

GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS

NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS SHOWS, 1989-2009

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Michael A. Messner, Ph.D.
University of Southern California

Cheryl Cooky, Ph.D.
Purdue University

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Robin Hextrum
University of Southern California

With an Introduction by
Diana Nyad

Center for Feminist Research, University of Southern California



June, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION by Diana Nyad.....	3
II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	4
III. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY.....	6
IV. DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS.....	8
1. Sports news: Coverage of women’s sports plummets	
2. ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i> : A decline in coverage of women’s sports	
3. Ticker Time: Women’s sports on the margins	
4. Men’s “Big Three” sports are the central focus	
5. Unequal coverage of women’s and men’s pro and college basketball	
6. Shifting portrayals of women	
7. Commentators: Racially diverse; Sex-segregated	
V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	22
VI. REFERENCES.....	28
VII. APPENDIX: SELECTED WOMEN’S SPORTING EVENTS DURING THE STUDY.....	30
VIII. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	33
IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	34
X. ABOUT THE CO-INVESTIGATORS.....	35

I. INTRODUCTION

By Diana Nyad

For two decades, the **GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS** report has tracked the progress—as well as the lack of progress—in the coverage of women’s sports on television news and highlights shows. One of the positive outcomes derived from past editions of this valuable study has been a notable improvement in the often-derogatory ways that sports commentators used to routinely speak of women athletes. The good news in this report is that there is far less insulting and overtly sexist treatment of women athletes than there was twenty or even ten years ago. The bad news, in these times of women’s empowerment and success in most spheres of our society, is that the overall coverage of women’s sports has declined to a level of outrageously small numbers.

As a former world-class athlete, and through my thirty years working in sports television and radio, I have certainly come to know the uphill challenges we women face in the male bastion of sports. I am also fully aware of the market forces at work in shaping the everyday programming decisions in televised sports. But in reading this most current edition of **GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS**, I confess to being shocked to learn that since 1989 very little has changed in the world of televised sports news. As a matter of fact, for women athletes, and fans of women’s sports, things have devolved, rather than having evolved. It is frankly unfathomable, and unacceptable, that viewers are actually receiving *less* coverage of women’s sports than they were twenty years ago...and that the sports news is still being delivered almost exclusively by men.

There is no doubt that there has been a gender revolution in American sports in recent decades. Millions of girls play sports every day. Tens of thousands of women compete in college and professional athletics. Women’s athletic skill levels have risen astronomically over the past twenty years in sports from basketball to volleyball, from swimming to soccer. It is time for television news and highlights shows to keep pace with this revolution. I can only hope that, five years from now, when this study is conducted again, it will find a substantial number of women among the ranks of sports news and highlights commentators, and that they, along with men commentators, will have joined the Twenty-first Century by reporting fairly and equitably on women’s sports. The coverage today misrepresents both the participation and the interest in women’s sports across our population at large.

Diana Nyad is formerly a commentator with Fox Sports News and ABC Sports, and currently contributes a weekly column for National Public Radio.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

◆ ***COVERAGE OF WOMEN'S SPORTS: LOWER THAN EVER***

- ◆ Women's sports were underreported in the six weeks of early evening and late night television sports news on the three network affiliates sampled in the study. Men's sports received 96.3% of the airtime, women's sports 1.6%, and gender neutral topics 2.1%. This is a precipitous decline in the coverage of women's sports since 2004, when 6.3% of the airtime was devoted to women's sports, and the lowest proportion ever recorded in this study.
- ◆ ESPN's nationally-televised program *SportsCenter* devoted only 1.4% of its airtime to coverage of women's sports, a decline in their coverage of women's sports compared with 1999 (2.2%) and 2004 (2.1%).
- ◆ ESPN and two of the network affiliates (KNBC and KCBS), continually ran a scrolling ticker text bar at the bottom of the screen, reporting scores and other sports news. The proportion of "ticker time" devoted to women's sports on KNBC and KCBS was 4.6%, more than triple the thin airtime they devoted to women's sports in their main broadcasts. *SportsCenter* devoted 2.7% of its ticker time to women's sports, down from 8.5% in 2004.

◆ ***MEN'S "BIG THREE" SPORTS:***

IN OR OUT OF SEASON, ALWAYS THE CENTRAL FOCUS

- ◆ 100% of the *SportsCenter* programs and 100% of the sports news shows in the sample led with a men's sports story. Lead stories tend to be among the longest stories in the broadcast, containing the highest production values.
- ◆ 72% of all airtime (main and ticker coverage) focused on men's basketball, football, and baseball. Other men's sports, especially most individual sports, were pushed to the margins along with the few women's sports that received any coverage.
- ◆ Reporters continually devoted airtime to men's sports that were out of season—pro and college football in March and July, pro baseball in November, or pro basketball in July—while failing to report on women's sports that were currently in season.

◆ ***WOMEN'S AND MEN'S PRO AND COLLEGE BASKETBALL:*** ***SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL***

- ◆ The WNBA received a tiny fraction of the coverage that was devoted to the NBA, both when in-season, and when out-of-season.

- ◆ College basketball in March is a sport being played both by women's and men's teams during the same time frame. The three network affiliate news shows devoted zero time, and *SportsCenter* gave token attention to women's college basketball, while lavishing huge amounts of air time to men's college basketball.
- ◆ News and highlights shows' scant coverage of pro or college women's basketball was usually relegated to the margins, appearing more often on the scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen rather than in the program's main coverage.

◆ **VIEWS OF WOMEN: LESS SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION; SPARING SERVINGS OF RESPECT**

- ◆ Past studies observed that women athletes (and women spectators) were frequently portrayed in demeaning ways—as sexual objects, or as the brunt of commentators' sarcastic humor in stories on marginal pseudo-sports. There was far less of this sort of sexist humor about women in 2009, though this may in part reflect that women in any form were increasingly absent from the broadcasts.
- ◆ A large chunk of ESPN's *SportsCenter's* meager coverage of women's sports was devoted to a short March series, "Celebrating women's History Month: Her Triumph, Her Story." These features had high technical quality, and were delivered in a respectful tone, but were cordoned off from regular *SportsCenter* highlights, and presented as something separate and different.
- ◆ A handful of women's sports stories made their way into news and highlights shows when the story line was focused on a rule-breaking incident like a fight, or on some other controversy in women's sport.
- ◆ On the rare occasions when women were featured in sports news and highlights shows, they were usually presented in stereotypical ways: as wives or girlfriends of famous male athletes or as mothers.

◆ **SPORTS COMMENTATORS: RACIALLY DIVERSE, SEX-SEGREGATED**

- ◆ Past studies revealed that news and highlights commentators were racially diverse, but most were men. This dual pattern of racial diversity and sex segregation continued in 2009. The three network affiliates included no women sports announcers, while women announcers appeared in a small number of *SportsCenter* broadcasts. Unlike general TV news anchor or weather positions, the TV sports news and highlights position is still defined almost exclusively as a male occupation.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

As with the 1989, 1993, 1999 and 2004 studies, the central aim of the current study was to compare the quantity and quality of TV news and highlights shows' coverage of women's versus men's athletic events. So that we might comment on change and continuity over time, we replicated the previous iterations of the study. First, we analyzed three two-week segments (a total of six weeks) of televised sports news coverage on each of three local (Los Angeles) network affiliates. Second, we studied ESPN's *SportsCenter*, replicating our focus on this sports highlights show that we began in 1999 and continued in 2004.

Over the past decade, television news and highlights shows have introduced visual techniques (e.g., split screens and scrolling tickers) of conveying information that invite viewers to listen, view images, and read text that refer simultaneously to two or more stories. As in 2004, most of the 2009 sports news and highlights programs in our sample included a continual running "ticker" at the bottom of the television screen. The ticker uses written text to report game scores, headlines, and breaking sports news that may or may not be reported through the main conventional verbal reporting and visual images. We analyzed the quantity of ticker coverage devoted to women's and to men's sports.

SAMPLE

Televised sports news

We analyzed six weeks of television sports news (both the 6:00 p.m. segments and the 11:00 p.m. segments) on the three local network affiliates (KNBC, KCBS, and KABC). As in the 1989, 1993, 1999 and 2004 studies, in order to sample different time periods when different sports were being played, we analyzed three, two-week periods: March 15-28; July 12-25; November 8-21. Amounts of airtime devoted to men's versus women's sports were measured. The scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen (in cases where it was present) also was timed, to determine the proportion of ticker reports devoted to women's versus men's sports. In addition to the quantitative measures, we analyzed the quality of coverage in terms of visuals and verbal commentary.

ESPN *SportsCenter*

We analyzed three weeks of one-hour 11:00 p.m. ESPN's *SportsCenter*. These three weeks corresponded with the first week of each of the three network news segments: March 15-21, July 12-18, and November 8-14. We added *SportsCenter* to this study in 1999, so we can now compare our 2009 data with the 1999 and 2004 data. Amounts of airtime devoted to men's versus women's sports were measured. Following a practice begun in the 2004 study, the scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen was

timed, to determine the proportion of ticker reports devoted to women's versus men's sports. In addition to the quantitative measures, we analyzed the quality of coverage in terms of visuals and verbal commentary.

(There were a small number of dates on which there was no 6 pm or no 11 pm sports news report included in our data, and two dates within the sample period for which we have no *SportsCenter* broadcast. In most of these cases, regularly scheduled news or highlights programs did not occur, because they were pre-empted by live sports broadcasts. In addition, Sunday KCBS news shows usually contained no sports news during the 11:00 broadcast, because the station covered sports on a special "Sports Central" show that was not included as part of our study.)

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design and methods of data collection and analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) were identical to those of the 1989, 1993, 1999 and 2004 studies.

In Stage 1 of the research, we recorded all of the sports news and highlights segments.

In Stage 2, the research assistant viewed all of the recordings and compiled a written preliminary quantitative description.

In Stage 3, one investigator independently viewed all of the tapes and added her written analysis to that of the research assistant. In this stage, a qualitative analysis was added to the quantitative analysis.

In Stage 4, the data were compiled and analyzed for this report by the two investigators, using both sets of written descriptions of the recordings, and by viewing portions of the recordings once again.

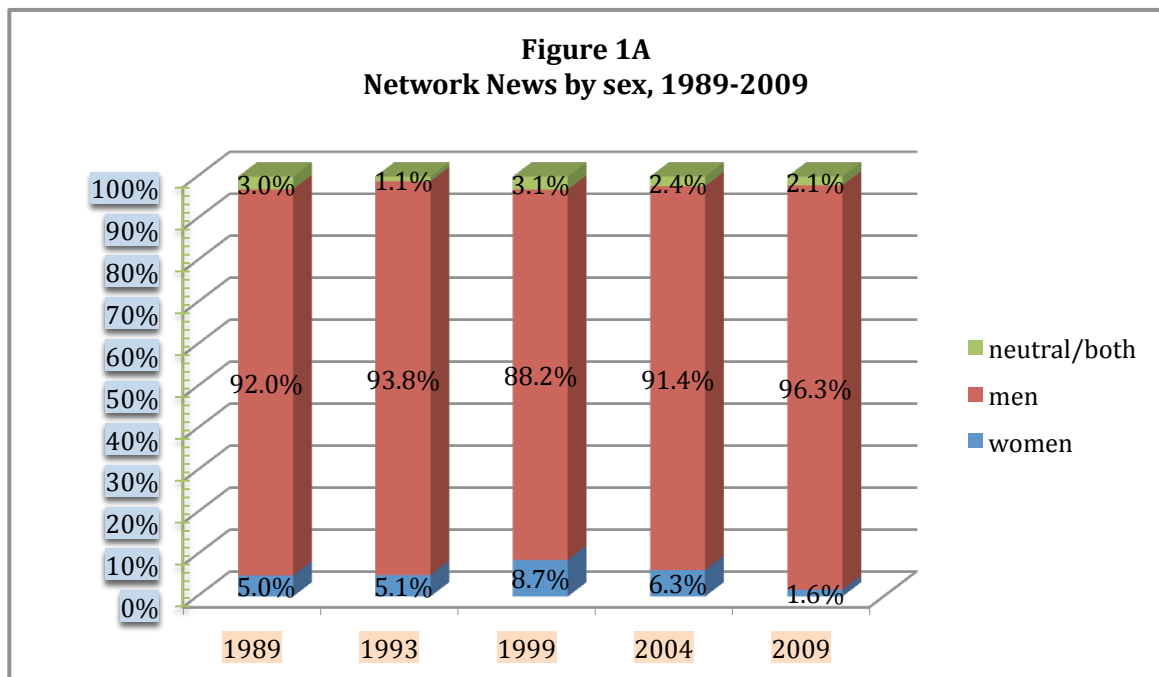
In Stage 5, one investigator wrote up the research report.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

1. Sports news on three network affiliates: Coverage of women's sports plummets

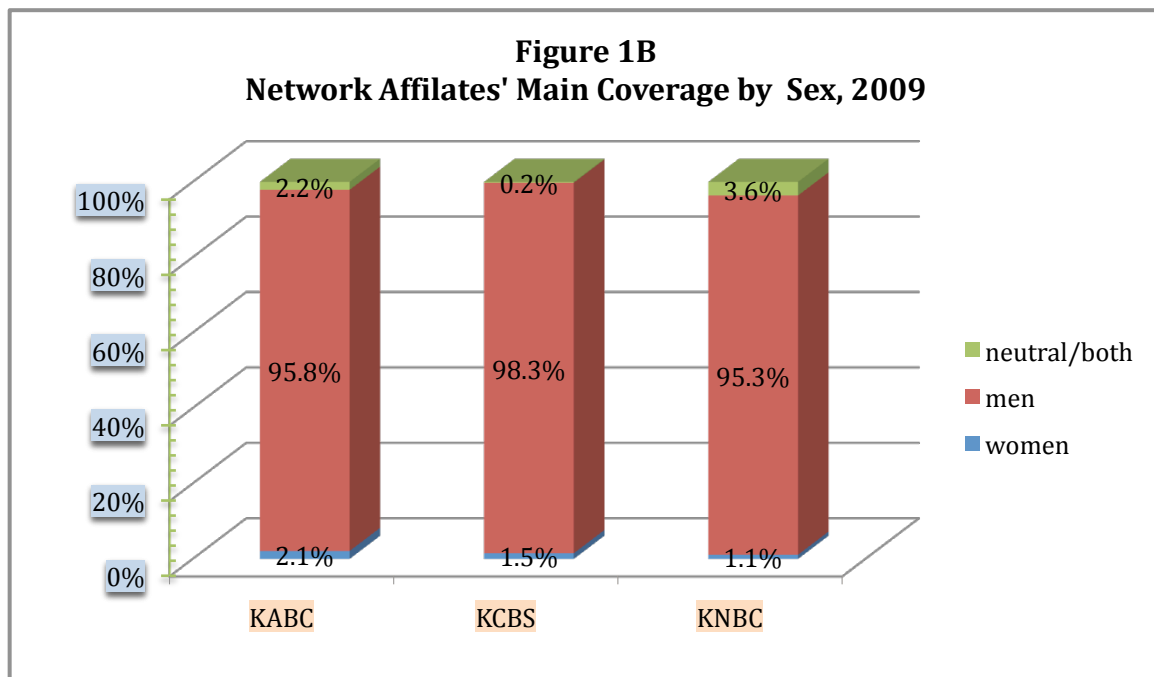
Chasm between coverage of women's and men's sports widens

In the 1989 and 1993 studies, we noted that female athletes rarely received coverage on the televised sports news. The 1999 study revealed an encouraging increase in the proportion of sports news devoted to coverage of women's sports, followed by a small decline in 2004 study. As Figure 1A illustrates, the 2009 proportion of airtime devoted to women's sports dropped precipitously to 1.6%, by far its lowest level in any year measured over the past two decades.



The three network affiliates share similar styles.

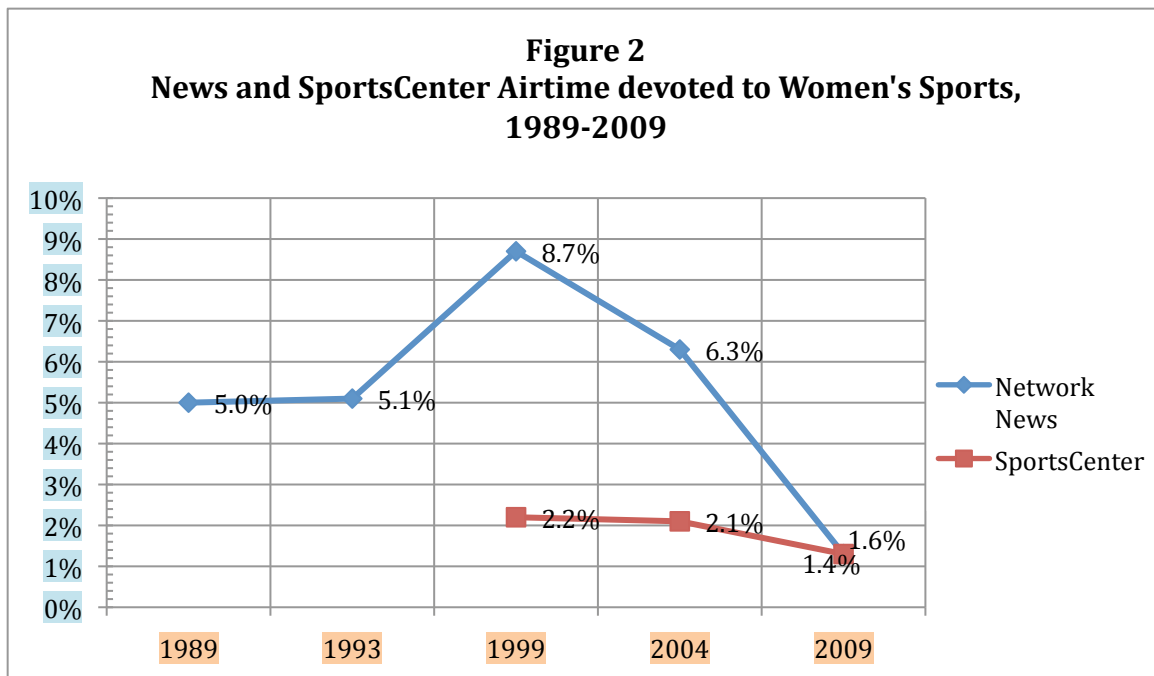
In past studies, the three network affiliates showed very similar patterns of coverage, all devoting hugely disproportionate amounts of time to men's sports. These similarities continued with the 2009 study, but as Figure 1B shows, there were also differences. KNBC, which in the 2004 study showed the highest proportion of coverage of women's sports (8.9%) dropped off to 1.1% coverage of women's sports in the 2009 study. KABC and KCBS both hovered closer to the 2% level, also representing a regression in coverage of women's sports from previous studies.



As in past studies, there was little difference between the evening and late-night editions of the three news shows, in terms of coverage of women's sports. Also consistent with past years of the study, the November period of the sample contained the least amount of coverage of women's sports (almost none). There was marginally more coverage of women's sports during the March and July periods.

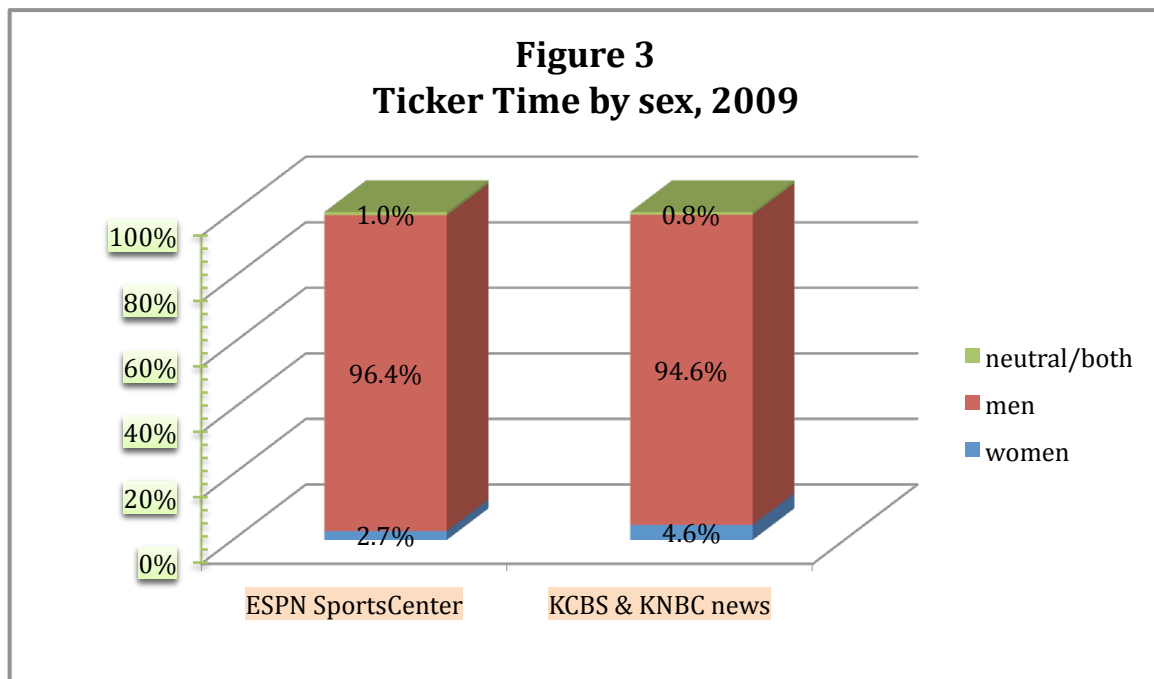
2. ESPN *SportsCenter*: Declining coverage of women's sports

In 1999 (when we added *SportsCenter* to the study) and again in 2004, the proportion of the popular highlights show's coverage devoted to women's sports was significantly lower than proportions devoted by TV news shows. As Figure 2 illustrates, *SportsCenter's* coverage of women's sports declined in 2009 to 1.4%, just a hair lower than the combined coverage of the three network news shows.



3. Ticker Time: Women’s sports on the margins

ESPN’s *SportsCenter* and two of the network affiliate news shows (KNBC and KCBS) continually ran a scrolling ticker text bar at the bottom of the screen, reporting scores and other sports news. The proportion of “ticker time” devoted to women’s sports on KNBC and KCBS was 4.6%, more than triple the proportion of the thin airtime they devoted to women’s sports in their main broadcasts. In 2009, *SportsCenter* devoted 2.7% of its ticker time to women’s sports. While this is almost double the 1.4% main coverage that *SportsCenter* devoted to women’s sports, it represents a decline from 2004, when the highlights show devoted 8.5% of its ticker time to women’s sports.



4. Men’s “Big Three” sports are the central focus

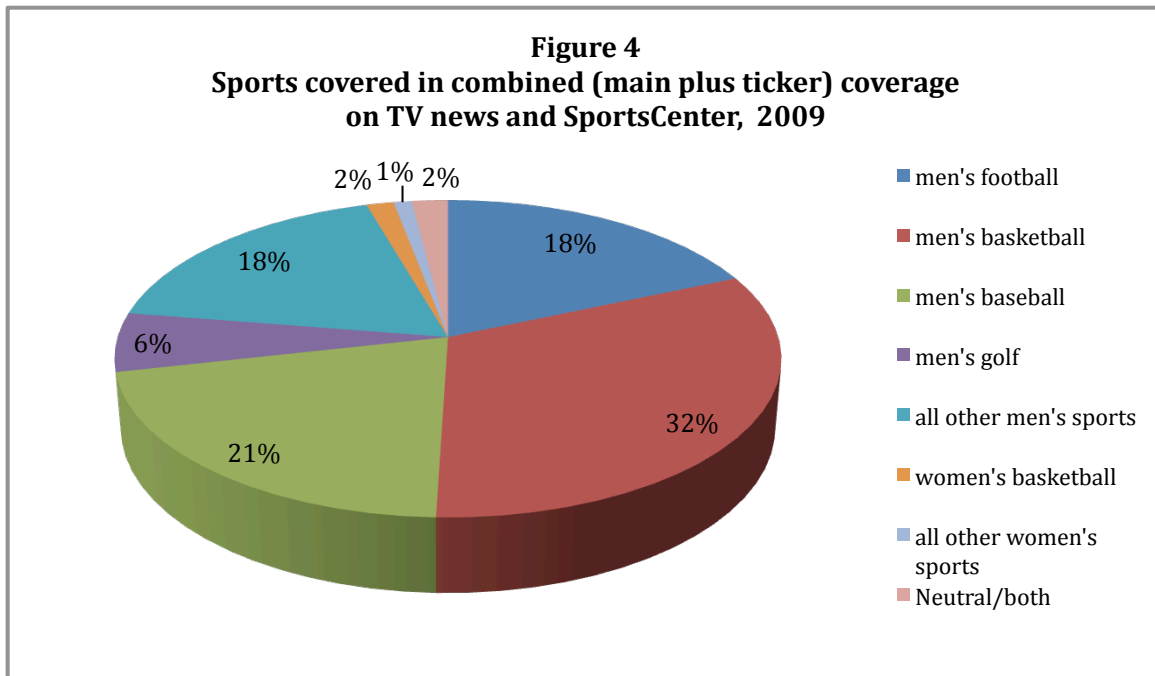
Men always lead.

Every sports news or highlights broadcast begins with a lead story that sets the tone of the broadcast. Lead stories, especially those on *SportsCenter*, tend also to be the longest stories of the broadcast, containing the highest production values (often including multiple interviews, game footage, musical montage, graphic statistics, ancillary on-site reporters, etc.). In our sample, 100% of the *SportsCenter* programs and 100% of the

sports news shows began with a men's sports topic as the lead story.

Not all men's sports are in the spotlight.

As Figure 4 illustrates, both ESPN's *SportsCenter* and the network affiliates' news shows devoted the vast majority of their attention to three men's sports. When combining all main coverage and ticker time, the three men's sports of football, basketball, and baseball received a combined 71.7% of all coverage. Men's golf was a distant fourth, receiving 5.6% of the coverage. Nineteen other men's sports shared 18% of the total coverage. Meanwhile, basketball was the only women's sport to receive anything close to substantial attention, garnering 1.5% of the overall coverage. Four other women's sports (golf, soccer, tennis and softball) shared less than 1% of the total combined coverage. In previous iterations of the study, tennis was usually the most commonly covered women's sport (43% of all women's sports stories in the 2004 study were tennis stories). This was not the case in 2009.



Even when not in season, the “Big Three” are given center stage.

Reporters continually delivered stories on men’s sports that were out of season, including especially stories on professional (and occasionally college) football in March and July, pro baseball in November, and pro basketball in July, as Table 4 shows.

Table 4
Main coverage of “Big Three” men’s sports while out of season
(number of stories; minutes: seconds)

	KABC, KNBC & KCBS	ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>
November men’s baseball stories	32 stories 17:01	8 stories 5:52
March & July men’s football stories	26 stories 14:11	42 stories 46:18
July men’s basketball stories	60 stories 35:31	21 stories 14:44

5. Unequal coverage of women’s and men’s pro and college basketball

Figure 4 and Table 4 showed that coverage of the “Big Three” men’s sports, even when out of season, far exceeded the coverage of all women’s sports, whether in-season or not. However, overall comparisons of men’s and women’s sports might be seen as misleading—like comparing apples and oranges—since there are still some men’s sports (men’s pro football and baseball in particular) for which there are no fully developed women’s equivalents. Thus, it is instructive to compare a sport for which there are equivalent men’s and women’s teams and leagues. For this purpose, we compared the coverage of professional and college women’s and men’s basketball.

The NBA is where coverage happens

Table 5A shows a comparison of coverage of the WNBA (the Women’s National Basketball Association) and coverage of the NBA (the men’s National Basketball Association). Breaking down in-season and out-of-season coverage of the men’s and women’s professional leagues sheds light on the depth of the gender asymmetries in news and highlights shows.

Table 5A
Coverage of WNBA and NBA, in season and out of season
(number of stories; minutes: seconds)

	March	July
WNBA on KABC, KNBC & KCBS	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	(in season) 3 stories; 2:51
WNBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	(in season) 5 stories 2:40
NBA on KABC, KNBC & KCBS	(in season) 51 stories; 43:25	(out of season) 60 stories; 35:31
NBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	(in season) 21 stories; 22:26	(out of season) 21 stories; 14:44

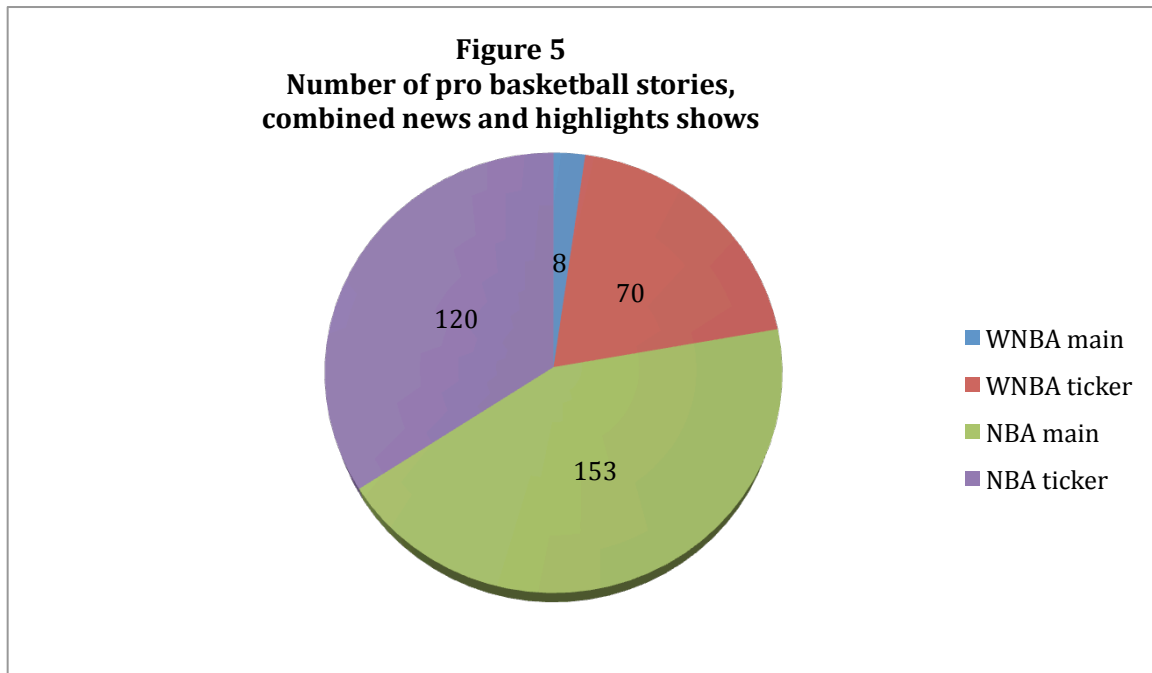
The WNBA received scant coverage in the main reports of both the network news and *SportsCenter* broadcasts—even when in season. But as Table 5B illustrates, the WNBA did receive significant in-season coverage in the rolling ticker, at the bottom of the screen.

Table 5B
Ticker coverage of NBA and WNBA, In season and out of season
(number of ticker stories; minutes: seconds)

	March	July
WNBA on KABC, KNBC & KCBS	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	(in season) 48 stories; 11:01
WNBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	(out of season) 0 stories; 0:00	(in season) 22 stories 7:56
NBA on KABC, KNBC & KCBS	(in season) 58 stories; 30:12	(out of season) 10 stories; 3:58
NBA on ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>	(in season) 28 stories; 22:26	(out of season) 24 stories; 18:28

When in season (July) the vast majority (70 of 78) of WNBA stories that appeared on the combined news and highlights shows were literally marginalized to the scrolling ticker. Only eight WNBA stories were given airtime in the main broadcast. When out of season

(March), WNBA coverage was entirely absent from the both the main reports and the ticker. Meanwhile, NBA stories continued to be given generous main story and ticker coverage, whether in-season or out-of-season. Figure 5 compares the ticker and main coverage of WNBA and NBA, combining the total number of in-season and out-of-season stories on the news and highlights shows during the March and July samples.



March Madness: Mainly for Men

Coverage of women's and men's college basketball during the month of March offers perhaps an even better contrast, since these sports are being played during the same time frame. As Table 5C illustrates, news shows ignored entirely women's college basketball games while ESPN gave them token attention. Meanwhile, both the news and highlights shows were lavishing major attention on men's college basketball.

Table 5C
In-season coverage of Men’s and Women’s NCAA basketball in March
(number of stories; hours: minutes: seconds)

	Men’s NCAA basketball	Women’s NCAA basketball
KABC, KNBC & KCBS, main coverage	60 stories; 1:17:47	0 stories; 0:00
KABC, KNBC & KCBS, ticker coverage	33 stories; 13:48	0 stories; 0:00
ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>, main coverage	40 stories; 1:36:33	4 stories; 1:12
ESPN <i>SportsCenter</i>, ticker coverage	56 stories; 1:28:33	7 stories; 5:07

This comparison of women’s and men’s NCAA basketball reveals the highly asymmetrical coverage of the same women’s and men’s event during the same temporal frame. Akin to the coverage of the WNBA, the very scant attention given to women’s NCAA basketball (all of it appearing on ESPN) was mostly relegated to the margins of the screen, on the scrolling ticker.

It’s not that the generous coverage of the men’s tournament left no time for covering the women’s tournament. Producers decided to cover other things instead. On March 20, for instance, KABC spent all of its 3:33 long sports report on the men’s NCAA tournament, closing with a lengthy humorous story about Shaquille O’Neill going “mano a mano” with a 93 year old grandmother in a contest to pick NCAA men’s tournament winners. As viewers see the old woman, dressed in a suit and dress shoes and awkwardly trying to dribble a basketball, commentator Kurt Sandoval quips that the woman “knows absolutely nothing about basketball and is picking games on instinct.” On March 23, KNBC devoted generous coverage to the men’s tournament and none to the women’s, but spent thirty seconds covering a gag-feature about a burger with 5000 calories and 300 grams of fat that fans can now purchase at a minor league baseball park in Michigan. And the next day, KNBC gave women’s sports a nod with a story that featured shots of tennis star Serena Williams wearing a short dress, climbing out of a sun roof of a car, on to its roof to play tennis, lobbing a ball back and forth against male player Andy Murray who stood atop another car. This stunt was intended to promote the start of the Ericsson Open tournament. Commentator Mario Solis quipped, “Tennis anyone?...I hope nobody decides to use a drop shot!” This was the only mention of women’s sports during this broadcast. Also on March 24, during the heart of the women’s tournament, KABC ran a 1 minute, 31 second feature on the 70th anniversary of Little League Baseball, and during its 11:00 broadcast a 29 second feature on 2 ½-year old “pool prodigy” Keith O’Dell.

6. Shifting portrayals of women

In past studies, we pointed to commentators' common practice of using sarcastic humor in portraying women athletes (and sometimes women spectators) as objects of ridicule, as participants in laughable "gag sports" (e.g., a woman's nude bungee jump in 1999, and a "weightlifting granny" in 2004), and/or as sexual objects. In 2004, we noted a decline in disrespectful or insulting treatment of women, compared with previous years. In 2009, we saw even less of this sort of sexist treatment of women, though this may in part reflect that women in any form were absent from the broadcasts. We outline below four themes that emerged in the rare occasions when women were afforded some airtime.

Rare moments of respectful coverage

In 2009, we found a few instances where resources and time were devoted to delivering high-quality and respectful reports on a women's sporting event. For instance, on November 14, *SportsCenter* presented a 20-second long story highlighting an upcoming Baylor vs. Tennessee women's college basketball game. The story was respectful in tone and included compelling game footage. A notable chunk of *SportsCenter's* meager coverage of women's sports during our March sample was devoted to a series of features entitled "Celebrating Women's History Month: Her Triumph, Her Story." One of these thirty-second long stories would run during the hour-long broadcast, each focusing on an individual woman athlete, such as Rachel Fico, one of "the nation's finest in high school softball," and college skier Kelly Brush, who had been paralyzed in an accident but still participates in downhill skiing. Each "Her Story" feature was cordoned off from regular *SportsCenter* highlights, presented as something distinct and separate (appearing at the end of a commercial break, before the resumption of *SportsCenter's* regular sports highlights report, which contained little or no coverage of that day's women's sports events). The "Her Story" features had high technical quality, and were delivered in a respectful tone.

Sexualized gag stories

The news broadcasts included a small number of sexualized gag stories about women that seemed like throwbacks to 1990s broadcasts. For instance, on November 11, 2009, KNBC's Fred Roggin delivered a gag-story on a new Japanese product:

"How 'bout this: With the holiday season quickly approaching, here's a perfect stocking stuffer for that woman who loves to play golf. A Japanese designer has created a bra that unfolds into a putting green. The 'Make-The-Putt Bra' turns into a self-contained, five-foot long mat that comes complete with a tee and golf balls." [Viewers see footage of a Japanese woman wearing a short, pleated white skirt, modeling the bra, putting a golf ball into the hole within the breast cup portion of the bra.] "If that's not enough the bra also comes with a motivational

tape that blares the traditional Japanese words of encouragement, 'Nice in!' Yes, it is truly a gift that keeps on giving."

The "Japanese Putting Bra" was a twenty-four second-long story embedded in a broadcast consisting otherwise of stories on four men's pro sports (football, baseball, soccer and ice hockey), and within a two-week stretch of time when KNBC had almost no coverage of women's sports.

On July 18, in a report that focused entirely on men's sports, KABC's Kurt Sandoval closed with a 28-second long story on the Laker Girls Tryouts. In taped footage of the tryouts, viewers saw young dancing women wearing sports bra tops and bikini bottoms, as cameras positioned below them panned up from their legs to their abdomens, their breasts and finally their faces, during which Sandoval reported:

"Finally, with Trevor Ariza in Houston and Lamar Odom's contract off the table, Laker fans needed something to smile about. We bring you, the Laker Girl tryouts. Good to see life is actually well in El Segundo for Laker fans today. Several dozens putting on their best show to try to win that coveted—highly coveted—spot on the Laker Girl roster. Just ask Paula Abdul if it can help your career. We wish all the ladies well tonight." A Female co-anchor responds, "You just made Danny's evening" (referring to KABC weather man Danny Romero). Off-screen, laughter erupts, to which Sandoval responds, "We aim to please."

Fights, assaults and scandals

Women's sports were apparently deemed newsworthy when the news angle involved physical violence, egregious rule-breaking, or economic problems within the sport itself. For instance, on November 11, KNBC's Fred Roggin devoted 39 seconds (of a broadcast of 2:40 that otherwise covered only men's sports) to a graphic discussion of alarm over soccer player Elizabeth Lambert's on-field hair-pulling assault on another player. *SportsCenter* used a clip of Lambert's hair-pulling incident as one of its November 8 "Ultimate Highlights Clips." And on November 9, KABC did a short story on a fight that broke out in the stands at a high school girls' soccer game. On July 13, KABC's Kurt Sandoval reported that LPGA commissioner Caroline Bivens had been ousted as a result of "a major revolt on the women's tour." Noting the devastating impact that the declining economy has recently had on women's golf, Sandoval concluded that "It's a great game of golf they play. It's just that the golf fans want to see the big hitters like Tiger, so we wish them well to get that resolved."

Women as girlfriends, wives and mothers

When women do nudge into the frame of news and highlights shows, they are commonly presented in conventional heterosexual roles, including as wives or girlfriends of prominent male athletes. On July 12, KABC's Curt Sandoval reported on auto-racing star Dario Franchitti, showing a clip of him during a moment of victory,

kissing his celebrity wife: “Another fabulous outing for Dario Franchitti. Like life’s not good enough: He’s married to Ashley Judd.” A July 14 story on KABC focused on USC quarterback Matt Cassel’s newly-signed \$63 Million NFL contract. Commentator Rob Fukuzaki joked that it “definitely pays...dating a quarterback at USC,” to which his male co-anchor laughed and said, “I’m not touchin’ that one!” And on November 16, KABC reported that NFL running back LaDainian Tomlinson had been motivated to have a standout game after his wife left a surprise gift in his locker: a positive pregnancy test.

A common way to portray successful women athletes was to foreground their status as wives or mothers. For instance, a July 18 KABC story on beach volleyball champion Kerri Walsh mentioned her husband’s volleyball win that day, and noted her own announcement that she is ready to return to play only two months after giving birth. Similarly, on July 12, *SportsCenter* delivered a short WNBA promotion for the next day’s WNBA game to be broadcast on ESPN, saying “...the new mom Candace Parker leads the Los Angeles Sparks to Connecticut to take on the Sun.”

SportsCenter’s “Her Story” segment on March 20 delivered high-quality production and respectful commentary on a woman athlete, while presenting her within the familiar frame of woman-as-partner to a high-profile male athlete. The story of Olympics track and field champion Sanya Richards and was narrated by her fiancé, pro football player Aaron Ross. “Hello,” Ross began, “My name is Aaron Ross, of the New York Giants. And I want to tell to you today about my fiancé, Sanya Richards.” As viewers saw still photos of Richards competing, Ross’s voice-over continued, “Her work ethic is second to none. I train with her and still to this day have not been able to make it through a workout.” Viewers saw taped clips of Ross and Richards working out together, as Ross explained that the night before the finals in the Olympics in Beijing, Richards said, “‘I’m going to go out there and give it my all.’ And she sure did. She came home with a Gold.”

Negative depictions of men?

Sprinkled throughout the 2009 study were a few stories that made fun of men athletes, sexualized them, or focused on their transgressions. For instance, on July 23, KNBC’s Fred Roggin mocked soccer star David Beckham’s declining athletic skills and his ascending status as an international sex symbol: “David Beckham was—*was*—a great player. But now he’s the Anna Kournikova of soccer. Women love to look at him. And, let’s be honest, some men do as well. But with that said, there’s plenty of people out there that simply don’t like him now.” In addition, there were several stories during July on all of the news shows that focused on NFL quarterback Ben Roethlisberger having been accused of raping a woman in Lake Tahoe. There was also the occasional stand-alone story, such as the KNBC report in July on Logan Campbell, an athlete from New Zealand who, in order to raise money for his training for the Olympic Games, had opened a brothel. The main difference in how these negative or derogatory stories about men athletes were presented, as compared with those on women, was that they were embedded within a seemingly unending flow of respectful and celebratory stories

about men’s sports and male athletes. By contrast, a negative story on a woman athlete usually stood alone as the only women’s sports story in a particular broadcast.

7. Commentators: Racially diverse; sex-segregated

In past studies we noted that the TV sports news announcers were all men, while *SportsCenter* included a few women announcers. In contrast to the sex segregation among sports commentators, the studies revealed considerable racial diversity. This dual pattern of racial diversity and sex segregation continued in 2009. As Table 7A shows, only one female announcer appeared during our entire sampling of KABC, KCBS and KABC—and she was not a regular anchorperson, instead appearing briefly as an ancillary reporter. Taken together, the three network affiliates appear to be very diverse racially; however KNBC accounts for all 40 appearances of a Latino male announcer (Mario Solis), KABC accounts for all 46 appearances of an Asian/Pacific Islander male announcer (Rob Fukuzaki), and KCBS accounts for all appearances of a Black male announcer (Jim Hill).

Table 7A
Race and Sex of KABC, KCBS, and KNBC Sports News Announcers

	WM	BM	LM	AM	WF	BF	LF	AF
Anchors	85	46	40	46	0	0	0	0
Ancillary	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	85	46	40	46	1	0	0	0
% of total	39%	21%	18%	21%	>1%	0%	0%	0%

[WM=White Male; BM=Black Male; LM=Latino Male; AM=Asian/Pacific Islander Male;
WF=White Female; BF=Black Female; LF=Latina Female; AF=Asian/Pacific Islander Female]

Men	99.5%	White	39%
Women	0.5%	Black	21%
		Latino	18%
		Asian/Pacific	21%

Grouped together, the data on the three network affiliates indicate that sports news commentary in the Los Angeles TV market continues to be a racially diverse profession. Meanwhile, in contrast to other on-camera TV news positions, such as main (non-sports) news anchors, ancillary reporters, and weather reporters, the position of sports news commentator remains almost absolutely sex segregated. The 2009 data illustrating this pattern of racial diversity and occupational sex segregation are nearly

identical to those in our 2004 data.

As Table 7B shows, *SportsCenter* evidences less racial diversity, but more gender diversity among its announcers than found on the TV sports news shows. Women announcers, however, appeared on *SportsCenter* most often as ancillary reporters, and only rarely in the more central role as anchor announcers.

Table 7B
Race and Sex of *SportsCenter* Anchor and Ancillary Announcers

	WM	BM	LM	AM	Other	WF	BF	LF	AF
Anchors	19	10	0	0	2	3	0	0	0
Ancillary	83	23	1	0	3	10	2	3	0
Total	102	33	1	0	5	13	2	3	0
% of total	64%	21%	1%	0%	3%	8%	1%	2%	0%

[WM=White Male; BM=Black Male; LM=Latino Male; AM=Asian/Pacific Islander Male; WF=White Female; BF=Black Female; LF=Latina Female; AF=Asian/Pacific Islander Female]

Men	89%	White	72%
Women	11%	Black	22%
		Latino	3%
		Asian/Pacific	0%
		Other	3%

At 11%, *SportsCenter's* proportion of women announcers during our 2009 sample is about the same as it was in 2004, when it was 12%. Compared with 2004, *SportsCenter's* announcers were somewhat more racially diverse, especially among women announcers. In 2004, all 21 of *SportsCenter's* women announcers were white. In 2009, five of 18 appearances by women announcers were by women of color, albeit all five appeared in ancillary announcer positions. The three instances where a woman appeared in the anchor position, she was white.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS: A DEEPENING SILENCE

The first **GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS** report was issued in 1990, nearly two decades after Title IX fueled an explosion of girls' and women's athletic participation in the United States. The 1990 report heralded the recent surge of girls' participation in youth sports, the dramatic upswing of girls' and women's high school and college sports opportunities and participation, and the stirrings of growth in women's professional sports. The study concluded that since women's sports received only 5% of TV news coverage, people who get all or most of their information from television news would have little idea how dramatically sports had changed. One common response to the 1990 study was an optimistic view: members of the public and many students with whom we discussed our findings assumed that TV coverage was simply lagging behind the surging popularity of women's sports; they predicted that media coverage would gradually catch up to the growing participation rates of girls and women in sport.

Twenty years later, this optimistic prediction of an evolutionary rise in TV news coverage of women's sports has proven to be wrong. During the ensuing two decades, girls' participation in youth sports has continued to rise (Sabo & Veliz 2008; Staurowsky et. al., 2009). In 1971, only 294,000 U.S. high school girls played interscholastic sports, compared with 3.7 million boys. In 1989, the first year of our sports media study, high school boy athletes still outnumbered girls, 3.4 million to 1.8 million. By 2009, the high school sports participation gap had closed further, with 4.4 million boys and 3.1 million girls playing (National Federation of State High School Associations 2009). This trend is echoed in college sports. In 1972, the year Title IX was enacted there were only a little over 2 women's athletics teams per college. By 2010, the number had risen to 8.64 teams per NCAA school (Carpenter & Acosta 2010). Women's professional sports, including the WNBA (which began play in 1997) has developed a somewhat stronger foothold in the larger pro sports marketplace. However, during this two decades of growth in women's sports, the gap between TV news and highlights shows' coverage of women's and men's sports has not narrowed, it has widened. Women's sports in 2009 received a paltry 1.6% of the coverage on TV news, and an anemic 1.4% on ESPN's *SportsCenter*.

WHY THE SILENCE?

This deepening silence about women's sports in mainstream televised news and highlights shows is nothing short of stunning, especially when considered alongside the fact that the world of sports is no longer a "male preserve," in which boys and men enjoy privileged and exclusive access to sport participation opportunities. To be sure, there is an expanding array of media sources of sports information, including Internet web sites, which fans of women's sports can tap for news about their favorite athletes

or teams. Though it is nowhere near the level of the seemingly 24/7 live broadcasts of men's sports across the TV dial, the number of live broadcasts of women's sports has also expanded over the past twenty years (including far more women's NCAA basketball tournament games shown live today than in 1989). But television news and highlights shows remain two extremely important sources of sports information. Their continued tendency to ignore or marginalize women's sports helps to maintain the myth that sports are exclusively by, about, and for men.

How can we explain the growing chasm between coverage of women's and men's sports in our six-week sample? We are cautious in interpreting why coverage of women's sports has nearly evaporated, based entirely on our content analysis of the programming. To answer this "why" question would require a study that also focuses on the production end of news and highlights shows. What assumptions and values guide the decisions of producers, editors and TV sports commentators on what sports stories are important to cover, and how to cover them? When asked, producers, commentators, and editors will usually explain their lack of attention to women's sports by arguing that they are constrained by a combination of market forces, and by their desire to give viewers "what they want to see." We understand programmers' desire to respond to market realities and viewer preferences; however, our discussion below points to ways in which the focus on men's sports is driven by a broad range of factors.

TIGHTER BUDGETS, NARROWED FOCUS?

The expansion of new media has been accompanied by shrinking revenues for traditional mass media, leading to tighter budgets and staff cuts for traditional news outlets. In a March, 2010 editorial blog, *Los Angeles Times* sports editor Mike James responded to reader complaints about the newspaper's lack of coverage of college women's basketball and other smaller-market sports:

True, we haven't been covering a lot of women's basketball this season, aside from a couple of features, largely because women's basketball hasn't been a major draw in L.A... Consequently, we have to make the difficult decisions every day on what events and sports we do cover and those that we can't. Our decision has been to try to make sure we reach the greatest number of readers we can with resources available, and regrettably, that means that some areas don't get much regular coverage (Edgar 2010).

James' lament about the impact of recent staff cuts at the *LA Times* would surely be echoed by hundreds of newspaper editors across the nation. As reporters and other sports news staff are cut, newspapers play it safe and assign their remaining staff to big-market sports teams that, they assume, "the greatest number of readers" want to read about. However, it is unlikely that the well-documented financial decline of print journalism can explain the increasingly paltry coverage of women's sports in television news. And it certainly cannot explain the scant coverage on ESPN's *SportsCenter*. In its 2010 media guide published for potential advertisers, ESPN claims that it is the "Most

viewed ad supported cable channel,” and crows that the 2009 broadcast year was ESPN’s “highest rated ever” (ESPN 2010, p. 5). Clearly, ESPN has no shortage of viewers, or presumably of advertising revenue. The network’s decision to ignore women’s sports must be due to other factors.

PITCHING SPORTS NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS TO MEN?

ESPN tells potential advertisers that in 2009 it was the top cable network viewed consistently by men aged 18-54, and that it has been “Men’s favorite TV network since 1998. ” (ESPN 2010, p. 5). Clearly, the ways in which ESPN targets its’ programming to male viewers is reflective of a larger trend, wherein TV producers carve out market niches that situate male viewers in the electronic equivalent of locker rooms characterized by male banter and ironic humor (Farred 2000; Messner & Montez de Oca 2005; Nylund 2007).

A foundational assumption of those who create programming for men on programs like *SportsCenter* seems to be that men want to think of women as sexual objects of desire, or perhaps as mothers, but not as powerful, competitive athletes. This is a questionable assumption, especially when we consider the dramatic growth of men’s support for their daughters’ athletic participation in recent decades (Messner 2009; Sabo & Veliz 2008). But even if this sexist assumption accurately captures the desires and values of a large swath of the U.S. male demographic that watches ESPN, it is probably inaccurate to operate from the same assumptions concerning viewers of evening TV news. After all, a sports report on the evening and late-night news is a short (two to five minute) segment embedded within a larger news report that is being viewed by a diverse audience. Presumably a large proportion of TV news viewers are women, many of whom are unlikely to find the male-centric views of the locker room or its ironic, sexist banter to be very inviting. We wonder how many women—and indeed, how many men—simply tune out when the sports segment of the evening news begins.

PACKAGING WOMEN ATHLETES FOR PRESUMED MALE VIEWERS?

In past iterations of this study, we pointed to the ways that sexist humor in sports commentary made fun of women and trivialized women athletes (and often women spectators at sporting events). We argued that this trivialization and sexualization of women in the broadcasts served to marginalize women’s sports, while also creating a viewing experience for male viewers that meshed neatly with the feeling of a locker room culture that affirms the centrality of men (Messner, Duncan & Cooky 2003; Kane & Maxwell, in press). In 2004, we noted a lessening of this sort of trivialization and sexualization of women in the broadcasts. Our 2009 study revealed that these practices nearly disappeared.

It is a positive development that sports news and highlights viewers are less often seeing disparaging and sexist portrayals of women (Berstein 2002; Daniels 2009; Daniels & LaVoi, in press). However, this decline in negative portrayals of women has not been

accompanied by an increase in routine coverage of women's sports. Instead, when the news and highlights shows ceased to portray women athletes in trivial and sexualized ways, they nearly ceased portraying them at all.

Viewing the woman athlete through the male gaze of sexualized humor is apparently (and thankfully) now discredited; instead, now women athletes are being re-packaged to be seen through another male gaze—as family members. The “women's sports history” segments during the March segment of *SportsCenter* offer an intriguing glimpse into programmers' assumptions about how to present women's sports to male viewers who are used to being fed a steady diet of men's sports. While these special segments had high technical quality, and were produced in ways that were respectful of the accomplishments of the women athletes, two elements were notable. First, these features were placed in a nether land between regular *SportsCenter* stories and ESPN commercial breaks. Clearly, they were meant to be viewed as something different, separate and apart from the regular sports highlight shows (which on these nights continued their normal coverage of mostly the “Big Three” men's sports). Second, one of them was narrated by the voice-over of the male fiancé of the woman athlete being featured. We interpret this as a strategy to make a woman athlete recognizable and palatable to a presumably male audience: in (mostly) rejecting the past practices of making a woman athlete familiar and “consumable” to a male audience by sexualizing her, producers in 2009 were more likely to package the woman athlete instead as a family member, in a familiar role as mother, girlfriend or wife.

This re-packaging of women athletes meshes with the larger commercial project of packaging women athletes as heterosexual mothers/wives. This practice has been criticized both for the ways in which it renders lesbian and other women athletes marginal or invisible, and also for the ways in which it maintains the public view of women athletes from the vantage point of men's continued positions of centrality in social life (Pfister 2010).

Connected with the silencing of women athletes is the fact that the voices of women commentators are still entirely absent from TV sports news, and very rare on *SportsCenter*. Unlike TV news anchor, reporter, and weather announcer positions, the occupation of TV sports commentator is still very sex-segregated (Etling & Young 2007; Sheffer & Shultz 2007). Women have had a very difficult time breaking in to sports broadcasting, remaining relegated at best to marginal roles such as “sideline reporter” during an NBA or men's college basketball game. Viewers of sports news and highlights shows are treated to a constant barrage of words and images about men's sports, narrated by a cacophony of men's voices.

AUDIENCES AND AUDIENCE-BUILDING

In the absence of audience research, we must be cautious in drawing conclusions about the meanings that TV viewers make of sports news and highlights shows. However, we can speculate on these questions, based on our analysis of the trends over the past

twenty years, and the dominant meanings that are conveyed in the patterns of gendered coverage of sports stories.

It has been known for many years that sports news and highlights shows do not simply “give viewers what they want,” in some passive response to demand. Instead, there is a dynamic reciprocal relationship between commercial sports and the sports media. Media scholar Sut Jhally called this self-reinforcing monetary and promotional loop the “sports-media complex” (Jhally 1984). When we add fans into this loop, we can see how information and pleasure-enhancement are part of a circuit that promotes and actively builds audiences for men’s sports, while simultaneously providing profits for men’s sports organizations, commercial sponsors, and the sports media. Sports fans seek out news wraps and highlights of games—*even of games they have already watched in their entirety*—not simply for information, but because viewing these reports *enhances and amplifies the feelings*—the tension, suspense, and exhilaration—they may have enjoyed a few hours earlier.

TV news and highlights shows do not simply “reflect” fan interest in certain sports, as sports commentators and editors often argue. They also help to generate and sustain enthusiasm for the sports they cover, thus becoming a key link in fans’ emotional connection to the agony and ecstasy of spectator sports. Fans of men’s sports—especially the Big Three of football, basketball, and baseball—are used to having this fix routinely delivered free of charge to their living rooms. This emotional enhancement is but one element of the larger role of TV sports news in building audiences for men’s sports. Meanwhile, their silence helps to ensure smaller audiences for women’s sports, while keeping fans of women’s sports on emotional life-support.

We have noted in past studies how a comparison of coverage of women’s and men’s NCAA basketball offers an especially valuable window into TV news’ audience-building functions (Messner, Duncan & Wachs 1996). Our 2009 data enhance our understanding of how audience-building works. As we noted above, far less time was devoted to reporting on the women’s NCAA tournament than on the men’s. What was most striking in the 2009 study was the amount of time all of the news and highlight shows spent on (and the enthusiastic, even excited tone within which they couched) reports about upcoming men’s NCAA tournament seedings and match-ups. Little or no such anticipatory reports on the women’s games appeared on the broadcasts. Even after the tournament games started, reports on the women’s games were, at best, usually relegated to the ticker. Meanwhile, the men’s tournament was receiving large chunks of coverage in every broadcast.

Audience-building for men’s sports permeates the mass media in a seemingly organic manner. As such, these promotional efforts are more easily taken for granted and, ironically, may be less visible *as* promotion. News and highlights shows are two important links in a huge apparatus of audience-building for men’s sports. But they rarely operate this way for women’s sports.

HOW CAN CHANGE OCCUR?

Can these stubborn patterns of inequitable coverage of women's sports be broken or changed? Clearly, the longitudinal data from our study shows that there is no reason to expect an evolutionary growth in media coverage of women's sports. To the contrary, our research shows that the proportion of coverage devoted to women's sports on televised news over the past twenty years has actually declined, and there is no reason to believe that this trend will reverse itself in the next twenty years unless producers decide that it is in their interests to do so. For this to happen in a substantial way, power relations and perceptions of gender will have to continue to change within sport organizations, with commercial sponsors who promote and advertise sports, and within the mass media. These shifts in perception will not come about by themselves, but will involve changes and pressures from a number of directions.

One important source of such change within the mass media would involve an affirmative move toward developing and supporting more women sports reporters and commentators. While we should be cautious in assuming that women reporters will necessarily cover sports differently from the ways that men do, there is some evidence to suggest that women sports reporters are less likely to cover women athletes in disrespectful ways, and more likely to advocate expanding the coverage of women's sports (Hardin & Whiteside 2008; Kian & Hardin 2009; LaVoi et. al., 2007).

Sports organizations too can contribute to change by providing the sports media with more and better information about women athletes. Indeed, a longitudinal study shows that university sports information departments have vastly improved their presentation of women's sports in their annual media guides (Kane & Buysse 2005). Sports fans can also be an active part of this loop to promote change: audience members can complain directly to the producers of sports programs—to tell them that they do not appreciate sexist treatment of women in sports news and highlights shows, and to tell them that they want to see more and better coverage of actual women's sports. That's why, perhaps, they call it "demand."

Overall, we find the results of this study to be discouraging. Clearly, change has happened, but not in the direction of increased coverage of women's sports. In recent years, sports news and highlights shows have evidenced a retrenchment, expressed through a narrowed focus on a few commercially-central men's sports.

VI. REFERENCES

Bernstein, A. 2002. "Is it time for a victory lap? Changes in the media coverage of women in sport," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37: 415-428.

Carpenter, L. J. & V. Acosta 2010. *Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal, national study, thirty-three year update*. <http://www.acostacarpenter.org/>

Daniels, E. A. 2009. "Sex objects, athletes and sexy athletes: How media representations of women athletes can impact adolescent girls and college women," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 24: 399-423.

Daniels, E., & N. M. LaVoi, in press. "Athletics as solution and problem: Sports participation for girls and the sexualization of female athletes," In T.A. Roberts and E.L. Zubriggen (Eds.) *The sexualization of girls and girlhood*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Duncan, M. C., M. A. Messner & N. Willms 2005. *Gender in televised sports: News and highlights shows, 1989-2004*. Los Angeles: Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles. http://www.aafla.org/11pub/over_fmst.htm

Edgar, D. 2010. "Which sports to cover? It's a tough call," *Los Angeles Times* editorial blog, March 12. <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/readers/2010/03/which-sports-to-cover-its-a-tough-call.html>

ESPN 2010. *2010 Pocket Guide*. ESPN Marketing and Sales. <http://www.espn.com/>

Etling, L., & R. Young 2007. "Sexism and authoritativeness of female sportscasters," *Communication research reports*, 121-130.

Farred, G. 2000. "Cool as the other side of the pillow: How ESPN's *SportsCenter* has changed television sports talk," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 24: 96-117.

Hardin, M. & E. Whiteside 2008. "Maybe its not a 'generational thing': Values and beliefs of aspiring sport journalists about race and gender," *Media report to women* 36: 8-16.

Jhally, S. 1984. "The spectacle of accumulation: Material and cultural factors in the evolution of the Sports/Media Complex," *Insurgent sociologist* 12.

Kane, M. J., & H. D. Maxwell (in press). "Expanding the boundaries of sport media research: Using critical theory to explore consumer responses to representations of women's sports," *Journal of Sport Management*.

- Kian, E. M. & Hardin, M. 2009. Framing of sports coverage based on the sex of sports writers: Female journalists counter traditional gendering of media coverage. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2, 185-204.
- LaVoi, N.M., Buysse, J., Maxwell, H.D., & Kane, M.J. 2007. "The influence of occupational status and sex of decision maker on media representations in intercollegiate athletics," *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 15: 32-43
- Messner, M. A. 2009. *It's all for the kids: Gender, families and youth sports*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Messner, M. A., M. Carlisle Duncan & C. Cooky 2003. "Silence, sports bras, and wrestling porn: The treatment of women in televised sports news and highlights," *Journal of sport and social issues* 27: 38-51.
- Messner, M. A., M. Carlisle Duncan & F. L. Wachs 1996. "The gender of audience-building: Televised coverage of men's and women's NCAA basketball," *Sociological inquiry* 66: 422-439.
- Messner, M. A. & Montez de Oca, J. 2005. "The male consumer as loser: Beer and liquor ads in mega sports media events. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society* 30: 1879-1909.
- National Federation of State High School Associations 2009. *2008-09 High school athletics participation survey*. <http://www.nfhs.org>
- Nylund, D. 2007 *Beer, babes and balls: Masculinity and sports talk radio*. State University of New York Press.
- Pfister, G. 2010. Women in Sport: Gender relations and future perspectives. *Sport in society*, 13, 234-248.
- Sabo, D. F. & P. Veliz 2008. *Youth sport in America*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.
- Sheffer, M. L. & Brad Schultz 2007. "Double standard: Why women have trouble getting jobs in local television sports," *Journal of sports media*, 2, 77-101.
- Staurowsky, E. J., DeSousa, M. J., Ducher, G., Gentner, N., Miller, K. E., Shakib, S., Theberge, N., & Williams, N. 2009. *Her life depends on it II: Sport, physical activity, and the health and well-being of American girls and women*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.

VII. APPENDIX: SELECTED WOMEN'S SPORTING EVENTS DURING THE STUDY PERIOD

Selected list of sports events in which women competed during the study periods:
March 15-28, July 12-25 and November 8-21, 2009.

INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORTS

March 11-14, NCAA MEN/WOMEN'S SKIING CHAMPIONSHIPS - FINALS, Bethel and Rumford, Maine

March 13-14, NCAA DIVISION I INDOOR TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS, FINALS, College Station, TX

March 19-21, NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS, College Station, TX

March 19-22, NCAA MEN/WOMEN'S FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS - FINALS, University Park, PA

March 20-22, NCAA WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS – FROZEN FOUR, Boston, MA

March 21-31, NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS, Trenton Regional, Trenton, NJ

March 21-30, NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS, Berkley Regional, Berkley, CA

March 21 - 30, NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS, Raleigh Regional, Raleigh, NC

March 21 - 31, NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS, Oklahoma City Regional, Oklahoma City, OK

November 20-22, NCAA DIVISION I FIELD HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS - FINALS, Winston Salem, NC

PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL

July 12, WNBA, Minnesota @ San Antonio; Chicago @ Seattle

July 14, WNBA, Los Angeles @ Connecticut

July 15, WNBA, San Antonio @ Washington; Atlanta @ Minnesota; Chicago @ Indiana; Sacramento @ Phoenix; Detroit @ Seattle;

July 17, WNBA Atlanta @ Indiana; Connecticut @ San Antonio; Seattle @ Sacramento

July 18, WNBA, New York @ Washington; Detroit @ Phoenix

July 19, WNBA, Indiana @ Connecticut; Atlanta @ New York; San Antonio @ Chicago; Minnesota @ Seattle; Detroit @ Sacramento

July 21, WNBA, Indiana @ Washington

July 22, WNBA, Atlanta @ Detroit; New York @ Chicago; Sacramento @ Connecticut; Minnesota @ Phoenix; Los Angeles @ Seattle; Indiana @ San Antonio; Chicago @

Washington; Sacramento @ New York

July 25, WNBA, All Star Game, Connecticut

GOLF

March 20-22, MASTERCARD CLASSIC HONORING ALEJO PERALTA, LPGA Tour, Huixquilucan, Mexico
March 26-29, PHOENIX LPGA INTERNATIONAL, LPGA Tour, Phoenix, AZ
July 9-12, US WOMEN'S OPEN, LPGA Tour, Bethlahem, PA
July 23-26, EVIAN MASTERS, LPGA Tour, Evian-les-Bains, France
November 6-8, MIZUNO CLASSIC, LPGA Tour, Shiga, Japan
November 12-15 LORENA OCHOA INVITATIONAL by BANAMEX and CORONA LIGHT, LPGA Tour, Guadalajara Mexico
November 19-22, STANFORD FINANCIAL TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP, LPGA Tour, Houston Texas

TENNIS

March 11-22, BNP PARIBAS OPEN, WTA Tour, Indian Wells, CA
March 25-April 5, SONY ERICSSON OPEN, WTA Tour, Miami, FL
July 11-19, ECM PRAGUE OPEN, WTA Tour, Prague, Czechoslovakia
July 13-19, INTERNAZIONALI FEMMINILI DI PALERMO, WTA Tour, Palermo, Italy
July 25-Aug. 2, BANK OF THE WEST CLASSIC, WTA Tour, Stanford, CA
November 4-8, COMMONWEALTH BANK TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS, WTA Tour, Bali, Indonesia
November 20, MIXED DOUBLES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, USA Tennis, Tucson, AZ

OTHER SPORTS

March 12-15, WORLD SINGLE DISTANCE SPEEDSKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada
March 20-22, U.S.A. MASTERS INDOOR TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS. Boston, MA
March 20-22 American Cup Final & Champions Challenge Ladies & Men, Salt Lake City, UT
March 2-22, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUALIFIER, USA Volleyball, Anaheim, CA
March 22-29, WORLD FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS, Los Angeles, CA
March 28, IAAF WORLD CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS, Amman, Jordan
July 12, CANADA CUP CHAMPIONSHIPS, USA Softball, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada
July 12-16, JUNIOR OLYMPIC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, USA Gymnastics, St. Paul, MN
July 16-20, KFC WORLD CUP OF SOFTBALL, Oklahoma City, OK
July 12-26, WOMEN'S JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, USA Volleyball, Mexico
July 18-19, NATIONAL QUALIFIER, USA Gymnastics, Plainfield, IN
July 18-25, ASICS/VAUGHN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS - JUNIOR GRECOROMAN, FREESTYLE, WOMEN, U.S.A. WRESTLING, Fargo, ND
July 25, COVER GIRL CLASSIC, USA Gymnastics, Des Moines, IA
November 5-8, WORLD CUP SHORT TRACK, Montreal, Canada
November 11-13, TRAMPOLINE AND TUMBLING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, St. Petersburg, Russia
November 12-15, SKATE AMERICA, Figure Skating, Lake Placid, New York

November 13, WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION WORLD FINALS, Tulsa, OK

November 15, AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NHRA FINALS, Pomona, CA

November 17-21, UPHA/AMERICAN ROYAL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP, U.S. EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, Kansas City, MO

July 19 - 22, AVA/USAE NATIONAL VAULTING, CHAMPIONSHIPS, U.S.EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, Lexington, VA

July 20 - 25, U.S. NATIONAL DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS, Mission Viejo, CA

July 21 - 23, USPC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, U.S. EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, Lexington, VA

July 23 - 26, WOMEN'S PLATINUM NORTH AMERICAN ROLLER HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS, Cincinnati, OH

VIII. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The **2010 GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS** report is sponsored by the University of Southern California's Center for Feminist Research, with the support of the Purdue University Women's Studies Program and Department of Health and Kinesiology.

This is the fifth in a series of studies of gender in televised sports news and highlights shows. The first four studies were funded and published in 1990, 1994, 2000, and 2005 by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, now the LA84 Foundation. Research reports on these earlier studies can be found on the LA84 Foundation's web site: http://www.la84foundation.org/11pub/over_frmst.htm

The longitudinal data in this study stretch across two decades. In 1989, Michael Messner and Margaret Carlisle Duncan of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee collected the first data for the study by analyzing six weeks of televised sports news on three Los Angeles Area network affiliates. The 1989 study also included analyses of coverage of professional tennis and college basketball. In later iterations of the study, the investigators focused exclusively on televised sports news. ESPN's *SportsCenter* highlights show was added to the study in 1999.

Past iterations of the **GENDER IN TELEVISED SPORTS** report have been useful in stimulating public dialogue about the sources and consequences of the under-reporting of women's sports on televised news and highlights shows. We are dismayed with the central finding of the 2010 Report: The coverage of women's sports nearly evaporated in 2009, dropping to its lowest level of any year we studied over the past two decades. However, we see some improvements in the quality of coverage of women's sports, especially in the decline over the past ten years of blatantly sexist and disrespectful treatment of women on news and highlights shows. It is our hope that this research will contribute to public discussion that will help to fuel a growth in respect for—and eventually equitable coverage of—women athletes.

Michael A. Messner, University of Southern California
Cheryl Cooky, Purdue University

June, 2010

IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend appreciative thanks to Wayne Wilson of the LA84 Foundation, and to Margaret Carlisle Duncan of the University of Wisconsin-Madison for their central roles in the previous iterations of this longitudinal study.

We are immensely grateful for the generous and expert help that Orasio Becerra contributed in organizing the data for this Report.

Thanks to Lisa Bitel and the USC Center for Feminist Research for supporting and sponsoring this study. Many thanks to colleagues in the department of kinesiology at California State University, Fullerton; the women's studies program and department of health and kinesiology at Purdue University; and the gender studies program and department of sociology and at the University of Southern California. Jennifer Schumacher of California State University Fullerton provided valuable assistance in recording the news and highlights shows. Thanks to the USC Undergraduate Research Associates Program for providing funds in support of our intrepid research assistant Robin Hextrum. Finally, thanks to USC's Laura Fujikawa and Tana March for their technical assistance.

X. ABOUT THE CO-INVESTIGATORS

Michael A. Messner is professor of sociology and gender studies at the University of Southern California, and immediate past-president of the Pacific Sociological Association. He is author of numerous scholarly articles and books on gender and sports, including *It's all for the kids: Gender, families and youth sports* (University of California Press, 2009). Messner was co-investigator, with Margaret Carlisle Duncan, for the *Gender in Televised Sports* reports in 1990, 1994, 2000, and 2005.

http://college.usc.edu/soci/people/faculty_display.cfm?person_ID=1003528

Cheryl Cooky is assistant professor of women's studies, and health and kinesiology at Purdue University. Her research, which has focused on girls' participation and experiences in sport and physical activity, and on gendered media representations of sport and athletes, has appeared in the *Sociology of Sport Journal* and *Sociological Perspectives*. Cooky was a research assistant on the 2000 *Gender in Televised Sports* report.

<http://cla.purdue.edu/hk/directory/Faculty/cooky.html>