

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORTSCASTER?

By

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Chapter I

Introduction

Our world embraces sport. Rader (1984) says, "Sports help to satisfy the human need for artistic expression" (p. 11). Our interest in sports is profound. The professional sportscaster helps to inform and entertain the public about sports figures and teams. Coverage of sports continues to increase, as does the interest of fans. Today, sports continues to generate and ignite coverage more than ever before, involving everything from basketball and volleyball, and baseball to bowling. Klages (1963) states that more than anything else, the sports fan is interested in what the athletes and coaches do and say.

Radio and television have been key tools in fueling, maintaining, and enhancing this interest in sports. To offer credibility, appeal, and attraction, the former greats of the fields and courts have also entered the booths and studios to provide expert analysis and color-commentary. Boomer Esiason and Bruce Jenner have joined in, as have others from professional and amateur sports and, as a result, a wealth of knowledge and information is presented daily to sports fans and fanatics alike.

History

According to Catsis (1996), commercial radio coverage of sports started in April of 1921 on radio station KDKA-AM in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Florent Gibson, a sportswriter at the time for the Pittsburgh Post, was asked to give a blow-by-blow description of a prizefight from Pittsburgh's Motor Square Garden.

Rader (1984) states that television sports coverage began in May of 1939 when NBC's Bill Stern televised the first Major League baseball game. From these humble beginnings, sportscasting has evolved into a big business in which many express a

vocational interest. Many have shaped the sportscasting profession, including Graham McNamee, Gordon McClendon, and Curt Gowdy (Catsis, 1996). McNamee was the first well-known play-by-play announcer. He was best known for his coverage of championship boxing and Major League baseball. McClendon's impact was in his coverage of baseball via re-creations. This was an invention where the announcer was not at the game, but received telegraphed messages, which were translated into broadcast play-by-play.

McClendon also formed the Liberty Broadcasting System. An equally important person was Curt Gowdy, who helped shape the genre of television. Catsis (1996) states that Gowdy was known as the "Cowboy from Wyoming," and was recognized as the one who helped set the standard for the next generation of sports announcers. He was also known to have covered more major sports events than anyone else in the history of sports broadcasting, and the only sports announcer ever to earn the Peabody Award.

Women have also played a role in the evolution of Sports casting. Henneke (1959) puts forth the view that the true emergence of women came in the midst of World War II when women were hired to meet the needs of radio stations while male announcers were at war. One individual who literally changed the face of television Sports casting was former Miss America 1971, Phyllis George. George was important because she was the first women network sports announcer when she teamed up with Brent Musberger, Irv Cross, and Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder in 1975 on CBS's "The NFL Today". She remained a fixture on the show for nine years. According to Catsis (1996), Judy Rankin also helped open the doors even more for women sportscasters; Rankin was the first woman on-course reporter at the men's US Open golf tournament 1985.

According to Catsis (1996), one more individual who always seemed to entertain and maintain a distinct, spontaneous, and unique appeal in sportscasting was Howard Cosell. Cosell made a substantial impact and was known as a trendsetter as well as

controversial figure. Ironically, Cosell was in training to become an attorney early on in his life. Still, he enjoyed sports and understood the power of the sportscasting medium. He helped to use that power to create controversy with his choice commentary and actions, and the results were that viewers and listeners could never ignore him. He was best known for his analyst role on ABC's Monday Night Football in the 1970s. His thoughts and expressiveness played a revolutionary role, and he is in part responsible for many current trends and thoughts expressed by sportscasters today.

Over the years more and more ethnic minorities have also become sportscasters. Their progression has been key, in part because of hard work and defusing past and current images. Baker and Boyd (1997) conclude about this evolution that one of the troubling perceptions African-Americans have faced (males in particular) in the media is:

“If we look at the image of the African-American male throughout the media, we find a series of regressive images that receive a great deal of attention, in the public through the media as well as in private conversations. Moreover, the media and the underlying ideology have suggested that since the only Black males who are successful seem to be athletes or entertainers, then they, by default, become role models...” (p. 140).

For these reasons and others, the present is helping to provide more African-American personalities in the industry than ever before including the likes of Fox Sport Net's Eric Clemons, Fox Sports James Brown, CBS's Greg Gumbel and Gus Johnson, ABC's Lynn Swann and ESPN/ABC's John Saunders, all of which are some of the most well-known and respected reporters and anchors.

Role

Although the face of sportscasting has changed, and although Sports casting has become more technologically sophisticated, the role of the sportscaster has not changed at all over the years. Keith (1944) elaborates on this statement saying, “The message is

by all odds the most important thing in a broadcast. It is the nature of the message that determines the vehicle to be used” (p. 1). Hank Stram, sportscaster and former head football coach of the National Football League’s first Super Bowl team, succinctly summarizes the role of the sportscaster: “you see the game, you talk about the game” (New Orleans Magazine, 1997, p. 14).

According to Bailey and Sage (1988), sportscasting involves highlighting and interpreting aspects of a contest for viewers and helping them make sense of the action and form impressions of athletes and teams. Klages (1963) believes that television sportscasters usually let the game present itself to the viewer. Visually presenting material leads to more curiosity about the event, and increases the desire, on the part of viewers and listeners, for more verbal information and details. According to Klages (1963), “regardless of the problems faced by a sportscaster, the audience must get the picture of the game’s actions” (p. 54). Additionally, an awareness of the overall action they are presenting to an audience should be clear.

Two main ingredients, or processes, known as selection and interpretation also help clarify the role of the sportscaster. Clarke and Clarke (in Bailey & Sage, 1988) assert:

“Selection involves highlighting particular aspects of the contest for the viewers, while interpretation sets the agenda within which viewers are led to experience a contest and interpreting actions of the game for the viewers, providing meaning in which to make sense of the action and shaping impressions in favor of one interest or another” (p. 128). Both processes are based on assumptions about what is “good television.”

The role of the radio and television sportscaster may differ somewhat. Klages (1963) contends that radio sportscasting is a highly specialized type of sports news coverage. Specifically, radio sports casting has often been thought to have a more profound origin and impact than its counterpart. Ernie Harwell (in Shouler, 1998), broadcaster for the Detroit Tigers, states that, “Radio is to TV as a book is to a movie....

With the radio and the book the listener uses his imagination. So the announcer on radio is bigger” (p. 9). Catsis (1996) agrees, noting that radio commentary is more difficult than television for two reasons: (1) the commentator does not have the assistance of television technology to explain plays or actions and (2) the radio commentator must serve entirely as the eyes of his or her audience. Albert (1993) says that the problem with many of the individuals in play-by-play today is that they jump into television without ever doing radio. Radio is a stepping-stone and allows the individual to establish a personality and a rhythm (in many cases for a smaller audience). But, as a result of rash decisions, they suffer because they do not have a good enough feel for the game. Their abilities to speak quickly and describe game activity (which is what play-by-play requires) suffer because television basically does most of the work. Simply stated, radio work can aid and allow an individual proper training, development and improve their knowledge and analysis.

Statement of the problem

Although many listen to sports on radio or watch television, and may even aspire to become sportscasters, little empirical research has been done to determine attributes of quality sportsbroadcasting. In the main, the attributes of quality sportscasters have been delineated anecdotally. No scientific studies have been conducted to determine what attributes of sportscasters are most appealing to audiences.

To quantitatively determine what audiences like and dislike about sportscasters is important for many reasons. First, such information will help stations decide which broadcasters should be hired. Second, this information will help train future broadcasters. Finally, this information may aid current sportscasters to improve their overall job performance.

The following study addresses the question, “What makes a good sportscaster?” In Chapter 2, prior research on the attributes of sportscasters is reviewed. In Chapter 3, a quantitative study aimed at answering the above-posed research question is described. In

Chapter 4, results of this study are summarized. These results are analyzed and discussed in Chapter 5.

Review of Literature

General Attitudes

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Chapter II.

Review of Literature

General Attributes

In this chapter, existing literature describing the attributes of quality sportscasters is presented. Catsis (1996) proposes that good sportscasters and announcers are like good athletes. All share the same positive attributes, such as paying attention to the job at hand, striving to improve and get better, knowing their limitations as professionals, and having mental toughness to learn from their mistakes. Bailey and Sage (1988) insist that sportscasters must keep viewers apprised of essential information about sports events, and their programs are an apolitical presentation for the expressed purpose of entertaining. Klages (1963) states that a successful sportscaster (whether in television or on radio) requires a purpose and challenge in one's approach to the job. Sportscasters try to remain positive in their approach to what they do, and the results they may attain for their audience or sponsor. They have a goal. They are vigorous, imaginative, competitive, and self-disciplined, and their thinking is controlled. They are respected for their honesty and the responsibility they assume. Coleman (1973) found that sportscasters must learn to do many things: conduct interviews, deliver commercials, speak at club meetings, emcee banquets for their community and friends, and entertain possible advertising clients, among many other important responsibilities.

According to Henneke (1959), maintaining a fundamental control and good communication between the audience and sportscaster lies in four areas: gaining the attention of the audience; increasing or allowing interest in oneself (as the sportscaster) maintaining audience interest; keeping the listener or viewer involved in the contest's actions; and, moving the viewer or listener to action (an excited state).

Bender and Johnson (1994) feel that factors such as curiosity, expressiveness, and writing abilities contribute to audience appeal and interest, and provide substance for a sportscaster. According to Hilliard (1978),

“Above all, the announcer must remember that he or she is a guest in someone's

home, not portraying a fictional character. Behave with the kind of honesty and sincerity that you would expect from a guest. Moreover, "...speak and behave with good taste" (p. 307). Catsis (1996) also offers that a sportscaster can benefit professionally through friendly rivalry or by studying other sportscasters as well.

Admiration of Sports

According to Bender and Johnson (1994), sportscasters who are content or satisfied no matter their level of work may be destined for this profession, maybe because of their admiration for sports. ESPN's Chris Berman says, "Sports should be fun, and I want viewers to share in the enjoyment I get from the games" (ESPN.com 1999). The famed ex-Oakland Raiders coach in the National Football League, and current Fox sports color man, John Madden (1996) reports, "as busy as I am, I never feel like I'm really working. I'm just having a good time doing what I did as a kid" (p 16).

Credibility

Albert (1993) writes: "To me, the most important asset a sportscaster has is his credibility. Once you have blown it with a listener, it is very hard to get it back " (p. 145). Olbermann and Patrick (1997) say, "your dedication has to be to your viewer or listener, to the truth, and, lastly, and only to the degree that it does not conflict with your ethics, to the success of your employer" (p. 122). Such responsibilities, and courtesies can be a key to maintaining or establishing a good reputation or appeal, as well affect how an individual is perceived among the public and others in this profession.

Preparation

Coleman (1973) advises that one must remember the important aspect of this business may entail being prepared for each task and to maintain caution that they do not spread themselves so thin that in maintaining their duties their knowledge or work in any one area suffers. Accordingly, play-by-play and color-commentary roles can partly be described or explained through the need for mental preparation, the ability to get along with others, and adapt to changes in the schedule. However, there are still those who maintain misconceptions about the ease of effort in mastering certain aspects of the

profession. Keith (1944) further explains: “[T]here is a pathetic prevalence of the belief that broadcasting technique can be perfected in a few brief lessons and check-up with recording. Many aspirants to fame feel they could succeed if only they were given a ‘break’- a chance to let the public come under the magic spell of their ‘radio (or television) personality’”(p. xiii). These perceptions do not take into account such things as enunciation, pronunciation, script reading and other important factors. Bender and Johnson (1994) say, “announcers (or sportscasters) often are experts simply from the amount of preparation they do” (p. 178). Madden (1996) states his opinion regarding expectations and an individuals approach involving conduct, performance, and preparation, in that one avoid assumptions in games and other aspects stating, “Once you assume that you know everything about a team, that’s when you discover you really don’t” (p. 202).

Keywords: *Style/Delivery*

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Attributes of quality selected for study

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Style/Delivery

A varying, yet important, ingredient for a sportscaster is the ability to communicate and create an individual style. Webster’s Dictionary indicates that style is influenced by “a person’s characteristic tastes, attitudes, and mode of behavior” (p. 240). According to Klages (1963), all sportscasters need to be able to converse effectively and precisely. In addition, “Quickness of thought and expression demands an ever-increasing inventory of words from the sportscaster” (p. 22).

A unique style allows the sportscaster to grow and emerge as a specialist and entertain the audience. Since no two individuals have exact personalities, no two announcers have the same style.

One potentially important aspect of style is the use of humor. Klages (1963) suggests: “[T]he use of humor can be an informative and entertaining means.... Similes, picturesque, comparisons, wisecracks, and filler stories about sports and its participants can be used...” (p. 25). He states that the most important thing to remember is “Sports

fans like a little humor, if in good taste” (p. 26). Henneke (1959) surmises that voice quality, usually a medium to low pitch along with resilience, rhythm, and high energy and feeling, is important to a Sports casting career and is one other aspect of style. Bender and Johnson (1994) state that style is very personal. According to Klages (1963), individual style encompasses being oneself, and knowing one’s strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, good style is having a unique and distinct ability that will attract and hold a listener or viewer. He adds, ”It is the pattern of stresses and pauses he uses to communicate, and the tone he sets. It is the sound of the sportscaster to the listener” (p. 17). In the same way, establishing a good delivery and maintaining a connection with the audience is essential. Evolving individual style is an adaptive process. Klages (1963) summarizes this notion stating, “the sportscaster can place himself in the background, become proficient, relax and let himself go, and style will emerge as the sportscaster himself emerges” (p. 18).

There are several individuals who help define personal style in the world of sportscasting. ESPN and ABC television color commentator for men’s basketball, Dick Vitale, is one who may epitomize what true style encompasses, in part because of his appeal and trademark game descriptions, hyperactivity, and catch phrases. Coleman (1973) argues, “One of the most difficult facets of being a broadcaster is that your product is yourself. You’re not selling cat food, or nuts and bolts, or any manufactured product with a set function or price” (p. 151).

The quality of style offers the public a unique perspective of the sportscaster’s personality and can set the tone throughout a broadcast.

Objectivity

In covering sports, the possible intensity, excitement, and action different events create suggests another quality which could aid in being a seasoned sportscaster known as objectivity. Coleman (1973) says, “There is a matter of attitude involved in broadcasting just as there is in participating in sports” (p. 96). To be objective, whether

in radio or TV, a sportscaster must not render judgment, be biased, or show extreme favoritism. Bender and Johnson (1994) warn that sportscasters “must always be neutral in the call of the game, showing no bias for either team” (p. 180). Giving one’s personal view of calls by officials or decisions by coaches should be avoided. Madden (1996) takes this position as well: “[W]hen I see a bad call during a game I react to it. But when I think about it later, I know it’s unfair to be critical of someone who doesn’t have a chance to succeed” (p. 163). Consistently giving personal views may cause an individual to be called a “homer” (one who supports and follows their favorite sports team). Catsis (1996) said offering quality, objective comments, and knowing the rules and are just a few key parts to remaining objective. Klages (1963) noted that in game situations “a sportscaster ethically should not go to the point of describing what should have been done after a play or opportunity fails to materialize” (p. 29). Game descriptions should not dwell on the negative aspects of the team, but should incorporate both the negative and the positive points. Albert (1993) wrote, however, that there are sportscasters who shy from or avoid negative stories or commentary and take a neutral stance. Such an attitude is based on fear of offending players, coaches, or in some cases employees, who in turn may jeopardize station contract rights. Another important part of objectivity involves the measure of honesty displayed in one’s work. Howard Cosell (in Kindred, 1995) puts a coherent and direct spin on this factor as he stated, “Nobody else will tell the truth, and somebody has to do it. Besides they pay me \$7500 a week” (p. 8). Curt Smith (in Shouler, 1998) summed up Cosell’s beliefs stating, “he defined what is allowed to be asked, what is expected to be known and yes, he told it like it is” (p. 9). Hence, an objective approach can help avoid potential problems, and allows the sportscaster the opportunity to report facts and information and leave judgments or decisions to the audience.

Professionalism

The American Heritage Dictionary (1982) defines professionalism as “status, methods, character, or standards” (p. 989). Professionalism can be seen as a state of

mind. For the purposes of this definition, Professionalism entails and encompasses how an individual reports the facts on hand, as well as their overall confidence and appearance in the job. These notions can specifically involve a display of knowledge, certainty, and assurance in the individual's words and actions. Such qualities help describe and define professionalism in sportscasting because they must be ready to juggle different the sports challenges, and all the while stay on track, be in control, and confident. Smekens and Byes (in Anderson, 1994) say some of the earlier mentioned qualities are needed in young, aspiring journalists who have hopes of success and accomplishment because they have a tendency to stray away from the heart of a sports story. Students who plan to be in this business and succeed need to have a sincere appreciation for accuracy and reporting the facts which are instilled in them from their first journalism course on through college graduation.

Dress and appearance also contribute to the quality of professionalism. Bender and Johnson (1994) see most sportscasters as individuals who do not need certain dynamic physical attributes to be successful or break into the business. Those wishing to succeed do not need to have a radio voice or necessarily have the looks of a Halle Berry or Denzel Washington, or be an ex-jock. However, Henneke (1959) explains that most important to remember is that the spokesperson usually must have a pleasant appearance, nicely groomed hair, even teeth, and an appealing personality.

In all, conducting oneself in the best light by placing the job first, is very essential. Professionalism can lead to a sense of gained respect, self-dignity and aid in staying power in this profession.

Expertise

The art of being an expert is a process. sportscasting expertise falls into this mold as well. This process is emergent. It increases, in part, through study and experience. Klages (1963) offers the belief that,

”(He) has to know what causes sports figures to do what they do on the field of competition as well as off” (p. 6). And ”(he) must have the coach's knowledge of the

game, the mental reflexes of a player, the enthusiasm of a fan, and the impartiality and self-control of a referee-umpire” (p. 5).

According to Bender and Johnson (1994), becoming a qualified expert is measured through knowledge as well as the manner in which they impart this knowledge. They write, “The analyst is the expert. Good analysts know the ins and outs of the sports they cover. They keep the audience apprised of all the whys of what has taken place while, at the same time alerting it to all that might happen” (p. 108). Madden (1996) adds to this view saying over the course of a game he watches for certain tendencies commenting,

“At the snap, I watch the center and what the other offensive lineman do. If they’re firing-out I know it’s a running play and I’m watching to see where the hole is for the running back. If the offensive linemen are pass blocking, I watch what patterns the pass receivers are running and try to read what coverage the defensive backs are in, man-to-man or zone. And then I watch the quarterback throw” (p. 140).

Olbermann and Patrick (1997) say that having knowledge of sports (in general) greatly aids an individual’s expert appeal: “You have to know a little bit about everything, past and present, and in those areas you don’t know, you have to know who to ask or where to look it up” (p. 121).

Gelfand and Heath (in Catsis, 1996) reiterate, saying that good, qualified, detailed sportscasters or analysts possess five key and fundamental qualifications: (1) a sound basic knowledge of sports techniques; (2) a thorough understanding of the rules; (3) the ability to follow action and stay in sequence, (4) the ability to distinguish and balance team play accomplishments from individual and (5) understanding the overall nature and consequence of sports.

In conclusion, qualified experts understand that experience, repetition, study, and appreciation all aid in development. Also, an expert must have has the interest,

motivation, and knowledge to stay apprised of new developments and changes.

Entertainment Value

Fans or audiences do not appreciate the repetitive, routine approach in sportscasting. According to Klages (1963), "It is an obligation of the sportscaster to entertain as well as inform" (p. 21). Olbermann and Patrick (1997) comment, "part of the job is making it look like it isn't a job" (p. 115). Madden (1996), stresses that the sportscaster should capture a game's emotion, energy, and appeal, saying, "To me, there's no such thing as a dull game. The person talking about it might be dull. The person watching it might be dull" (p. 202).

One entertaining person who has received a great amount of attention is ESPN's Stuart Scott. Scott's entertainment appeal comes mainly out of his trademark energy, phraseology, and analogies. Scott, who is African-American, has introduced his own style, and has, in the minds of viewers and sportscasters, revolutionized self-expression and African-American pride. ESPN's Chris Berman has also garnered a definite following as an entertainer. This five-time sportscaster of the year has become a mainstay at ESPN since its inception in 1979. Berman has gained notice and recognition for his balance of in-depth reporting, humor, ebullience, and player nicknames.

The unique, spontaneous, and distinct posture Scott, Berman, and other sportscasters display helps to define entertainment value in sportscasting.

This chapter has reviewed the literature concerning many of the attributes of quality Sports casting. In particular, general attributes have been reviewed, as have the specific attributes including admiration of sports, credibility and preparation. Attributes of quality that were selected for this study include: style and delivery, objectivity, professionalism, expertise, and entertainment value.

As previously noted, the literature in which attributes are mentioned is anecdotal and not scientifically based. In Chapter 3, a study that tries to quantitatively assess and describe five specific attributes of quality sportscasters is detailed.

Chapter III

Methodology

Participants

Sixty males, 18-24 years of age, in Introduction to Speech Communication classes (SPCH 2713) at Oklahoma State University were surveyed. Subjects were chosen based on availability, interest, and the overall appeal of doing the study. Certain sports (in particular, football and baseball) were also targeted as another aid of interest. The survey took approximately 60 minutes to complete. Participating students were given credit for an outside listening report for their class.

Stimulus Materials

Three sportscaster roles were selected for study: in-studio/in-the-field reporter (provides analysis before, during and after games)(see Appendix C) play-by-play announcer (provides in-depth description and illustration of game activities)(see Appendix D) and color-commentary analyst (provides analysis and insight into game activity, players, personnel, and strategy)(see Appendix E).

Ten sportscasters were chosen because of their experience, attraction/appeal, accessibility, and overall reputation and exposure. Subjects rated each of the following five video/audio taped segments: Segment 1: Lesley Visser, television sideline reporter and interviewer, ABC/ESPN National Football League; Segment 2: Al Michaels and Boomer Esiason, play-by-play announcer and color-commentator, ABC National Football League; Segment 3: Ray Knight, Tim Kirkjian, and Trey Wingo, studio-anchors/analyst ESPN Baseball Tonight; Segment 4: Beth Mowins and Michele Granger, play-by-play announcer and color-commentator, ESPN Women's Professional Softball League; and Segment 5: Mike Holt and Derek Gill, radio play-by-play announcer and color-commentator Stillwater, Oklahoma Pioneer Football. Segment 1 was 3:50 seconds long; Segment 2 was 3 minutes long; Segment 3 was 3:30 seconds long; Segment 4 was 2 minutes long; and Segment 5 was 4 minutes long.

Independent Variables

Based on the research reviewed in chapter two, five attributes were selected for study: Expertise, (which entails prior experience or participation in the sport, knowledge of coach and player personnel and a familiarity with strategies and interpreting rules and regulations); Entertainment value (energy and enthusiasm, spontaneity brought to the broadcast, and unique or distinctive phraseology); Professionalism (confidence exuded, proper dress/grooming and reporting the facts); Style and delivery (being conversational, establishing a specific genre or mode, and exhibiting attractive personality features such as humor); Objectivity (completeness and thoroughness, honesty, and unbiased reporting. Ratings were based on a 1 to 5 scale (5 is strongly agree, 4 is agree, 3 is neutral, 2 is disagree, and 1 is strongly disagree).

Dependent Variables

At the end of each survey participants were asked to give a general impression of each sportscaster. There were three questions involving this topic of interest. Ratings were based on a 1-5 scale (5 rating as very effective, very successful, very competent; 1 rating as very ineffective, very unsuccessful, or very incompetent).

Procedures

Participants were asked to fill out surveys based on their impressions of the sportscasters seen or heard in each segment. Each was asked to rate the sportscaster(s) on the five selected qualities of effective sportscasting. All subjects rated all five segments. Three different forms of the survey were administered, one for each sportscaster according to their role involving play-by-play ability, color-commentary ability, or studio/in-the-field ability. All subjects evaluated sportscasters in each segment and filled out a survey immediately after viewing each segment. Surveys were collected at the end of each segment.

Chapter IV

Results

There were three regression analysis tables run for each of the three roles studied.

The three roles consisted of studio/in-the field reporter, play-by-play announcer, and color commentary roles. Each was significant. Statistical data are represented in tables one through three.

Table 1

Regression Summary Table for Studio Personnel

<u>Step</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>MultR</u>	<u>RSq</u>	<u>F(Eqn)</u>	<u>Sig F</u>	<u>BetaIn</u>
1	Professionalism	.7165	.5134	314.371	.000	.7165
2	Entertainment Val	.7911	.6259	248.440	.000	.3765
3	Style/Delivery	.8077	.6523	185.121	.000	.2384
4	Expertise	.8187	.6703	149.939	.000	.1544
5	Objectivity	.8220	.6757	122.538	.000	.1018

In table one, professionalism accounted for 51 percent of the variance (see R-squared) in participants' opinions in regards to studio/in-the-field performance. Entertainment Value came in second place for studio personnel.

Table 2

Regression Summary Table for Play-by-Play Personnel

<u>Step</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>MultR</u>	<u>Rsq</u>	<u>F(Eqn)</u>	<u>SigF</u>	<u>BetaIn</u>
1	Professionalism	.7541	.5687	155.596	.000	.7541
2	Style/Delivery	.7957	.6332	100.993	.000	.3248
3	Expertise	.8171	.6677	77.679	.000	.2740

In table two, Professionalism accounted for 57 percent of the variance in participants' opinions regarding play-by-play performance. Style and delivery came in second and was emphasized because of the duties and functions of a play-by-play announcer.

Table 3

Regression Summary Table for Color-Commentary Personnel

<u>Step</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>MultR</u>	<u>Rsq</u>	<u>F(Eqn)</u>	<u>SigF</u>	<u>BetaIn</u>
1	Professionalism	.7638	.5834	252.109	.000	.7638
2	Entertainment Val	.8292	.6876	197.026	.000	.4070
3	Style/Delivery	.8453	.7146	148.561	.000	.2606
4	Expertise	.8492	.7212	114.469	.000	.1124

In the third table, Professionalism accounted for 58 percent of the variance in subjects' opinions regarding color-commentary performance. Entertainment value was second in this table and was important once more because of the role, skills and duties of a color-commentator.

In addition, multivariate and univariate analysis were conducted to examine differences among the individual sportscasters. MANOVA results were significant, and the Wilks' lambda ($df=54,299$) = 8.17, $p < .001$. Each univariate analysis was also significant at .001 with 9 and 592 degrees of freedom. Respective F values were 16.90 for Expertise; 16.09 for Entertainment value; 5.12 for Objectivity with an 11.28 for Style and Delivery; 14.04 for Professionalism and 21.82 for competence. There was also a cell means table established to help distinguish where each broadcaster measured up or qualified.

Table 4

Cell Means for Factors by Broadcaster

<u>Segment</u>	<u>Broadcaster</u>	<u>Factors</u>					
		<u>Exp</u>	<u>Ent</u>	<u>Obj</u>	<u>Sty/Del</u>	<u>Pro</u>	<u>Comp</u>
1.	Visser	3.24	3.655	4.102	3.333	4.164	4.040
2.	Michaels	4.59	4.428	4.289	4.139	4.644	4.761
3.	Esiason	4.41	3.556	3.889	3.522	4.122	3.939
4.	Knight	3.86	3.600	3.928	3.517	3.989	3.817
5.	Kirkijan	3.83	2.844	3.661	2.939	3.694	3.306
6.	Wingo	4.12	3.814	3.792	3.574	4.093	4.038
7.	Mowins	3.82	3.078	3.867	3.011	3.589	3.344
8.	Granger	3.58	2.961	3.539	2.811	3.272	2.956
9.	Holt	3.89	3.844	3.822	3.600	4.150	3.956
10.	Gill	3.89	3.489	3.852	3.403	3.651	3.737

N=60

In table four, a breakdown of all six factors is analyzed numerically along with the specific sportscasters evaluated as well as their affiliation and job title. Of all ten of the sportscasters evaluated and involved in the study, the individual receiving the most praise and positive recognition in each of the factors evaluated was Al Michaels, play-by-play announcer for ABC's Monday Night Football. Michaels rated best or the highest in all of the attributes tested.

Chapter V

Conclusion

For all the qualities analyzed, the attribute audiences felt was most significant and important was professionalism in sportscasting. Although professionalism can signify different things to different individuals, and is difficult to define in simple terms, most audiences know it when they see it and clearly regarded it as their most important sportscaster attribute in this study. This notion can be explained due to several factors. First, when an audience feels that a particular sportscaster is confident they in turn feel confident that the information they are receiving is factual, interesting, and of importance. Next, the confidence factor is maintained and prolonged more when an audience can envision or know that the sportscaster takes pride in being properly prepared and wishes to present themselves in a way that they are taken seriously. Finally, when an audience is given the truth (even in times when they do not want it), a certain amount of respect can be garnered as well as a certain degree of trust. All such factors contribute greatly to the reception and acceptance of the sportscaster, including some of the other more respected figures in sportscasting from Chris Fowler (of ESPN) to Jim Nance (of CBS sports) and many others. These two are just a couple of the mainstream sportscasters considered to be at the top of their game. From their conversational styles on camera with ease and calmness, to their dress and attire, they provide hope and something for budding sportscasters to strive for in their work. The popularity of play-by-play announcer (for ABC NFL Monday Night Football) Al Michaels came as no surprise as he emerged on top based on his collaboration of all of the qualities analyzed in this study. Seemingly, the males in this study found that his demeanor, wit and knowledge all as vital keys to his longevity.

success: In all, the three preceding tables helped to establish a trend (as to what other qualities were of most importance) based on the role of the sportscaster. For the greater part, the results only confirm what the literature suggests which is that hard work usually leads to good work. Mulligan and Mulligan (1999) reflect this thought best in stating, “the best in the profession have succeeded with a combination of talent, creativity, and hard work” (p. 215). This statement reflects what it takes to truly succeed and persevere in whatever your profession or endeavor.

reality: This study provides opportunities for future discussion, research and analysis in the area of sportscasting. The goal of this research in studying some of the specific qualities which audiences may like or dislike was accomplished, making this a successful atypical facet in communication research. With all of this in mind, the question beckons, Where does such research offer help, and exactly who does it help? The outcome and attempt of this study can only help to heighten and or strengthen the awareness of audiences as well as, potential or current employees. The ability to determine quality talent can eliminate problems for radio, newspaper and television industry employees and aid in hiring the best individual for the position. No longer will hiring and promotion be based (in part) on some of the more superficial qualities such as appearance or networking; instead, the audience and the employer can take heart in knowing the best of the best represent the organization and their entertainment interests. Another way such research can aid is in lowering the “luck factor” which is also associated with this industry. It has often been said by those in the industry that being at the right place at the right time can take an individual a long way. Such scenarios can be changed to some extent by using a more diplomatic or scientific process of talent evaluation. All discussed thus far may also aid in alleviating the abundance of hopefuls and possible pretenders wishing to be a part of this elite fraternity. Other sportscasters can also become better,

successful, competent, and more proficient in their jobs with such a process. Sports casting embodies an array of ingredients (from patience to hard work) in order to attain success. Those qualities evaluated are only a small part of the tools needed for optimal achievement.

There are limits to this study and in the future, researchers could possibly test more qualities (beyond the five used in this study). Of major note here is that the qualities chosen (although universal in their importance) are not the only key ingredients needed to succeed in this profession. Furthermore, to add more appeal, perspective and less bias, exploring gender differences among females could be involved. With the increased explosion and awareness of female sports and its celebrity, societies interest has caused women to continue to mark their place. Their place has made them deserving of being part of the overall solution. The female perspective may add a different and unique slant to the entire study.

Other racial groups and culture perceptions involving minority sportscasters could help in adding diversity and validity to the study, also. As mentioned earlier, the minority sportscaster continues to emerge in our society. Their perspectives should count no less either. Through the struggles of the past the mainstream success stories of the present help to offer hope for the future.

Finally, including more radio segments could help to further emphasize its in-depth nature and understated audience impact.

This impact cannot be underscored and reaches small towns as well as large cities everywhere. All of the specific qualities discussed throughout the course of this paper are responsibilities every sportscaster must hold and perfect. In a society where it is much easier and popular to watch the action unfold, radio is a lost art form of sorts. It uses imagination and gives the sportscaster the opportunity to truly excel and improve the

quality of their work, not to mention, present the games waning moments in high energy, high intensity form.

With the likes of Marv Albert (former radio personality, current Turner Network Television personality) and others receiving their start in radio, a rich tradition of solid work is created and a standard is set in the process. Coleman (1973) also provides an accurate and poignant summary of the sportscasting profession, stating, "tomorrow's sports announcer will be better at his craft than men who preceded him. But tomorrow will have learned from today, which in turn was taught by yesterday" (p. 13).

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My name is Linda Jenkins and I am conducting a study for my Master's in Speech
Communications. I would like to ask you to participate. Your participation would involve
completing a 20-minute questionnaire that seeks to determine what makes a good
speech coach. It would require a request of 30 minutes of your time. Your
participation is voluntary and anonymous. It will be your confidence
There is no pressure for returning any materials. You may withdraw from the study
any time. I will contact you if you have any questions. If you have any questions,
please contact me at 503-754-1234. Thank you for your time and consideration.

APPENDIX A
SOLICITATION FORM

APPENDIX

My name is Chris Jenkins and I am conducting a study for my Master's in Speech Communication. I would like to ask you to participate. Your participation would involve completing a three-part questionnaire that seeks to determine what makes a good sportscaster. This would require a maximum of 60 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous, and your responses will be kept confidential. There is no penalty for refusing to participate and you may withdraw from the study at any time, also without penalty. Your willingness to complete the survey signifies your informed consent. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Dr. David Schrader, Associate Professor, 109d Morrill Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater OK 74078; his telephone number is (405) 744-6150. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Survey

The purpose of this survey is to measure or determine subjects' views of sportscasters' abilities based on everyday viewing and listening experiences. Results will be reported in aggregate form only (e.g., means). Please circle one of the five choices 1-5 that apply

5= strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1= strongly disagree

Measuring Expertise in Apprentices

Expertise

1. I have

knowledge

2. I believe that I am

a familiar

3. I believe that I am

4. I believe that I am

5. I believe that I am

6. I believe that I am

7. I believe that I am

APPENDIX B

Table 1

INSTRUMENT MEASUREMENT

Table 1

Measuring Instruments by Dimension with the audience

Expertise:

1. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the field reporter) displayed knowledge of coaching and player personnel.
2. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) displayed a familiarity with game strategies, rules and regulations.
3. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) displayed knowledge of the sport based on prior experiences or participation.

Entertainment Value:

4. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) were energized and enthusiastic.
5. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) maintained a spontaneous and fresh approach.
6. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) used analogies in the broadcast, making it more interesting.

Objectivity:

7. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) displayed unbiased in reporting.
8. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) maintained an honest and sincere approach in his/her work.
9. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) exhibited or provided complete, accurate reporting.

Style/Delivery:

10. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) used charisma and or humor as a tool for maintaining audience appeal.
11. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) exhibited

a distinctive mold or style.

12. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) maintained a conversational approach with the audience.

Professionalism:

13. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) displayed confidence.

14. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) reported the facts throughout the broadcast.

15. I believe (the play-by-play, color-commentator, studio/in-the-field reporter) were properly prepared throughout the broadcast.

...analysis of games before/during/after, usually
...objective and common at the game sight (or studio)
...discovered knowledge of

ing of game

d

e. 1. 1. 1. 1.

...knowledge

se

...1. 1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 1. 1.

APPENDIX C.

1. 1. 1. 1.

SURVEY VERSION 1

7. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) was unbiased in reporting.

Studio-in-the-field coverage: (provides an analysis of games before/during/after, usually consists of a former athlete offering perspective and opinion at the game site or studio).

1. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) displayed knowledge of coach and player personnel.

5 4 3 2 1

2. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) displayed a familiarity with game strategies, rules and regulations.

5 4 3 2 1

3. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) displayed knowledge of the sport based on his or her prior experiences or participation.

5 4 3 2 1

4. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) was energized and enthusiastic.

5 4 3 2 1

5. I believe the maintained a spontaneous and fresh approach.

5 4 3 2 1

6. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) used colorful analogies in the broadcast, making it more interesting.

5 4 3 2 1

7. I believe the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) was unbiased in reporting.

5 4 3 2 1

8. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) maintained an honest and sincere approach in his or her work.

5 4 3 2 1

9. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) displayed or provided complete/accurate reporting.

5 4 3 2 1

10. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) used charisma and/or humor as a tool for maintaining audience appeal.

5 4 3 2 1

11. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) exhibited a distinctive mold or style.

5 4 3 2 1

12. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) maintained a conversational approach with the audience.

5 4 3 2 1

13. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) displayed confidence.

5 4 3 2 1

14. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) reported the facts throughout the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

15. I believed the studio-in-the-field reporter (or analyst) was properly groomed in the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

Please provide (by circling) your general impression of this sportscaster.

16. 5= very effective 4= somewhat effective 3= neutral 2= somewhat ineffective 1= very ineffective

5 4 3 2 1

17. 5= very successful 4= somewhat successful 3= neutral 2= somewhat unsuccessful 1= very unsuccessful

5 4 3 2 1

18. 5= very competent 4= somewhat competent 3= neutral 2= somewhat incompetent 1= very incompetent

5 4 3 2 1

Questions/Comments?

(Please provide any additional views in the space provided and thank you for participating).

Player 1

Player 2 (plus description of the action on the court or

field, etc)

Player 3 (if used, etc)

Player 4

Player 5 (knowledge of the game, level)

Player 6

Player 7

Player 8 (knowledge of the game, level)

Player 9

Player 10

APPENDIX D

SURVEY VERSION 2

I believe the play-by-play announcer maintained an honest and sincere approach in his

Play-by-play coverage: (provides a play-by-play description of the action on the court or field, such as who has the ball, who scored, who fouled, etc).

1. I believe the play-by play announcer displayed a knowledge of coach and player personnel.

5 4 3 2 1

2. I believe the play-by play announcer displayed a familiarity with game strategies, rules and regulations.

5 4 3 2 1

3. I believe the play-by play announcer displayed knowledge of the sport based on his or his prior experiences or participation.

5 4 3 2 1

4. I believe the play-by play announcer was energized and enthusiastic.

5 4 3 2 1

5. I believe the play-by play announcer maintained a spontaneous and fresh approach.

5 4 3 2 1

6. I believe the play-by play announcer used colorful analogies in the broadcast, making it more interesting.

5 4 3 2 1

7. I believe the play-by play announcer was unbiased in reporting.

5 4 3 2 1

8. I believe the play-by play announcer maintained an honest and sincere approach in his or her work.

5 4 3 2 1

9. I believe the play-by play announcer displayed or provided complete/accurate reporting.

5 4 3 2 1

10. I believe the play-by play announcer used charisma and/or humor as a tool for maintaining audience appeal.

5 4 3 2 1

11. I believe the play-by play announcer exhibited a distinctive mold or style.

5 4 3 2 1

12. I believe the play-by play announcer maintained a conversational approach with the audience.

5 4 3 2 1

13. I believe the play-by play announcer displayed confidence.

5 4 3 2 1

14. I believe the play-by play announcer reported the facts throughout the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

15. I believe the play-by play announcer was properly groomed in the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

Please provide (by circling) your general impression of this sportscaster.

16. 5= very effective 4= somewhat effective 3= neutral 2= somewhat ineffective 1= very ineffective

5 4 3 2 1

17. 5= very successful 4= somewhat successful 3= neutral 2= somewhat unsuccessful 1= very unsuccessful

5 4 3 2 1

18. 5= very competent 4= somewhat competent 3= neutral 2= somewhat incompetent 1= very incompetent

5 4 3 2 1

Questions/Comments?

(Please provide any additional views in the space provided and thank you for participating).

with a view to starting a strategic partnership with the company of which said respondent on the
and having the person in charge

of the company of which said respondent on the
persons
of the company of which said respondent on the

APPENDIX E
SURVEY VERSION 3

page 14 of 14

3. I believe the color-commentator maintained an honest and sincere approach in his or

Color-commentary coverage: (provides an in-depth analysis of what just happened on the field, court, etc. and helps to paint a picture for the viewer or listener).

1. I believe the color-commentator displayed a knowledge of coach and player personnel.

5 4 3 2 1

2. I believe the color-commentator displayed a familiarity with game strategies, rules and regulations.

5 4 3 2 1

3. I believe the color-commentator displayed knowledge of the sport based on his or her prior experience or participation.

5 4 3 2 1

4. I believe the color-commentator was energized and enthusiastic.

5 4 3 2 1

5. I believe the color-commentator maintained a spontaneous and fresh approach.

5 4 3 2 1

6. I believe the color-commentator used colorful analogies in the broadcast, making it more interesting.

5 4 3 2 1

7. I believe the color-commentator was unbiased in reporting.

5 4 3 2 1

Please provide the (rating) your general impression of this sportscaster.

8. I believe the color-commentator maintained an honest and sincere approach in his or her work.

5 = 5 4 3 2 1
effective 1 somewhat effective 2 neutral 3 somewhat ineffective 4 very ineffective 5

9. I believe the color-commentator displayed or provided complete/accurate reporting.

5 4 3 2 1
complete/accurate 1 somewhat complete/accurate 2 neutral 3 somewhat incomplete/inaccurate 4 incomplete/inaccurate 5

10. I believe the color-commentator used charisma and/or humor as a tool for maintaining audience appeal.

5 4 3 2 1
effective 1 somewhat effective 2 neutral 3 somewhat ineffective 4 very ineffective 5

11. I believe the color-commentator exhibited a distinctive mold or style.

5 4 3 2 1

12. I believe the color-commentator maintained a conversational approach with the audience.

5 4 3 2 1

13. I believe the color-commentator displayed confidence.

5 4 3 2 1

14. I believe the color-commentator reported the facts throughout the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

15. I believe the color-commentator was properly groomed in the broadcast.

5 4 3 2 1

Please provide (by circling) your general impression of this sportscaster.

16. 5= very effective 4= somewhat effective 3= neutral 2= somewhat ineffective 1= very ineffective

5 4 3 2 1

17. 5= very successful 4= somewhat successful 3=neutral 2= somewhat unsuccessful 1= very unsuccessful

5 4 3 2 1

18. 5= very competent 4= somewhat competent 3= neutral 2= somewhat incompetent 1= very incompetent

5 4 3 2 1

Questions/Comments?

(Please provide any additional views in the space provided and thank you for participating).

APPENDIX

IRB FORM

APPENDIX F

IRB FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 07-16-99

IRB #: AS-99-043

VITA

Thesis Title: WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORTSCASTER?

Christopher Carl Jenkins

Department of Investigative Journalism, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Candidate for the Degree of

Assistant and Professor of Journalism

Master of Arts

Applied Journalism, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Thesis: WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORTSCASTER?

Major Field: Speech Communication

Biographical:

Education: Graduation from Stillwater High School, Stillwater Oklahoma in May 1993; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater Oklahoma in May 1998. Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts degree with a major in Speech Communication at Oklahoma State University in May 2000.

Experience: Employed as a play-by-play announcer for AM- 1020 radio in Perry Oklahoma (1998), employed as a side-line reporter and play-by-play announcer for KWEM News-31 television (1999-2000).

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 02-16-99

IRB #: AS-99-043

Proposal Title: WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORTSCASTER?

Principal Investigator(s): David Schrader, Chris Jenkins

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: 

Date: February 16, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

cc: Chris Jenkins

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.