

Sideline Reporting: Skidmore Women's Basketball

Final Project Proposal

Major: Broadcast Journalism

Readers: Jeffrey Segrave, Jesse O'Connell

Introduction / Background

Sports reporting is a dynamic and engaging field of journalism that revolves around the coverage and analysis of various sporting events, athletes, and related stories (McEnaney 3). It plays a crucial role in keeping sports enthusiasts informed about the latest developments in their favorite sports and provides a platform for athletes to showcase their achievements and experiences (Boyle and Haynes 72).

Sports have a unique ability to bring people together across geographic, cultural, and social divides. Sports reporting serves as a bridge that connects fans, allowing them to share in the excitement, emotions, and experiences associated with their favorite teams and athletes (Stofer et al. 15). Through in-depth profiles, interviews, and match analyses, sports reporting helps in building the profiles of athletes and teams. This exposure can lead to sponsorships, endorsements, and increased fan following, which are crucial for sustaining a successful sports career (Boyle and Haynes 98). Additionally, sports often mirror and influence societal values, norms, and trends. Reporting on sports events and personalities can shed light on broader cultural issues, such as gender equality, racial diversity, and inclusivity (Gietschier 76).

Reporting on female sports is crucial for several significant reasons, reflecting broader societal shifts towards gender equality and inclusivity in the sports arena. The importance of covering female sports extends beyond merely showcasing athletic prowess; it encompasses cultural, economic, and inspirational dimensions. Reporting on female sports helps to diminish the inequality that females face in the sports world, through the quality and quantity of media coverage (Higgs et al. 167). It also can challenge the prevailing stereotypes and misconceptions about women's physical abilities and interests. It showcases the range and diversity of sports that women excel in, breaking down traditional gender norms (Cooky et al. 367). Inclusive reporting

on female sports contributes to a more diverse sports culture, where all athletes, regardless of gender, are recognized and celebrated for their achievements (Higgs et al. 173). By giving female athletes the same level of coverage and attention as their male counterparts, it sends a powerful message about the importance of gender equality in all aspects of society.

Additionally, when female athletes receive media coverage, it provides young girls with visible role models to look up to. These representations are essential in encouraging participation in sports and physical activities among girls and young women (Cooky et al. 354).

The Skidmore Women's Basketball team is a perfect team to focus on for my final project. I have dedicated a lot of my focus on female sports, and I have been pushing for female sports to have accurate representation. The Skidmore Women's Basketball team won the Liberty League Conference for the third time ever, last year. This was an incredible moment for the team, for Skidmore, and for women's sports. For my final project, I want to follow the team through their season, creating a website that accumulates all the broadcasts I will do throughout the season. I will do pre-game, halftime, and post-game broadcasts, where I discuss the team's games, players, predictions, etc. These broadcasts will include many interviews with various people, such as the players on the team, fans, and coaches. I will also come to a few of their practices, for a more behind-the-scenes approach, hoping to represent how the team prepares both physically and mentally for their competition. My broadcasts will not just be on stats and games, but I will use my creativity to develop stories about the team and their players.

I have come up with a few story ideas as examples. There is one player on the team that is from Lithuania. I would love to develop a story about her journey to the U.S.; how and why she chose Skidmore, how Skidmore and the team is different than going to school and playing basketball at a school at home, how having family so far away affects her in basketball. I will

want to interview her to get the answers to these questions, and I would hopefully interview her teammates to get their understanding of her. I will include footage of her playing basketball at Skidmore.

Another story idea I have is on Coach Turner. She is a black, female, head coach and a mother, and I think I could create an amazing and inspirational story on her and all the hard work she does behind the scenes. The only thing that is difficult, is that she does not like being interviewed or filmed so this will be an obstacle for me. I will have to make sure she is comfortable and conduct the story at her pace.

This project will directly incorporate my coursework at Skidmore and learning experiences from previous internships such as FOX Sports. I will be able to translate what I have learned into a hands-on experience. I will be able to use what I have learned in my English classes to write out plans and create stories. For instance, I will make sure to include a beginning, middle, and end to the story, and I will know what to include and what to leave out. For example, if Coach Turner talks about what she makes her children for dinner, I will not include that because it is not furthering the story. However, if she talks about how she has to bring her children to practice sometimes and watch them while she coaches, this will further the story so I will include it. I will be able to use my sports classes to pick and choose what types of games/stories I want to report on. For instance, I know that certain games are more important than others; conference games and playoff games are far more important than preseason games or out-of-conference games. I can use my media and documentary studies classes to actually put together the broadcasts and compile them into pieces that can be viewed by fans. This project will also prepare me for post-college, as I want to work in the sports broadcasting industry. I will get practice being more comfortable in front of the camera and get experience in actual reporting.

In doing this project, I will literally be doing what I want to do after college. Additionally, I will be able to use it for my portfolio and applications, which will be very helpful.

Methodology

My project will be completed over the entirety of the basketball season, which usually runs from November - February. I will be reporting live on most home games and will try to attend one practice a week to obtain footage. I will be using a camera from MDOCS to film everything. MDOCS has also given me a tripod, so I can set up the camera and film myself without a camera person. However, if I have friends or roommates who are attending the games, they can help set up the camera for me. For the reporting and interviews, I will use a microphone that MDOCS will be giving me. The assistant director of MDOCS, Jessie O'Connell, trained me on the camera, microphone, and tripod in the middle of October.

For my live broadcasts, it is important that I look professional and experienced. I have a wardrobe that I wore for my summer internships that will be acceptable for on-air broadcasts. I also have a makeup/hair kit that I can use before I go on-air.

For B-Roll footage, I will take video of the team during games and in practices as the season goes on. I will mainly just need B-Roll for feature stories, which I will only do on certain occasions. I have gotten a grant from the Student Opportunity Funds for an external hard drive and an SD card, which will both be used for the camera footage.

In terms of getting filming permission, I will have all of the players and coaches sign a video release form from MDOCS. I have already gotten permission from all of the women's basketball coaches and I will be having a meeting with the players, in which I will explain my project. In case I am using footage of opposing teams, I will let the coach know ahead of time and have their team sign a release form as well. In terms of fans and audience, I will post a location release form at the entrance of the gym. If anyone does not want to be on camera, they will be able to reach out to me.

For editing purposes, I will use the school computers that have Adobe Premiere Pro. I also have a software called CapCut on my personal computer that I have used many times for editing. By doing the editing myself, I will gain more experience in post-production, which is something that I will most likely be doing after college in my first job.

I will upload all the videos and stories to a YouTube channel that I plan on creating. This way, all the footage will be in one area, and it will be easy to locate and watch. My final project will consist of a video log containing the interviews and reports I do from the season. This will be rolled out throughout the season.

Timeline

Practice on **Nov 5th** - film practice and conduct interviews, pre-game report

By Nov 7th- edit and put together the pre-game report

First game **Nov 7**- vs Russell Sage

- Pregame, half-time interviews, post-game report
- Edit and put together on by **Nov 11**

Nov 20, Nov 23, Nov 27 - film practices and conduct interviews, edit and put together by **Nov 30**

Dec 1- vs Clarkson, pre-game report, half time interviews, post-game

Dec 2 - vs SLU, pre-game report, half time, post-game

By Dec 5th- edit and put together both weekend games

Dec 4-16 - film practices and conduct interviews, edit and publish by **Dec 18th**

Dec 16-Jan 21- winter break

Jan 26 - Union, pre-game, halftime, post-game show

Jan 27- RPI, pre-game, half time, post-game show

By Jan 30- edit and put both game reports together

Feb 2- vs Ithaca, pre-game, halftime, post-game show

Feb 3- vs Bard, pre-game, halftime, post-game show

By Feb 6th- edit and put together both game reports from the weekend

Feb 9 - vs William Smith, pre-game, halftime, post-game show

Feb 10- vs RIT, pre-game, halftime, post-game show

By Feb 15th- edit and put together both game reports from the weekend

Feb 20- Quarter Final

Feb 23- Semi Final

Feb 25- Final

Month of March - Final edits, making it look good, recap of the season, putting it all together

References

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- Cooky, Cheryl, et al. "'It's Dude Time!' A Quarter Century of Excluding Women's Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows." *Communication & Sport*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2019, pp. 261–287, <https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813592084-011>.
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Annotated Bibliography

Carlisle, Duncan Margaret, et al. "Gender in televised sports: News and highlights shows, 1989-2004." *Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles 2005*, 2005.

This research study, authored by Margaret Carlisle Duncan and colleagues, presents a comprehensive analysis of the representation of gender in televised sports coverage.

Duncan has a Ph.D. and is a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. One of the co-investigators, Michael A. Messner is a sports sociologist and has published a number of works that I have studied in previous courses at Skidmore. Their study covers a span of fifteen years from 1989 to 2004, providing a longitudinal perspective on how gender dynamics have been depicted in sports news and highlight programs. The authors use a meticulous methodology, using content analysis and critical examination of visual and textual elements in the broadcasts. This study specifically focuses on the sports news in CBS, NBC, and ABC affiliates in Los Angeles, as well as ESPN and FOX. It was found that the quality of sports reporting on female sports has improved over the years, however female athletes being the source of humor in the media is still prevalent today. Nevertheless, this is the exception rather than the norm today.

Duncan et al.'s research stands as a significant contribution to the field of sports media studies. Their rigorous methodology allows for a nuanced exploration of the ways in which gender is portrayed in televised sports coverage over an extended period. The longitudinal approach provides valuable insights into potential shifts or consistencies in media representation. This source is an essential reference for me as I examine gender representation in sports journalism and media. I will be able to use the knowledge I

gained in this historical source to create the highest quality reports that I can for the women's basketball team.

Horky, Thomas, and Barbara Stelzner. "Sports Reporting and Journalistic Principles." *Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication*, 2013, pp. 118–127, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203123485.ch12>.

Co-authors, Thomas Horky and Barbara Stelzner both have a Ph.D. and are professors at Macromedia University in Germany. Their research interests include sport, communication, and media. In their chapter, they discuss many characteristics and guidelines of sports journalism. In one section, the authors present sports journalism as a form of storytelling that has its own narrative, syntax, and semantics. One aspect of storytelling in sports journalism is emotionalization, as the authors describe. This includes framing with rituals, such as opening, closing, and medal ceremonies, as well as using the audience to portray more emotion. Close-ups are a newer thing that is used in sports media to emphasize emotion.

Sports media and regular media follow different rules and guidelines. For instance, in sports media narrativization is important. For example, describing not just who wins, but how they win, is imperative for creating a narrative for the sports story. There should also be follow-ups on the heroic athletes with fixed time slots. Another "rule" that the authors mention, is allocation of relevance. Not all competitions will have the same amount of meaning or importance. As a sports journalist, it is necessary to save the "hype" for more meaningful contests.

This source is helpful for my final project, as the authors lay out new rules of sports journalism that other sources have not spoken about. Both of the authors are professors in Germany, which is beneficial because this diversifies my sources. There are many sports that are more popular in Europe, so getting perspectives from European journalists is extremely helpful. When I do features on the players on the women's basketball team, I will keep in mind that visualizing emotion will increase the effect of the story. I can emphasize the emotion of the game by zooming in on the athlete's face at certain points and using the audience's reactions as well. I will also remember to narrate the games in a way that describes how the team is winning, rather than just stating statistics and scores.

“How Does CBS Sports Sideline Reporter Tracy Wolfson Prepare for NFL Games?” *YouTube*, STAA, 27 Jan. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjLYDInyH8I.

In this video, Tracy Wolfson dissects how she prepares for NFL games each week during the season. Wolfson is a CBS Sideline Reporter and has reported on four Super Bowls, so she is a talented, well-known, experienced sideline reporter. She describes how she is prepared when it comes to her schedule, as she knows each week what is going on and who is playing who. She also says that one tool that is very helpful to her is Twitter. She follows a number of reporters and finds many stories through Twitter. She follows each team's reporters and media outlets because they are with the team every day and know the most about those individual teams. Then, she uncovers about three stories per team, by making phone calls, reaching out to the PR people, and following injuries. After she has these stories, she ranks them and figures out what video/graphics will be needed to support the sideline report.

Tracy Wolfson is a reporter who I have been following for years so it was interesting to hear what she does to prepare. I can definitely use some of her suggestions when I am reporting on the Skidmore Women's Basketball team. For instance, I should follow each team in the conference's Instagram pages and keep following their websites. I should prepare for the games beforehand and try to uncover stories, such as previous meetups or if players on the two teams have previously played together. For example, in my report, I will state what the scores of the previous games were between the two teams. This makes the story more enticing and gives it some context. I also should think about what type of video I will need to accompany these stories. As I will be producing my own shows, this is an important part that other sources did not bring up.

What Wolfson did not touch on, but a few other sources did, was interviewing. I am curious to know how she prepares for interviews and how she comes up with questions.

Huffman, Suzanne, et al. "How Campus Media Cover Sports: The Gender-Equity Issue, One Generation Later." *Mass Communication and Society*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2004, pp. 475–489, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327825mcs0704_6.

In this study, the authors, Suzanne Huffman, C.A. Tuggle, and Dana Scott Rosengard conduct a thorough examination of how college campus media outlets handle the coverage of sports, particularly focusing on the issue with gender-equity. The authors all have done previous research together on sports in the media. They have published articles in the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* and *Mass Communication and Society*. CA Tuggle is also a professor at University of North Carolina's journalism school and had a 16-year broadcasting career.

The authors outline their study in terms of the media framing theory, which is the way athletes are portrayed in the media, and also relates to what is not covered in the media. The study analyzed 258 print stories and 157 broadcast stories, focusing on the ratio of coverage of men's teams compared to women's teams, the gender of the reporter or broadcaster, and the quality of the broadcasts of men's teams and athletes compared to their female counterparts.

Huffman et al. found that college newspapers covered male athletes and events in 72.7% of these stories, and college television devoted 81.5% of broadcast time to male athletes and events. In broadcast, 74.7% of the anchors were male and 78.4% of the student journalists were male. In both types of media, baseball coverage was more than twice the amount of softball coverage. In terms of quality, they found that there was no significant difference between the quality of coverage given to male athletes compared to female athletes. There was no significant difference in the average amount of seconds per story, number of photographs, or if the broadcasts contained video or not. The photos were all likely to be in color, and the quotes highlighted from both sex athletes were around the same length.

This article serves as an indispensable resource for my final project. It gave me insight into the characteristics of broadcasting the women's basketball team that I should focus on. For example, type and length of the video/B-Roll I use for my broadcasts.

Additionally, I will pay attention to quotes that I am using from the athletes, and I can compare them to the types of quotes I see in broadcasts about professional men's sports. I want to be able to cover the women's basketball team in a way that will emphasize the rise of female sports, as it is clear from this article that many campus media outlets fail to

do so. Although this study gives me background information about sports broadcasting on college campuses, it does not give me any details on what the best ways are to perform the broadcasts on female athletes. Additionally, all the articles and broadcasts that were studied were sent in the month of April, which excludes basketball. This is a limitation for me because basketball is the sport I will be broadcasting.

However, through my coursework and previous sources I have read, I know that it is important to report on female athletes in the same manner that I would report on male athletes. This means, do not comment on the players' personal lives unless it directly relates to their playing, do not comment on their physical appearances, and do not downplay their abilities. It is important to emphasize the players' abilities and talents, as a lot of media coverage on female athletes does not. In conclusion, I want to make the viewers and fans want to watch their games because of how talented the team is.

Knight, Jennifer L, and Traci A Giuliano . "He's a Laker; She's a 'Looker': The Consequences of Gender-Stereotypical Portrayals of Male and Female Athletes by the Print Media." *Sex Roles*, vol. 45, no. 3-4, 2001, pp. 217-229.

In this study, the researchers focused on a small, predominantly white, liberal arts school, which is significant to my project. One of the authors, Traci A. Giuliano, is a psychology professor at Southwestern University and has published 37 peer-reviewed journal articles. Jennifer L. Knight is also a professor at Southwestern University. In this study, the subjects were asked how they felt about an athlete whose picture they were presented with. Additionally, participants rated how much they liked a sports-related article, specifically, how flattering the coverage was to the athlete, how interested they would be

in reading more about the athlete, and how accurately the coverage depicted the athlete. As expected, female athletes whose attractiveness was portrayed more than their athletic ability were seen as more attractive than the females who were portrayed by their athletic ability. However, there was no difference in this category with male athletes. Additionally, the athletes who were portrayed as attractive rather than athletic, were seen as less talented and less heroic. Lastly, when the article focused on the athlete's looks rather than athletic skill, the participants tended to like the article less.

This article will be critical to my project, because it emphasizes the idea that how the media portrays athletes greatly affects people's perceptions on the athletes. As a result, what I put out on the women's basketball team will severely impact how people perceive them, and it is imperative that I keep this in mind. Being a female athlete myself, I will keep reminding myself that I want the athletes I am broadcasting to be seen as I would like to be seen, which is talented and athletic. For example, if one of the players has a bad breakup mid-season, I will not be reporting on the breakup during a half-time show. Instead, I will create reports on the players that relate to their athletic ability, for instance, what their training schedule was leading up to the season and how that plays into their preparation level for their first game.

Although a limitation of this article is that it was conducted at a small, liberal arts school, this characteristic is helpful to me individually because my project will be based on a women's basketball team at a small liberal arts school. This article contains one weakness, in that it does not provide examples of the photographs or articles used in the study. This leaves me wondering what types of photos were used to make athletes look less athletic, or more attractive, which would have been helpful for me.

“Media Coverage and Female Athletes - Media Coverage & Female Athletes.” *Twin Cities PBS*, Tucker Center, 12 Jan. 2013, www.tpt.org/media-coverage-and-female-athletes/video/tpt-co-productions-media-coverage-female-athletes/.

This documentary was published by The University of Minnesota Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, which is a legitimate, university-level source. This documentary homed in on female athletes and the quantity and quality of the media coverage they receive. Women make up forty percent of all athletes, but only receive 4% of media coverage. For instance, the documentary mentions that in the NCAA semifinals, the Minnesota Gophers women’s ice hockey game was not televised. They had an undefeated run to the national championship and fans had to find out what was going on through tweets and emails. In a home where men’s sports are always on, little boys think this is what they must do, while little girls think this is what they cannot do, creating a vicious cycle.

When they are portrayed in the media, they are usually not in competition or in uniform, but rather in highly sexualized contexts. During a world record track meet, the announcers were commentating on how one girl in the race stole another girl’s boyfriend, while they were competing for a world record. The documentary then goes on to discuss how homophobia shapes women’s sports, and how there is a cultural assumption that women who play sports are homosexual. As a result, many women choose to do photoshoots that sell sex and their bodies, because they are overcompensating for the idea that they are manly, not feminine, or homosexual.

This documentary is undeniably relatable to my final project on the women's basketball team. It reinforces the fact that female athletes do not get enough coverage, and when they do, the media takes the attention away from their athletic ability. As I will be in control of what and how much content is produced, it is important to keep these statistics in mind, as I will be pushing back against it. The Skidmore Women's basketball team won the Liberty League last season, and they did not get nearly enough attention, which is similar to when the Minnesota women's hockey team won the national championship. If the women's basketball team gets there again, it will be my job to report on their journey and their team in a way that accurately represents them and their team. One weakness of the documentary is that it did not discuss the positive sides of media coverage in women's sports. This makes it difficult for me to have examples of things I can do, while reporting, rather than just having things I should not do.

“Official Basketball Rules.” *FIBA.Basketball*, 2000, www.fiba.basketball/basketball/official-rules.

This source is the International Basketball Federation's (FIBA) Official Basketball Rules for Men and Women. FIBA governs the sports of basketball worldwide, including NCAA basketball. This is a legitimate source, and it contains all the rules that NCAA basketball follows.

The most important thing that I learned from this was the playing regulations. The game consists of four ten-minute periods, with a fifteen-minute half-time break. In between the other periods, there is a two-minute break. This is important for me to know because it gives me an idea of how much time I must interview coaches and players during the

breaks. This article went into depth about jump ball, which occurs at the start of the game. There were a few things that I learned about jump balls that I did not know before, such as the jumpers can only touch it after the ball has reached its highest point. I also learned that the term field goal, means any 2-point shot that was inside the field goal area. This was very important for me to know because I can use this language in my reports. The article also went through the rules of fouls and penalties, which was extremely helpful.

This article is clearly helpful for my final project, as it gives me a handbook of rules that I can follow in order to report on the game to the best of my abilities. If I do not know something, I can always come back to this handbook and figure it out.

“Pelicans vs. Pistons Pregame Report 12/7/2022.” *YouTube*, New Orleans Pelicans, 7 Dec. 2022, youtu.be/E4RrrY8UrJQ.

In this video, Erin Summers does a pregame report for an NBA game. Summers is the team reporter for the New Orleans Pelicans, an NBA team, and the New Orleans Saints who are in the NFL. She hosts the Saints podcast and does pre/post game shows and interviews throughout the week. This will essentially be my job, but with the Skidmore Women’s Basketball team.

In her pregame report, Summers mentions the Pelicans win streak, calling them “the hottest team in the league”. She also talks about the opposing team, telling the viewers the Piston’s average points coming from substitute players. These are statistics that she researched before the show. She talks about what the Pelicans need to focus on in terms of the opposing team. She clearly knows this information from researching the other team

and being well-prepared. In her report, she includes a few interviews with players during practice, talking about the upcoming games. This is something I will utilize as well, interviewing Skidmore players during their practices and then implementing them in my reports. At the end of the report, Summers states the Pelicans record and who they will be up against that weekend.

This video was very helpful to me, as it is exactly what I will be doing. Summers has an entire portfolio of reports, so I can continue watching and learning from her. I like the way she does her reports, and I will try to model mine after hers.

Ransdell, Lynda B., et al. "A 4-Year Profile of Game Demands in Elite Women's Division I College Basketball." *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2019, pp. 632–638, <https://doi.org/10.1519/jsc.0000000000003425>.

Author, Lynda Ransdell is a professor in the department of Kinesiology at Boise State University. She has a Ph.D. in Exercise and Wellness from Arizona State University, and she is interested in helping sedentary people increase their levels of physical fitness. Dr. Ransdell has published over 110 peer-reviewed journal articles. In this article, Dr. Ransdell and co-authors examined six NCAA Division 1 female basketball players throughout four seasons. Their goal was to determine and understand the difference in workload that a player demonstrates throughout four seasons of collegiate basketball. They found that the number of jumps increased significantly in the athletes' last two years compared to their first two years. This is important because the number of jumps in a game is an indication of higher performance. The increase in jumps was consistent with the increase in win records as well. This indicates that measuring in-game jumps can

correlate with positive game performance in women's collegiate basketball. It was also found that the average number of minutes played was higher in the guard positions compared to the post positions. Previous research shows that guards on average cover more area of the court and that they typically have faster acceleration, agility, and speed, than post players. One limitation of this study is that the sample is relatively small and results are specific to the team that was studied.

This study is helpful to me because it helps me understand the dynamics of the sport. For instance, this puts positions and workload into context, so when I am reporting on the team, I can have this background information. For example, if a post position player is playing less than a guard, I will have this background information to guide me when I am coming up with reports. When I am watching the games, I will pay attention to the quality and quantity of jumps in the game. This article will help me understand when a player is gaining or losing playing time, and it also gives me more context on specific positions, which I did not know before. It is critical that I learn more about the sport of basketball, so this article is very helpful.

Reinardy, Scott, and Wayne Wanta . "The Essentials of Sports Reporting and Writing."

Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp. 10–49.

Scott Reinardy is a professor of Journalism at the University of Kansas. Wayne Wanta is a professor of Journalism at the University of Florida. They both have PhDs and have published a significant number of articles in this field. In chapters one and two of "The Essentials of Sports Reporting and Writing," the authors discuss the basics of sports reporting through a list of necessary tools. The first tool of good sports reporting is

understanding the game, through research and studying. It is critical to know about the sport and the game that is being reported on, in terms of teams, formation, records, rules of the sport, etc. Research is important when doing a feature story, which is what I will be doing a lot of. A feature story is a story on a specific player. The authors recommend searching the athlete's name, talking to teammates and local fans, and interviewing people who may know the athlete. The authors state that there is always a way to get information, and good journalists will dig around to find it. Another tool is preparation, which is constant. For example, always carrying a notepad and pen, always having a recording device, and setting up times and places to meet with people before meeting.

These chapters are essential, as they literally give me a beginner's toolkit on sports reporting. Before the season, I need to sharpen my knowledge on the game of basketball, which I can do by watching professional games and listening to the commentary, and I can do my research. Before each game that I am reporting on, I will research the team Skidmore is playing against, their record, and their last meeting with Skidmore. I will also investigate their roster and who their key players are. This goes together with preparation. Additionally, these chapters gave me helpful advice on how to get information before a story. Interviewing unlikely people, as well having a strong relationship with the athletic director and communications department is necessary for high quality stories. One limitation of this article is that it is giving tips for reporters who are most likely working in a larger, more professional field. However, I can translate that into a smaller setting. This book has many more chapters that focus on different aspects of sports reporting, which will be very useful for my project.

Stern, Ricki and Annie Sundberg, directors. *Let Them Wear Towels*. ESPN, 2013, Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

"Let Them Wear Towels," directed by Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg, provides a comprehensive exploration of the challenges faced by female sports journalists in a predominantly male industry. Stern and Sundberg are a pair of American filmmakers known for their collaborative work. They have co-directed and co-produced a number of documentaries. In "Let Them Wear Towels," through a combination of archival footage and interviews with prominent female journalists, the documentary sheds light on the struggles and triumphs of women working in sports media. It covers a wide range of topics, from unequal access to athletes and locker rooms to the pervasive gender biases encountered in their reporting careers.

This documentary is a pivotal contribution to the discourse surrounding gender dynamics within the sports journalism profession. Stern and Sundberg's meticulous direction and skilled editing weave together historical context, personal anecdotes, and powerful interviews. Some of the women reporters in the film include Melissa Ludtke, Claire Smith, and Christine Brennan, who are all prestigious sports reporters. Moreover, "Let Them Wear Towels" effectively highlights how the issues faced by female sports journalists resonate with broader themes of gender inequality in the workplace.

This film is very helpful to me as I begin my project as it validates the experiences of female sports reporters by showcasing their challenges, successes, and hurdles in the male-dominated industry. This film also sheds light on the systematic issues within the sports journalism industry. Understanding these dynamics will help me navigate my

experience more. I do not think I will experience such extreme discrimination and obstacles because I am the only sports reporter for Skidmore, and I will be focusing on the women's basketball team who wants the coverage as much as I want to cover them. Nevertheless, this background information was necessary for me to complete my sports reporting project.

“Tips for the Sideline Reporter | Commentator Series.” *YouTube*, Creative Foundry, 4 Jan. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpnNsHeiiXI. Accessed 27 Sept. 2023.

Bryan Eubank is the Sports Information Director at Jackson Academy and the Voice of the Raider Network. He received his master's degree from Mississippi College. In this video, he gives tips for someone interested in becoming a sideline reporter. The first thing he suggests is to have questions prepared before halftime. The flow of the game will dictate what questions will be asked, and the first question asked will dictate the follow-up questions. One important thing to keep in mind about halftime reporting, is that you must be quick. The coaches and players must go to the locker room and have a talk, so it is important to set up before the game and tell the coaches that you are going to grab them. Another tip he gave in the video was how to hold the microphone. Holding the microphone close to your mouth is crucial, and you should never give away your microphone during interviews. For injuries, it is the sideline reporter's job to find out about the injury and report on it to the best of their ability.

This video gave me some very helpful tips when it comes to sideline reporting. At Skidmore, there is no course that is solely on sideline reporting so I would not have known small details, like how to hold the microphone or when to set up for halftime. I

also liked that this source was a video because I got to see his examples of him holding the microphone, which was helpful.

“Tristen Newton on Transferring to UConn to Win a National Title.” *YouTube*, March Madness, 4 Apr. 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=44u2PA0-T_k.

In this video, Andy Katz interviews college basketball player, Tristen Newton after he wins the national championship. Andy Katz is a college basketball analyst for the Big Ten Network, owned by Fox Sports. He has also previously worked for ESPN. He is a popular, well-known basketball analyst, making him a great person to learn from.

In his interview, Katz emphasizes his own excitement and emotion through his tone of voice. As a result, Newton matches that excitement. Katz does this in hopes of getting a good answer out of Newton for the sake of the interview. This is a good tip to follow, because some of the players on the Skidmore Women’s Basketball team may be on the quieter side. Emphasizing my own emotion may cause them to match me and give more detailed answers. Additionally, Katz asked about Newton’s past and why he transferred to UConn, creating a story. He did not ask about how many points he scored or why he was feeling during the game. He asked why and how he got to where he is now. These types of questions are critical for creating more emotional reports, which is a tip I can take with me when I am reporting for my final project. I want the viewers to feel for these players and learn to love the people on the team through my reporting. I will do this by showing footage of their hard work at practice and asking the players questions that will ignite passionate responses. For example, when interviewing a player about her performance in a game to a team they lost to last year, I will ask a question that will allow

her to let those feelings of revenge show, such as “What sparked your confidence against this team specifically?” This will allow the viewers to see the people behind the athletes.

Weedon, Gavin, et al. "Where's all the 'Good' Sports Journalism? Sports Media Research, The Sociology of Sport, and the Question of Quality Sports Reporting." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 53, no. 6, 2018, pp. 639-667.

Gavin Weedon is an Associate Professor at Nottingham Trent University in the UK. He teaches sociology of sport and has published several peer-reviewed sports-related journalism articles. The authors of this article examined 376 sports media articles to determine the types of suggestions that have been offered for journalistic ‘best practices.’ Seven suggestions were consistently found in the sampled articles. The first suggestion was more, and more appropriately contextualized reporting. The second suggestion was more critical media work and more balanced, neutral reporting. To report in a neutral way, I will steer away from saying any team or specific player played better or worse. I will use the stats and score line as evidence in my reports. For example, if Skidmore is winning by forty points, I can rightfully say that Skidmore is outplaying the other team. On the other hand, if Skidmore is losing my forty points, I can say that the other team is looking a lot better than Skidmore and Skidmore’s defense is struggling in that specific game. I will also never say my personal biased opinions, such as who I think is the best on the team. Other than balanced reporting, more equitable coverage of different sports, equity in the newsroom, more socially responsible and educative coverage, and more reflexive reporting, were the other suggestions that were consistently found in the samples. The authors concluded that these suggestions could lead to more quality sports reporting, however there is no consensus on what ‘good journalism’ entails.

This article will be helpful to me as my project starts, because of the suggestions that the authors compiled. One thing that I will have to focus on is being objective while reporting, which is imperative for good sports reporting. Before my reports, I will write down notes of what I want to say, and make sure that I am not showing a bias. One of the suggestions was more equitable coverage of different sports, which ties into the reason why I am focusing on the women's basketball team. The other sources I am using explain more in depth why female athletes get a significantly lower amount of media coverage. This article presents helpful sports journalism practices that I can use while I am broadcasting for my final project.