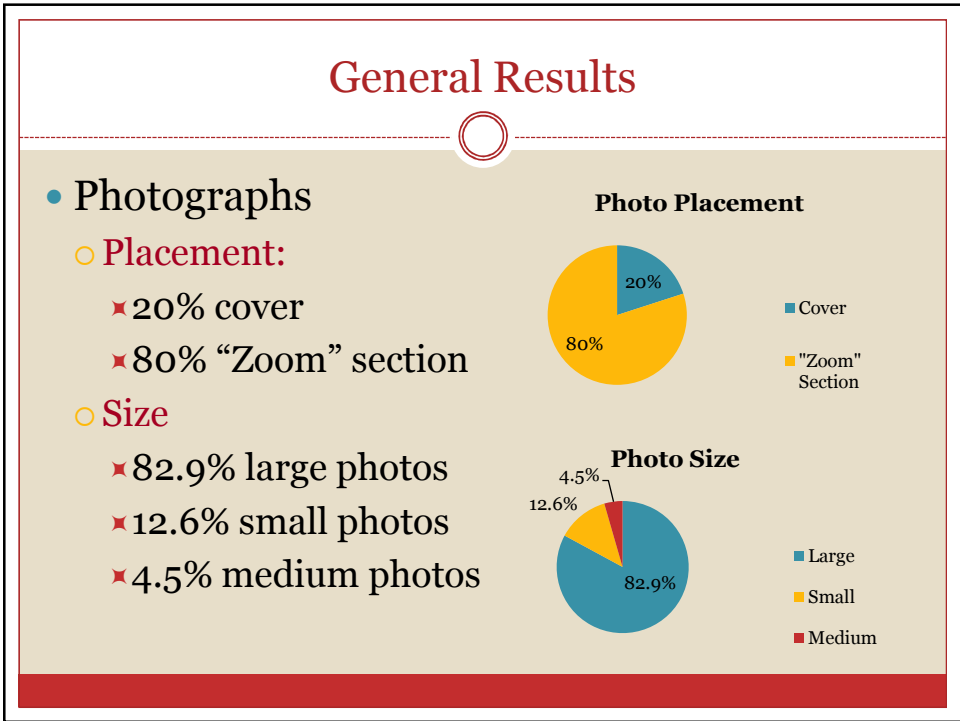
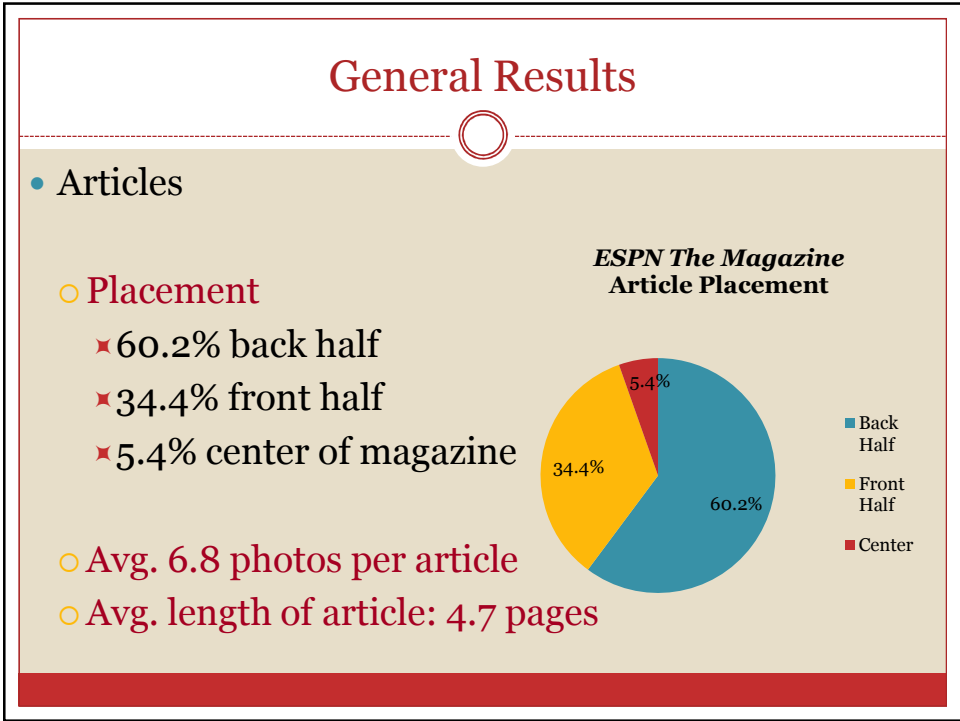
	Variable	Percentage of Agreement	Scott's Pi
Articles	Coder	97.8	.978
	Date	96.1	.961
	Title	97.8	.978
	Author	97.8	.978
	Prominence	96.7	.966
	Gender	95.6	.950
	Content	97.8	.978
	League	89.7	.897
	Length	95.8	.958
	Page	97.2	.972
Photographs	Coder	90.4	.902
	Date	90.4	.904
	Photographer	90.7	.907
	Cover or Zoom	90.4	.890
	Gender	87.6	.874
	Content	89.4	.879
	League	86.8	.853
	Type	84.4	.843
	Suggestiveness	89.9	.885
	Size	89.9	.895
Page	88.4	.884	

General Results

- The 203 issues yielded the following for analysis:

- 1,307 feature articles
 - ✦ An average of 6.4 feature articles per issue
- 1,029 cover and special "Zoom" photos
 - ✦ An average of 5.1 special photos per issue





Gender Results

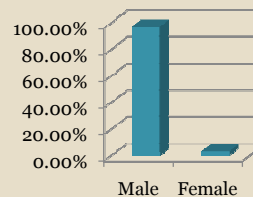
- Independent standard
 - Proportional coverage was determined by making percentage comparisons between actual coverage allotted to female sports and male sports and the female and male readership of the magazine
 - ✦ *ESPN The Magazine* has 80.5% male audience (Audience, 2006)
 - ✦ Chi-Square Analysis



Gender Results

- Gendered Coverage - Articles
 - 96.7% of the articles examined were exclusively focused on either men's or women's sports.
 - Of those...
 - ✦ 96.9% were focused on males; 3.1% on females
 - ✦ ($\chi^2=216.27$, $df=1$, $p < .005$)
 - ✦ Male sports, even when compared to the independent standard of circulation distribution, received statistically significant greater number of feature articles than did female sports
 - Placement
 - ✦ 61.7% of male-focused articles in the back half
 - ✦ 89.7% of female-focused articles in the back half

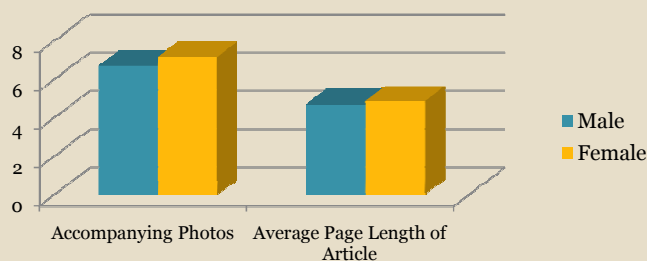
Articles Devoted to Men's Sports and Women's Sports



Gender Results

• Gendered Coverage – Articles

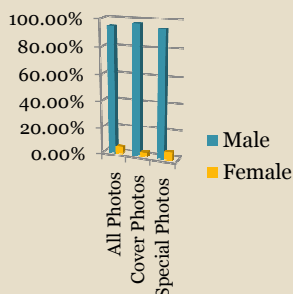
- **Average number of accompanying photographs**
 - ✦ Women's articles: 7.15 photos per story
 - ✦ Men's articles: 6.69 photos per story
- **Average page length of articles**
 - ✦ Women's articles: 4.85 pages
 - ✦ Men's articles: 4.68 pages



Gender Results

• Gendered Coverage – Photographs

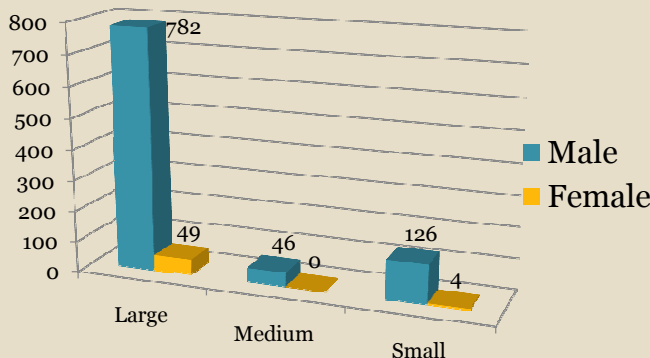
- 1,007 cover/special photos exclusively devoted to either male or female sports. Of those...
 - ✦ 94.7% males and 5.4% devoted to females
 - ✦ ($\chi^2=129.54$, $df=1$, $p < .005$)
 - ✦ Male sports received significantly more special photos than did female sports
- **Cover Photographs**
 - ✦ 191 male (97%); 6 female (3%); ($\chi^2=33.39$, $df=1$, $p < .005$)
- **Special section "Zoom" photographs**
 - ✦ 763 male (94.2%); 47 female (5.8%); ($\chi^2=96.88$, $df=1$, $p < .005$)
 - ✦ Male sports received statistically significant greater number of exclusive cover photos and "Zoom" section photos



Gender Results

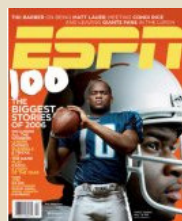
- Gendered Coverage – Photograph Size

- When male photos were used: 13% small and 82% large
- When female photos were used: 8% small and 93% large



Discussion & Conclusion

- Male sports:
 - 96.9% of feature articles
 - 94.7% of special photographs
 - Better article and photo placement
 - They receive significant promotional advantages through *ESPN The Magazine*
- Promotion of female sports rarely occurs



Discussion & Conclusion

- When female sports are covered, their articles
 - are longer in length than male articles
 - contain more accompanying photographs than male sports articles
 - contain more large photographs than male sports articles
- However, the major finding of this study is that *ESPN The Magazine* rarely promotes female sports, as close to 95% of the magazine's article and photographic coverage is devoted to male sports.



Discussion & Conclusion

- For the sports that receive coverage (i.e., male sports)...
 - Reliance on the mass media for promotion is mutually beneficial
- “The media are seen as influencing people’s leisure choices because of their ability to cultivate images and perceptions of what’s popular and attractive” (Jeffres, Neuendorf, & Atkin, 2003, p. 173)
- For the sports that are under-represented or ignored...
 - Promotional efforts are much more difficult and must be secured more often through other means such as word-of-mouth, advertisements, and sponsorships.



Discussion & Conclusion

- When female sports receive limited coverage...
 - This works to undermine and devalue the activities, accomplishments, and involvement of women in sports

- Promotion of females through increased coverage...
 - Would most likely help female sports in terms of fan interest and involvement
 - Might increase the subscription base of general interest sport magazines



Questions?



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