

DISCOVERING THE DISCONNECT: A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE  
PERCEPTIONS AND MEDIA PERSONNEL REALITIES FOR WOMEN IN SPORTS  
BROADCASTING

By

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To my mother and extended family at the University of Florida

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESPN	Entertainment and Sports Programming Network.
GTN	Gainesville Television Network.
IRB	Institutional Review Board.
NBA	National Basketball Association.
NBC	National Broadcasting Company.
NFL	National Football League.
SIT	Social Identity Theory.
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association.

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It is commonly understood that all sportscasters are not created equally. Some are looked to for entertainment; some are looked to for hard sports coverage. The vast majority of notable sports analysts are men with women often remaining on the sidelines, rather than in the press box with the analysts.

This study is based on a series of 4 focus group interviews with past and present female sportscasters and reporters. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine whether a discrepancy exists between the audience perception of female sports broadcasters and the way the sports broadcasters see themselves. By comparing responses between the focus groups and in-depth interviews, a better understanding of the potential difference of opinion between the two sides of the sports industry was achieved.

The results show that there is a discrepancy between the way the audience views female sportscasters and the way these sportscasters view themselves and their contributions to the sports world. Examining themes like respect and credibility of female sportscasters as ascertained by the audience determined whether they deemed

females reputable sources in sports reporting. By understanding that a discrepancy does indeed exist, we can further delve into the reasoning behind it and ultimately make strides towards a level playing field for men and women alike in the sports broadcasting field.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

ESPN has become synonymous with everything sports related. According to Forbes staff writer Kurt Badenhausen: “The reality is that there is not another media property in the world worth as much as ESPN because no media asset delivering content generates close to as much money.” The people who have built careers on covering athletes are an intricate part of the sports-viewing experience. They dig up the facts, provide context, and shed light on the complexities of the game. A sports analyst’s job is critical to the sports-viewing experience because he or she has a responsibility, not only to those new to the sports, but also to those familiar with the teams. It is the analyst’s responsibility to cater information to all audiences, no matter what their familiarity with the sport is. Sports analysts, broadcasters, and reporters all fall under the term “sportscaster.” They serve as gatekeepers because they help decide what the important and unimportant issues are in the sports worlds.

Success in this industry requires attention to detail, the ability to research quickly and efficiently, creativity, and, most importantly, a passion for the game and knowledge of it. Interestingly enough, the traits previously listed that seem to bring about success in the modern sports broadcasting industry are not gender specific. Since that’s the case, why is it that the number of analysts and commentators in the sports broadcasting industry are overwhelmingly male? Why is it that females seem to be overwhelmingly assigned to sideline reporting roles, while their male counterparts are the ones trusted with presenting viewers with information and analysis?

USA Today writers Steve Weiberg and Steve Berkowitz (2011) speak on ESPN’s involvement with college sports (only one of the Network’s many endeavors).

They say: “As a TV rights holder, ESPN is a business partner to a wide array of conferences and schools (its total college outlay will average more than \$700 million annually by next year). And as a leading broadcast, print and online news outlet, ESPN also reports the news it's often a party to making.”

If so much emphasis is put on sports coverage in this country, what does this say about social implications towards women when they are rarely trusted with top-tier positions within the ESPN Network? Until roughly 150 years ago, women were prohibited from participating in sports, much like their prohibition from participating in society, the workplace, and politics (Navarro, 2001). There are parallels that can be drawn between sports and the social structures in this country. Several researchers argue that sports perpetuate images of male superiority and female inferiority, more than any other social institution (Birrell & Cole, 1990; Duncan, 1990; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Kane, 1995; Kane & Snyder, 1989).

Credibility adds power to a broadcaster's voice. In many instances the same information is reported by a variety of sources, but the audience needs to believe that the sportscaster they are listening to is a reputable one. This voice is considered a critical part of sports media, and the right of women to own a place in the field of sports media is as important as their right to participate in professional sports (Staurowsky & DiManno, 2002).

For example, NBC Sports reporter Michelle Tafoya (2012), said:

When I first started, people would look at female reporters like, 'what does she know?' But meanwhile a male reporter could show up to a press conference or event and no one is going to think twice. He could be clueless but no one will think twice because he looks like he fits in.

Tafoya's comments paint a picture in which females have to be more prepared than males holding the same position because the female gender is seen as some sort of handicap. In addition to spending a disproportionate amount of time proving themselves when compared to males, female sports broadcasters also have to deal with career advancement issues and in many instances remain stuck in the role they started their careers in.

What seems to be happening is women are stuck with these secondary roles where they remain until they ultimately decide to change careers. As Hardin and Shain (2005) write : "The two most prominent reasons for women leaving sports media careers seem to be lack of advancement in the workplace and negative consequences on their lives outside of work" (p. 815).

The aim of this study is not to trivialize the jobs women have in the sports media industry. Positions like sideline reporting are extremely important for the unique insight they bring to sports broadcasting. Speaking to the athletes in the midst of the most intense sporting events we know of is no easy feat. Emotions are running high and the wrong question could have disastrous effects, especially since sideline reporting is live.

Poise and a concrete understanding of the game is key when it comes to success at this position. However, when one thinks about sports broadcasting, the mind instantly goes to the analysts. Sports analysts are the face of the industry; they hold much of the power because they are constantly speaking to audiences during broadcasts while sideline reporters are only able to secure a few fleeting moments per sporting event.

Broadcasters and analysts are seen as the authority on sports; their opinions aren't necessarily agreed with, but are still respected enough to consider. Facts revealed during sideline interviews, like a switch in a coach's game plan, or a game changing injury, serve as supplement for analysts up in the booth. The sideline reporting role is by nature a supplemental one.

There's more to the issue of female representation in sports broadcasting than what is seen on television. There are parallels that can be drawn between the roles women serve in the sports realm and the roles women are expected to have in other sectors of society. The male hegemony is explicitly stated and represented in scholarly textbooks on the subject of women in sports broadcasting. An analysis of journalism textbooks about sports gender representation found that "these texts, to varying degrees, reinforce the idea that sports and sports journalism are masculine; they are enterprises for men" (Hardin, Dodd & Lauffer, 2006, p. 441). Women are mentioned in literature about the sports realm, but the discrepancy between female and male mentions is apparent. "...Until 1993 only *one* nonfiction book documented the experience of a female sports journalist in the American media market" (Creedon, 1994, p. 21). Books written by males help perpetuate stereotypes of women that were created by males.

According to Hardin, Dodd and Lauffer (2006):

These texts promote the gender stereotypes of sports, sports writing, and sports writers and, therefore, provide a model for students to maintain those patterns rather than promoting the realities of women's sports, the reporting and storytelling possible for men and women in covering women's sports, and the opportunities for women sports writers. (p. 441)

This study was carried out with a mixed methods approach. Focus groups were used to find out what the viewing audience thought about female broadcasters. Those

responses were compared with in-depth interviews and provided first-hand accounts of how active female broadcasters perceived themselves and their place in the sports industry.

The researcher wanted to thoroughly examine whether a disconnect exists between the way the sports audience views female in sports broadcasting, and the way the women actually working in the industry view themselves. When compared to their male co-workers, it seems that women aren't looked at in the same way. They don't seem to be respected in the same way the men are by the audience. In many instances they're looked at as a pretty face and little more. Are female sportscasters aware of the general audience perceptions of them? What do they think about themselves and how would they evaluate their contributions to the sports industry? The researcher believed that by first discovering whether there actually was a disconnect between audience perceptions and female sportscasters realities, the groundwork could be laid for discovering why these sentiments existed in the first place.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Before beginning to discuss the perception of females in the industry, there must be a solid understanding of how the media can affect the formation of an audience's perceptions in the first place.

### **Framing Theory**

According to Chong (1993):

The major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue. (Chong, 2007, p. 104)

Framing, at its core, is the action of focusing on certain aspects of a subject shapes the audience's awareness of it. The very act of highlighting an aspect of a concept draws attention to some related aspects and hides others. It is a way of determining what is of value and what should be focused on. This simple phenomenon exists at many points throughout the human experience. It often goes unnoticed in its subtlety despite or because of its ubiquitous nature, but it is studied in various ways in the humanities and social sciences.

Framing theory as discussed by Entman (1993) deals more with the conscious application of a frame to promote a particular aspect of a concept to control focus or generate a response. In this application of the core idea, media and the field of communication become the primary display of the act of framing. A simple example is of partisan news media groups focusing on different stories or different aspects of stories. Any news story is perceived by the audience on the basis not only of its fundamental facts, but which facts are presented and in what light, basically, what is

emphasized. Entman (1993) discusses this emphasis as “salience”, with the more salient information being most likely to be processed and stored. As alluded to before, salience works both ways. If something is more likely to be noted, processed, and stored, then the reverse is true for aspects not being focused on. Entman (1993) suggests that what is neglected in media also has relevance and sends its own message. As some pieces of information are repeatedly brought to the fore, they are seen as most important and are engrained into the mind of the viewer, while those things repeatedly neglected fall out of sight. Frames are not defined only by what they emphasize, but also by what they obscure or omit entirely.

It should be noted that the idea of framing not only applies to what is being reported, but extends also to those doing the reporting. As easily as a certain aspect of a news story is repeatedly highlighted, the manner by which “important” information is passed on reinforces an idea of what makes the news important. If a certain type of presentation or presenter is repeatedly tied to a type or quality of information, this connection is solidified over time in the minds of viewers. Given that, by its very nature, a frame suggests what is important, there are clear implications for the people that are also framed in this way simply by their connection to what information they present.

As mentioned before, framing is not limited only to media, and even in media, it is not a wholly unique phenomenon. Strong connections can be seen between framing theory and priming effects, where the exposure to a specific stimulus influences a response to a later stimulus through things like repetition, memory, and even unconscious recall. Framing is also not just a one-way system. Audience selectivity plays a role and as the audience recognizes (consciously or unconsciously) frames

being used, they may be more inclined to seek out frames they are familiar with and prefer. This is because while frames are capable of directing thought, they do not override opposing thoughts simply by existing. Viewers with established schemas about certain topics are less likely to accept a frame that defies their existing perception of the world.

At some level the claim can be made that culture is no more than the collection of “commonly invoked frames”, a case that Entman (1993) argued. With that in mind, it should be no surprise that frames common in a culture are repeated and reinforced in the media that reflects that culture.

The real issue boils down to the way men in positions of power view women in the industry. There are men (with gatekeeping responsibilities) who just don't see women as equals. These gatekeepers have the power to marginalize the contributions women have made. For example, former *60 Minutes* commentator Andy Rooney was quoted as saying “The only thing that really bugs me about television coverage is those damn women they have down on the sidelines who don't know what the hell they're talking about” (Rooney, 2002). One man's sentiments towards women aren't enough to sway the masses, but the researcher would argue that it's the men with power and influence who say things like Rooney's remark that have the ability to influence many people. It's one thing to say something like that in passing, but saying something like that on television instantly broadcasts the message to millions of viewers. People see messages like that broadcast over airwaves nation-wide and then the message becomes embedded in their minds and accepted as factual. People of authority express views and those who are influenced by them adopt the same beliefs.

As to Creedon (1994) asks:

What does this synthetic super media spectacle (the Super Bowl) tell us about the differences between males and females in our culture? At a minimum, because professional football remains a male-only preserve, we learn that being male in our culture confers a degree of privilege. By denying women access to the games as players, we are taught that women are less qualified, powerful or physical than men. (p. 5)

The same holds true for women in the broadcasting realm. Many times women are held from the more prestigious jobs, relegated to the lesser, supplementary tasks and the frames dictating the way people are supposed to view women in this profession may have a lot to do with that. Sideline reporters are given only a few minutes to speak on average so they can't really deviate from the fact finding they're required to do. In football and basketball games, these types of reporters only have the duration of a timeout, or a few fleeting moments as a coach is intercepted on the way to a locker room to do their fact finding. The amount of time they're given simply cannot accommodate any analysis they might want to add. They have just enough time to find out about any in-game injuries, or late-game strategy changes and toss that information up to the analysts so they can actually talk about the effects the findings will have on the game.

A frame in a communication "organizes everyday reality" (Tuchman, 1978, p.193). When a particular group of people is relegated to the same kind of role over an extended period of time, people begin to subconsciously form opinions about that group. If we only see women in secondary roles in sports, then there must be something about them that doesn't make them quite as good as their male counterparts.

Sports have always been seen as a male dominated realm. The testosterone, the blood, sweat and tears that go into waging warfare on another group of men is a direct

clash with the mental images that are associated with women. Women, seen as tender, affectionate, emotional beings, don't belong in the harsh world of sports, according to these views. They don't get a pass to the "all-boys club."

### **Source Credibility Theory**

Credibility is the factor which grants a person or their words, weight, value, and truth. The problem is, we decide who has credibility based on our own assumptions and not always facts. The question of what credibility is based on is of paramount importance. In the realm of sportscasting, one of the main issues is the idea of men having more credibility than females. usually attributed to prior field experience, or if not that, prior work experience on the same level. The first could be argued, but the second seems faulty. If someone is trustworthy because they have had a similar position in the past, but others are not able to have that position because of factors not based on merit (but on gender and perceptions related to gender), then credibility is no longer based on actual ability and is undeserved.

According to Hovland's Source Credibility Theory (1953), credibility can be broken down into trustworthiness and expertise; both with their own objective and subjective components. Trustworthiness is at its base more subjective, but can be objectively supported through past experience and proven reliability. Expertise is typically more objectively grounded, using things like credentials and information quality as objective measures. However, the relative importance of these objective measures, and other ways they are viewed and interpreted, can come into play. It should be clear that any assessment of one person by another, even if stemming from objective facts, is filtered by the many assumptions and preconceptions of the one doing the assessing.

So while objective truths remain, the weight of the subjective can overwhelm them. It seems the objective factors of experience are highlighted when it supports an already held position (experience is helpful) and downplayed when they do not (experience is not necessary). The amount of time someone has played is an objective measure, but it would seem that its relative importance is not as great as believed. Another aspect of expertise to address is that it does not come solely from experience.

Expertise is simply skill or knowledge in a particular area. Here it is important to separate expertise in play and expertise in analysis and reporting. As has been noted, field experience can certainly aid in analysis, but it is a separate thing. Skill and knowledge of the game and an ability to analyze and present the goings on of a game can be gained without extensive field experience. Putting this all together, expertise of analysis can be held by reporters without field experience but regardless of actual expertise, female reporters are perceived as having less. The subjective perception of the objective facts is what come together to fill out the expertise side of the credibility equation.

### **Cultivation Theory**

George Gerbner's Cultivation theory (1976) is critical to this project because it looks to explain the phenomena of how people shape the world around them, based on the images they see on television. Gerbner's cultivation theory says that "Television has become the main source of storytelling in today's society. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are affected by the Mean World Syndrome, an idea that the world is worse than it actually is" (1976). Although early cultivation research was especially concerned with the issue of television violence, over the years the

investigation has been expanded to include sex roles, images of aging, political orientations, environmental attitudes, science, health, religion etc.

Gerbner's Cultivation theory (1976) is about how the things people see on television eventually create the world they live in. The more television a person watches, the more that person will believe that the things seen are an accurate portrayal of real life occurrences. McQuail and Windahl (1981) note that cultivation theory presents television as not a window on or reflection of the world, but a "world in itself" (1993, p. 100). Prevalence of a message in the media can promote certain societal values that are taken for granted (like male dominance).

Cultivation theory is concerned with the big picture. If audiences are constantly inundated with images of women serving secondary roles, those views can eventually become the accepted norm. This theory is important to this study because it talks about what's seen and equally important, the things that aren't seen. Gerbner and Gross (1976) address this specific phenomenon with their discussion of symbolic annihilation. "Representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976 p.182). If a certain group is always heralded as important or knowledgeable (for instance male sports broadcasters), then how should groups that aren't represented be viewed? If a group isn't put on display in a position of power it leads people to believe that the group isn't important, or doesn't have something worthwhile to contribute.

### **Male Hegemony**

At any given time, the more powerful side will create an ideology suitable to help maintain its position and to make this position acceptable to the weaker one. In this ideology the differentness of the weaker one will be interpreted as inferiority, and it will be proven that these differences are

unchangeable, basic or God's will. It is the function of such an ideology to deny or conceal the existence of a struggle (Horney, 1967, p.56).

Hegemony refers to and reinforces what has been called the "fundamental outlook of society" (Bocock, 1986). It's about preserving the status quo. When it comes to male hegemony (Cockburn, 1991) a scenario is created in which males rule supreme over females. Men are looked to as sources of information; they're looked to as the leaders of the society they live in.

According to Sheila Rowbotham (1973) in *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*, the concept of male hegemony isn't new. In order to understand the concept, we need to look at the separate instances in which women have come to accept it. In her study *Male Hegemony, Social Class and Women's Education*, Madeleine Arnot (1982) says "Women have become colonized within a male-defined world, through a wide variety of educational moments that seen separately may appear inconsequential , but which together comprise a pattern of female experience that is qualitatively different from that of men" (p. 84).

More importantly we need to examine male dominated culture and the subordination of women in it. Male hegemony isn't so much about men running everything, it's more about women accepting that as reality.

### **Femininity**

In order to effectively frame women a certain way, femininity needs to be established. People need to understand what it means to be feminine. That way they can differentiate between that and masculinity. Examining the dominant cultural discourse on femininity is also instrumental in understanding why women are viewed the way they are in our culture. By realizing what has come to be expected of women

and what makes a woman feminine, we can better sharpen our focus when it comes to changing the roles that have embedded themselves in our minds. Femininity itself is a frame that can shape the way people view a particular group. “Judges in women’s body-building competitions, for example, acknowledge that they have a definition of muscles for women restricted by their definition of femininity” (Creedon, 1994 p. 280).

Not only do women have to worry about femininity separating themselves from their male counterparts, they also have to worry about the same ideal creating rifts between their fellow woman.

The apologetic is another frame women are forced to grapple with in the media world. They have to constantly worry about aggressively pursuing greatness. Tenacity, assertiveness, and aggression are largely seen as masculine characteristics. Women who possess these traits are often seen as strange, only further alienating them from their male co-workers. One explanation for the negative evaluation of women athletes is that sport participation is incompatible with the female sex role (Colley, 1987). Sex roles are largely important to this study because they are a source of conflict in many instances. The image of what a woman should be and of what an athlete should be in many cases do not coincide with one another. According to Martin and Martin (1995), characteristics of an ideal female and an ideal athlete can’t belong to the same person because the characteristics that constitute a good athlete don’t coincide with the characteristics that make up a good woman.

In essence, women are apologizing for striving to be great. They exhibit the same characteristics that their male co-workers utilize to achieve success yet are seen as less feminine because of it. This makes it seem as if women are expected to settle for less;

they are expected to be meek and not rock the boat or draw unwanted attention. How is one supposed to make any real advancements if one must constantly fear being ostracized from members of the opposite gender, in addition to members of his or her own?

### **Role Congruity Theory**

Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory (2002) posits that women aren't as likely as men to become leaders when expectations for leaders don't match up with gender expectations. This has to do with the stereotypes that are associated with the female gender role and the way those stereotypes do not align with expected leadership traits. According to Eagly and Karau (2002) this perceived incongruity makes it more difficult for women to be selected for leadership roles and once they are selected, less likely that they'll be perceived as successful leaders. Previous research often assumes that certain leadership behaviors are perceived as being more typical for male leaders (e.g. transactional leadership) and others are more typical for female leaders (e.g. transformational leadership) without verifying this basic presupposition (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003).

Glick and Fiske's (1996, 2001) theory on ambivalent sexism also relates to role congruity theory. Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) argued that there are two different types of sexism. Hostile sexism, which is based on the notion that women ultimately aim to control men and results in a negative view of women because they're seen as a source of competition. Then there is benevolent sexism, which is based on the notion that women have communal characteristics and that leads to more positive views towards women, but also to paternal stereotypes causing people to believe women are more suited for traditional gender roles rather than high status roles in the workplace.

Benevolent sexism is directly related to role congruity theory (2002) because it assigns men and women specific stereotypes (agentic for men and communal for women). By assigning gender specific stereotypes, women and men are expected to be proficient at different things in the workplace. The communal stereotype makes it easier to see women as supportive role players, while the agentic stereotype makes it easier to see men as leaders in their field.

### **Standpoint Theory**

Dorothy Smith's Standpoint Theory (1983) is pertinent to this study because it highlights the purpose of comparing and contrasting audience views of female sportscasters with the views those sportscasters have of themselves " ... Scholars, working more or less independently of one another, have maintained that marginalized groups of people have less interest in preserving the status quo and occupy a unique position from which to view the culture from which they are marginalized" (Lenz, 2004). In this study, female sportscasters are the marginalized group.

In this study, women were the marginalized group. They were looked at as an "other" by audience members and male counterparts. The views women have of their own contributions to the sports world greatly contrasted the views members of the accepted group have of those same women. Standpoint theory (1983) argues that women would not be interested in preserving the status quo when it came to their roles in sports reporting. That status quo currently has them doing lower level jobs, and producing supplementary work.

### **Social Identity**

Social Identity Theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. The theory was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup

discrimination. SIT posits that individuals position themselves in social categories or groups (e.g., nationality, sports team, sex) in which they feel they belong (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982). This theory is about comparing an “in group” against a set of outsiders that don’t belong. In order to discover and come to terms with what’s to be accepted as normal in a society, people have to group themselves. In every level of society there has to be an in crowd and an out crowd. The researcher is not deeming men the “in” crowd and women the “out” crowd, he’s arguing that if the views of someone in the accepted crowd say something like “Think lesser of women” then people that strive to be a part of that accepted crowd will likely adopt those same viewpoints. People on the outside want to feel like they’ve been admitted to a prestigious group of people. As Michael Hogg (2006) writes: “Social Identity Theory defines group cognitively — in terms of people’s self conception as group members. A group exists psychologically if three or more people construe and evaluate themselves in terms of shared attributes that distinguish them collectively from other people.” (p. 111).

### **Research Questions**

Based on the previous discussion, the following research questions were proposed: RQ1: What roles are female sports broadcasters expected to hold during sporting events by the audience? RQ2: How credible do viewers see female sports broadcasters to be when compared to their male counterparts? RQ3: Do men and women receive the same amount of respect when it comes to sports broadcasting from the audience? RQ4: Is there a disconnect between the way sports media consumers view female broadcasters and the way those same female broadcasters view themselves?

## CHAPTER 3 METHODS

### **Methodology**

This study focused specifically on the advancements women have made in the sports reporting field. In order to accurately gauge the way things have or haven't changed over the years, the researcher needed to speak with people in different phases of their careers. People who started their careers at different points in time will have different memories and their experiences will be different. There are policies that are accepted now in the workplace that might have been considered outlandish 30 years ago. By speaking to people with different recollections of what it was like for women in the sports media workplace, the researcher constructed a timeline of noticeable changes that have occurred for women over the years.

The researcher's in-depth interview subjects were Gayle Seirens, Beth Mowins, Carolyn Peck and Julie Quittner.

#### **Gayle Seirens**

Gayle Seirens is a news anchor for WFLA-TV in Tampa. She joined in 1977 as a weekend sports reporter and anchor. She was the first female sportscaster in the Tampa Bay area and in 1981 she was recognized as the Bay area's best reporter by *Tampa Bay Metro Magazine*. On December 17th 1987, Sierens became the first woman to broadcast a NFL game on network television.

Seirens has spent much of her career working on news, but her sports background is also very strong. The fact that she made history by becoming the first woman to do a NFL broadcast makes her special and her insight critical to this study. Sierens, age 59 at the time of the interview, has been covering sports longer than any

other woman the researcher spoke to so she'd be best suited to speak on trends for women in the sports reporting field as they have developed over the years.

### **Beth Mowins**

Beth Mowins is a reporter and play by play announcer for ESPN and CBS. She is the second woman to call nationally televised football games for ESPN starting in 2005. Mowins was a high school athlete, playing basketball, soccer and softball at Cicero-North Syracuse High School. She also played basketball for two seasons at Lafayette College. Mowins began her sports broadcasting career in 1991 at WXHC-FM radio in New York as a news and sports producer.

Mowins, age 45 at the time of the interview was selected because she has been involved with sports reporting long enough to remember what things were like early on for women breaking into the field. As a pioneer of sports broadcasting for females, the memories she has provide valuable insight because they can help paint the picture of what things might have been like for women and how they've changed over the years. Her experience as an athlete at the high school and collegiate level also give her added depth as a broadcaster and analyst.

### **Carolyn Peck**

Carolyn Peck has been a color analyst for ESPN since 2006. Before working with ESPN she played collegiate basketball at Vanderbilt from 1985 to 1988. She took a break from basketball, but returned to play in 1991 professionally in Italy for three weeks and then for Japan for 2 years. Her coaching career began in 1993 in Tennessee under Pat Summitt for two years. From 1995-1996 Peck was an assistant coach at the University of Kentucky. She was an assistant coach at Purdue from 1996-1997 under Nell Fortner. She became the Head Coach at Purdue in 1997. Peck coached at Purdue

from 1997-1999, before taking a head coaching and general managing job with the WNBA's Orlando Miracle. During her stint at Purdue, Peck was named Women's Basketball Coach of the Year by the Associated Press and her team also won a National Championship. After her brief coaching experience in the WNBA, Peck returned to coaching collegiate basketball with the University of Florida from 2002-2007.

Carolyn Peck, age 47 at the time of interview has experience as a player, coach and broadcaster for women's basketball. Her insight is valuable because of the different perspectives each of those jobs requires. Peck understands what it's like for a woman being involved with the media; she understands the pressure and expectations associated with trying to succeed in a male dominated realm.

### **Julie Quittner**

Julie Quittner, age 23 at the time of the interview, is the newest sports reporter of the group. The researcher chose to speak to her because her insight would be interesting to compare to that of the focus groups because those participants are around her age. According to the Gainesville Television Network Website (2012):

Julie Quittner is a University of Florida graduate who as always had a passion for sports. Julie grew up in South Florida and interned in the sports departments of prominent TV stations in that area where she covered Miami professional sports teams. Throughout college until now, she has covered multiple Gators sporting events, from the Elite Eight (Men's collegiate basketball) in 2011 to the Gator Bowl. (GTN website, 2012).

Julie Quittner belongs to a new age of sports reporting women, an age that may know opportunities older women may not have been able to start their careers with. Her insight might coincide with the focus group participants more so than any of the other broadcasters the researcher spoke with because of the similar thought process that may exist between people belonging to the same age demographic. When it comes to

women involved with sports reporting, the status quo that the focus group participants and Julie Quittner have become familiar with may be very different from the accepted norms that the other in-depth interview subjects dealt with.

In addition to the in-depth interviews are the focus group interviews. The researcher conducted 4 focus group interviews with approximately 6-8 members in each group. The researcher was looking to gauge sentiments towards female reporters and analysts from the sports media consuming public in a college age demographic. For the purposes of this study that age demographic is 18-25 years of age. This demographic is one of the largest consumers of sports information.

Even though Enoch (2012) says that college-aged males are the main sports media consumers, both males and female college students were interviewed for this study. Interviewing college females proved particularly informative as their responses were compared with female sports reporters in the industry. The findings provided links between any disparities involving what college females thought the sports industry was like, and what female sportscasters actually experienced.

### **Rationale for Focus Groups**

Focus groups were used in this study because they provided a way to gather multiple opinions using targeted questioning. “In implementing focus groups as an approach to evaluation research, a clear sense of the research goals and the moderator's job in relation to the goals is essential” (Data Collection Methods for Program Evaluation: Focus Groups, 2008).

The opinions participants shared during the focus groups came largely from the experiences they've had when it comes to viewing the contributions made by women in the sports reporting field. “Using focus groups can help in facilitating access to ‘tacit,

uncodified and experiential knowledge', as well as the opinions and meanings of the participants" (Hopkins, 2007, pgs. 528-529). Focus groups focus on depth, rather than breadth. They are effective at looking closely at a few specific issues and really allow participants the opportunity to thoroughly discuss the issues presented to them. The interviewing method was more suitable for this study because the underlying issue that was discussed was the current status of women in sports broadcasting. All of the questions in some form or fashion related back to that main theme, eliminating the need to cover many different topics.

### **Rationale for In-Depth Interviews**

The in-depth interview has the same advantage as the focus group. A one-on-one conversation with a woman currently involved in sports reporting has limitless opportunities for insight to the researcher. These interviews served as the foundation for the study because they reflected thoughts and emotions directly from people who have dealt with some of the issues raised in the focus groups. The comparison between what the media consuming audience thinks of female sports broadcasters and what those same sports broadcasters think of themselves is where the analysis for this study mainly focused. The in-depth interview is only different from the focus group in scope. By focusing on one subject at a time, the in-depth interview provided a tailored collection of data, unique to the participants' own memories and experiences.

### **Specific Objectives**

The aim of the focus group interviews was to discover student opinions about female sports broadcasters. The objective was to better understand if college students viewed female and male sportscasters as the same or if different qualities influenced their perceptions of how well these individuals do their jobs. The in-depth interviews with

current and former female analysts were compared directly to focus group participant feedback. The goal of this study was discovering whether the views the general audience has of female sports reporters match the way females in the sports industry identify themselves. In addition to discovering if the two opinions match up, the researcher sought to discover whether men and women in the sports reporting industry were viewed with the same level of respect from the audience.

### **Research Instrument**

Focus group questions (See Appendix A) served as a guide to discussion about the way female sports broadcasters, analysts and sideline reporters were perceived by the media consuming audience. The researcher wanted to determine whether females who fill these roles (broadcaster, analyst or sideline reporter) were respected on the same level as male counterparts who held the same positions. Preliminary questions gauged how heavily participants consume sports media. Questions like, "How many hours of sports broadcasting do you watch per week?" were important here because they demonstrated how heavily participants consume sports media. Broad questions like that one were utilized because the researcher believes that the responses from individuals will be directly correlated to how much sports media they consume. Another guide question was, "How many sports broadcasters are you familiar with?" The researcher was looking to see how many specific broadcasters could be named by participants regardless of gender. After that question was answered the researcher asked, "How many female sports broadcasters are you familiar with?" expecting participants to name as many as they know. The researcher expected there to be a discrepancy between the number of male and female sportscasters named and used those questions to springboard into discovering why there seemed to be a discrepancy.

If in fact, participants named more male than female broadcasters the researcher asked, “Why do you feel there is a discrepancy between the number of male and female broadcasters?” which in turn relates to the main purpose of this study which is identifying why the audience saw female sports broadcasters differently from males.

Participants were be asked, “How much attention do you pay to commentary during sports broadcasts?” That question helped the researcher gauge the level of audience interaction during sporting events by noting the amount of attention they gave to broadcasters during a game.

If commentary was seen as an important aspect of sports reporting, that lead the researcher to the subject of whether the source providing the commentary needed to be credible. Credibility ultimately lead back to research question two (How credible do viewers see female sports broadcasters to be when compared to their male counterparts?)

In-depth interviews were intended to gain deeper understanding of the existence of negative sentiments towards women in sports broadcasting; specifically, the plight and struggle of females in a male-dominated realm.

### **Data Collection**

Four focus groups of eight to ten college students each were asked a series of guided questions to better understand their views on sports. The questions specifically focus on issues involving female and male sports reporters. For the parameters of this study “college-aged” was considered 19-24 years old. This group was targeted because it is the heaviest consumer of ESPN products (Enoch, 2012).

The four focus groups were gender specific; an all-male, all-female, and two mixed gendered groups. This format was created to better facilitate conversation with

focus group participants. The researcher believed males would be more comfortable speaking around other males, and females would be comfortable speaking with other females. The researcher also believed the more comfortable the participants were, the more frank and honest their responses would be. The mixed gendered groups were utilized to discover if participants would first acknowledge a discrepancy exists between males and females in the sports industry and then expound upon their beliefs in the presence of the opposite gender.

This study used qualitative data collection to better understand how individuals perceive female sports broadcasters and analysts. Members of each focus group were asked the same general questions.

The researcher served moderator and facilitator during each focus group session. Name tags were provided for participants, allowing them to identify themselves however they wish. The researcher also had an assistant present to help video record each focus group session. With a visual representation of each participant, emotions that accompany responses were noted, which another dimension to the transcription process. “The expression, attitude of individual, the intensity of the conversation etc. can be perceived by the researcher, which can modify the moderator’s decision and also can be counted in the research result” (Focus Group Issues, PB works n.d.)

Focus group participants were compensated through course extra credit and the researcher provided food and drinks during the focus group sessions. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour

Insight from female reporters on gender inequalities enhanced the depth of this study by showing that the effects of double standards and gender discrimination in the sports reporting industry were applicable and not just theoretical.

Sports analysts work in a very deadline oriented environment and are always extremely busy, and therefore finding participants may prove difficult. Participants were contacted via email and asked to participate and by using a snowball sample, they were asked if they knew any other female sports broadcasters that were also willing to participate.

The format for the in-depth interviews was similar to the focus group format. There were a few general questions to get the subject talking about her experiences in the broadcasting field. (See Appendix B) Questions like “Can you talk about some difficulties (if any) you’ve encountered during your career or “Do you feel there is a discrepancy between the way men and women are treated in your field?” served that purpose.

The biggest difference between the aim of the in-depth interview questions and the focus group questions was the fact that the in-depth interview questions were more catered to a woman in the sports industry. Interviews were 15-45 minutes long and followed a structured guide with the exception of any follow up questions. (Appendix B)

### **Focus Group Interviews**

The issue of credibility addressed in research question two, was revisited with the question “Does experience as an athlete affect how credible you see a broadcaster to be?” In some instances, female sports broadcasters in the booth or along sidelines report on sports they have not played, such as NFL sideline reporters where obviously

there have not been any female players. So it was important to discover if participants took female reporters less seriously than a male who played on that same level.

In addition, focus group participants were asked “What roles are women expected to hold during sporting event?” By better understanding what purpose audience members expect women to fill in sports reporting, inconsistencies with those expectations were discovered and evaluated.

The question “What qualities does a good sports broadcaster have?” related to research question two (How credible do viewers see female sports broadcasters compared to their male counterparts?) By developing a definition of what a “good” sportscaster is perceived to be, it was easier to determine if focus group members think female broadcasters/sideline reporters fell into that category.

The question “Do you think there is a discrepancy between the amount of time men and women spend on air in sports broadcasting?” was related to the overall purpose of this study. The researcher asked focus group participants if they felt more on-air time meant more authority on a subject. The researcher drew conclusions as to why females seem to be lagging in the amount of on-air time they received in comparison to men.

Additional questions included “How important to sports is sideline reporting?” to learn more about whether participants believed sideline reporting was an integral part of the sports reporting package. The researcher came to some conclusions as to why focus group participants view female reporters differently than males by evaluating the importance placed on the types of reporting women were likely to be found doing.

## **In-Depth Interviews**

For the in-depth interview questions, the overriding questions were “Do you feel there is a discrepancy between the way men and women are treated in your field?” Responses to this question were most heavily analyzed because the responses made up the opinions of those representing the industry. Another important question was “Do you ever feel like you need to prove yourself because you’re a woman in an industry that seems to be male dominated?” Responses to these questions provided a firsthand account of the industry from those most impacted.

Interviewing every female sports reporter wasn’t feasible, so the aims of the in-depth interviews were taking “snap shots” of experiences women have had in the sports industry. Similarities were compared and the composite view that female sportscasters have of themselves is what was used to relate back to the main question of this study: “Is there a disconnect between the way the sports media audience sees female broadcasters and the way they see themselves?”

The questions “Do you think positive changes are occurring in the sports industry?” and “What else could be done to further advancement for women in this industry?” are very important because they focus on the current status and treatment of female sports reporters from their own perspective. These questions are critical because they brought the study full circle. By talking about the way women felt about the industry, it was possible to develop a better understanding of the changes that need to be made and the directions that need to be taken since focus group participants and in-depth interview subjects didn’t feel the playing field was level for men and women in the sports industry.

## **IRB Approval**

Before the researcher could speak to anyone, he had to gain approval from the University of Florida's Institutional Review Board. In order to gain approval, the researcher had to explain the purpose of the study, list the types of questions that would be asked, and state any risks that participants could potentially incur. Appendix C is the informed consent document that was signed by each focus group participant after the researcher gained IRB approval. Focus group participants agreed to either use their real name or a pseudonym for identification purposes. They could opt out of the focus group session at any time if they were uncomfortable for any reason. Focus group participants were told that their information would be kept confidential and it wouldn't be shared with anyone without their expressed permission.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Overall, the themes the researcher utilized to create focus group and in-depth interview questions relate to respect, or lack thereof, for females in the sports industry. These themes were used to first identify the roles women have in sports reporting, and then to identify the value placed on the things women bring to the table in the eyes of the sports consuming audience. The following research questions were explored through a series of four focus groups with male and female college students and four in-depth interviews with women working in sports broadcasting at various levels. The research questions were: RQ1: What roles are female sports broadcasters expected to hold during sporting events? RQ2: How credible do viewers see female sports broadcasters to be when compared to their male counterparts? RQ3: Do men and women receive the same amount of respect when it comes to sports broadcasting? RQ4: Is there a disconnect between the way sports media consumers view female broadcasters and the way those same female broadcasters view themselves?

There were 15 female and 11 male focus group participants in total. The researcher had four in-depth interview subjects. Focus group participant ages ranged from 19 to 24 years old. Focus group participants were asked to either give their real name or a pseudonym before speaking for identification purposes during transcription. The in-depth interview subjects were former collegiate and WNBA coach and current ESPN sportscaster Carolyn Peck, current ESPN sportscaster Beth Mowins, former ESPN sportscaster Gayle Sierens, and GTN sports reporter Julie Quittner.

## The Roles Assigned to Women in Sports Reporting

Research question one focused on the positions most often filled by women in the sports reporting field. It was established that sideline reporter was the most common job for a woman in the sports industry to hold. That role was treated with disdain in almost every focus group. It was established that sideline reporter was the role most frequently associated with women in sports broadcasting, but focus group subjects spoke about it as if it was a stepping stone to something more important.

“Morgan” (Twenty-year-old female): I honestly think that is because when you tie sports into it, women are still trying to fight to break into this industry. I feel like sideline reporting is an entrance point. We saw Erin Andrews start off at sideline reporting and now she does College Game Day.

Sportscaster Beth Mowins agreed. She had this to say in an in-depth interview:

Beth Mowins: It’s very difficult for a woman to break in as an analyst because they did not play at that level and quite frankly there are not a whole lot of young female play by play announcers. You’re starting to hear of more and more of them but that seems to be the nature of it and as to why women tend to get steered more towards the sideline, I think that is the first point of entry, if you will, to get into the business and work your way up through the ranks.

“Morgan” then later said sideline reporting is what potential female sportscasters use to prove they belong in the field.

“Morgan”: You have to prove you know your stuff on the sidelines before you can get a chair. It’s sad because a lot of guys don’t have to do that just because of their gender but it’s almost like sideline reporting is like a passageway to something bigger.

Sideline reporting was accepted, but not seen as needed by focus group subjects and nearly every participant said that the sporting world would remain largely unaffected without the jobs that women are doing now.

“Craig” (Twenty-four-year-old male): All you have to know is their name and what the injury is and if they’re going to return to the game or not. They may ask three to five questions at halftime or at the end of the game of the coach. So anybody can feed them those questions, even the photog who’s working with them can say ‘Hey ask them this, this and this.’

Sideline reporting was accepted, but not seen as overly useful by focus group subjects and nearly every participant said that the sporting world would remain largely unaffected without the jobs that women are doing now.

“Rebekah” (Twenty-year-old female): I think that if it (sideline reporting) never would have come into play it wouldn’t have been important. I don’t think it’s vital.

“Talia” (Twenty-year-old female): I don’t think that it’s (sideline reporting) vital to the sport. I mean they always have recaps after the game. People talk about it before, during and after the game. So I feel like sideline reporting is just an extra thing to have for that immediate moment.

Interestingly enough, there were instances in which it seemed sideline reporter was thought to be a role only suited for a woman.

“Katie” (Twenty-year-old female): I think it would actually be kind of awkward for a guy to be on the sidelines just because it’s so normal to see girls there.

Ricki” (Twenty-one-year old female): When I watch football it’s usually with a group of people and we will generate a conversation about whether there is a female sideline reporter or not. I think it’s better to see women there because that gets people talking more.

### **Credibility of Women in the Field**

The second research question dealt with perceived credibility of women in the sports broadcasting field. For the most part, focus group participants felt that women

didn't have it. This is because the concept of credibility was linked directly to playing experience. Twenty-two-year-old male focus group participant "Brandon" said, this about the role playing experience plays in sports broadcasting: "

"Brandon": You know more than an average person. You bring more to the table, more experience, a different kind of insight, more understanding, more wisdom.

Twenty-one-year-old male focus group member "Domingo" added:

"Domingo": Yeah I think that it gives you like some kind of authority when you talk about the game in a way that some reporters cannot do because you played and you experienced it first-hand.

Some male focus group members argued that experience is needed for women and men. They argued that journalists without that experience aren't reaching audiences as effectively and it doesn't only encompass women.

"Devin" (Twenty-one-year-old male): I think the Al Michaels and Jim Nantz's of the world are kind of fading. Even with the World Series Aj Pierzynski was an analyst and he's still playing. So I think it's definitely turning into that kind of world. I think the only position where it's not applicable is being the host of some show. If you want to be an analyst or a reporter you definitely need that sports playing experience.

However, Tampa Channel Eight news anchor and former ESPN sportscaster Gayle Sierens said in an in-depth interview that she believes playing experience is helpful, but not critical to a woman's success in the press box.

Gayle Sierens: I think to be a good play-by-play announcer you don't have to have played the game; you just need to know the game. You need to know the X's and the O's of the game. You don't need to know what it feels like to be at the bottom of the pile, that's what your color announcer is for. So I think that's an invalid criticism.

Sportscaster Beth Mowins felt experience was necessary depending on which position you pursue.

Beth Mowins: I think it's (playing experience) tremendously important from the analyst perspective. Just because you have a background and there's a certain level of built up base knowledge that you already have established and you can speak to sort of, not only what the athletes are doing, but what they're feeling, what they're thinking because you've been there before. So from an analyst's standpoint, I think it's critical. From a play by play standpoint and from a reporter standpoint, I think it's very helpful but I don't think it's a requirement.

The researcher found that in-depth subjects generally felt that playing experience was a plus, but not a necessity for success in the field. They felt that there were other routes to getting where they wanted to go and those involved fact checking and researching. Former college and WNBA coach and current ESPN sportscaster Carolyn Peck said in a separate in-depth interview:

Carolyn Peck: If a female is reporting on football, some consumers may think 'well she's never played the game and therefore how does she know about the game?' but when you really listen to what reporters are reporting on a lot of times it's not what has actually happened on the field, but what built up to that, whether it be a player's injury or a player's hard work, a player's training, those kinds of things are what's conveyed and you don't necessarily have to go through that yourself to understand it.

These views were in direct contrast with the majority of focus group participants who seemed to feel like without experience playing the sport most women simply lacked credibility when it came to sports broadcasting.

### **Respect for Female Sportscasters**

Research question three focused on the issue of respect for sideline reporters by the audience. This respect was compared directly to respect for analysts and broadcasters in the booth during the focus group sessions. Participants generally agreed that sideline reporters do not get the same amount of respect as their peers in the booth get from the audience. In fact, when asked if sideline reporters are given the

same amount of respect as their co-workers in the booth, members of a mixed gendered focus group erupted into laughter before unanimously giving a resounding “No.”

Twenty-one-year-old female focus group member “Kyra” had this to say when asked about the subject: “

“Kyra”: I do not think that sideline reporters have the same level of respect as sports analysts because of the fact that they’re mainly women. Questions of competence, questions of experience in that particular sport and if they are really aware of what’s going on keep sideline reporters from attaining the same level of respect as other broadcasters in the field.

Twenty-two-year-old male participant “Aaron” said that since sideline reporting isn’t something that can be taken seriously on its own, women need to focus on being more physically attractive to grab a male viewer’s attention.

“Aaron”: I think it’s important for the job that they are good looking. I think what they’re going for is since sideline reporting can be brushed under the rug they need to have more appeal. Since the majority of viewership is male, having attractive females report sports increases audience numbers.

Focus group members stated that generally, women need to use their physical characteristics to demand respect from the audience because the actual work they do in the industry isn’t noteworthy.

“Aaron”: When you have a female who doesn’t necessarily have a sports background she has an additional hurdle to jump so people will actually pay attention and listen to her. Part of the appeal is physical attractiveness, as backwards as it may be. It’s a very important thing, especially in a field like sports that can be pretty superficial.

Twenty-year-old-female participant “Jackie” said this about physical appearance:

“Jackie”: I feel like the majority of sideline reporters I’ve seen at least have been attractive because a guy is going to want to watch a hot girl reporting something they actually like watching.

The subject of physical attractiveness dominated focus group discussions. In every scenario a consensus was reached saying that the role of attraction heavily influenced the success of a woman in the field, but had little to no implications for a male in the same field.

Specifically, in a mixed gendered focus group Twenty-four-year-old “Kevin” said this:

“Kevin”: I think that women who are involved in sports reporting are judged on their appearances. I think often times there are a pretty face, or kind of a break from looking at 60-year-old guys in the booth. You know, you go down to the sidelines, you have a twenty something year old nice looking reporter. So it’s kind of I guess planned out that way but I don’t think male reporters have to deal with that.

Male focus group member “Wes” (Twenty-one-years-old) added:

“Wes”: I think that they (the sports audience) want that image, they want that attractiveness. It could attract more viewers. As for men, I think if they project themselves well, if they have a good voice, if they have a good knowledge base, attractiveness is secondary.

Sportscaster Beth Mowins also agreed that physical appearance does play a role. She said:

Beth Mowins: I think you can’t ignore the fact that when you’re working in television how a woman looks on the air has something to do with how she’s judged. Certainly by the fans, since most of the audience is male and it’s TV.

The theme of women operating in a male dominated genre was common between focus groups and in-depth interviews. Thoughts pertaining to male dominance were expressed in several interviews. Those thoughts were associated with issues of the preparedness of female sports reporters when compared to males in the same field. In nearly every conducted interview a female said they felt women needed to be more prepared than males because people were already looking for them to make mistakes.

For instance, in a mixed gendered focus group interview, Twenty-one-year-old “Jen” said:

“Jen”: Women tend to have to overdo it, exceed expectations because there’s this assumption that they aren’t going to be as good or as efficient in some way.

In a different mixed gendered focus group session “Morgan” said:

“Morgan”: I feel like people are almost waiting for you to slip up just because you’re a female. It’s like I’ll be one 150% prepared for an interview that my male counterpart was 75% prepared for. God forbid if I messed up, I’d get looked down upon immediately and it’s just because I’m a female.

However, sportscaster Carolyn Peck argued that the pressure she feels to perform comes from herself, rather than outside influences.

Carolyn Peck: I think that in this business you’re proving yourself every day. Sometimes chemistry just doesn’t fit so you’ve got to prove that you can hang in whatever circumstance or situation you’re put in.

Reporter Julie Quittner shared similar sentiments in an in-depth interview.

Julie Quittner: I think if you are a woman, you have to show those things even more because there’s no lie, it is a male dominated industry. So, I think if you are a woman you have to show that stuff even more than a man does.

The male dominated realm theme led to comments about women having to become “one of the guys” at work, while simultaneously playing up physical attraction for viewers. Focus group participant “Amanda” had this to say:

“Amanda”: I feel like as a woman you have to intellectually be one of the men, you have to be able to recite stats and know what they’re talking about or be able to talk about that awesome play but at the same time you have to be the cute one and physically be feminine but intellectually be a man and that’s really hard to separate sometimes.

In that same session, 20-year-old female participant “Keishla” added:

“Keishla”: Physically the girl part is played up a lot and then mentally, you have to be a boy, or at least pretend like you’re a boy. Because I think they try to sell a physically perfect kind of sports reporter because they are there for the entertainment factor and for their looks a lot of the time.

Sportscaster Carolyn Peck admitted to the existence of male hegemony in the workplace, but she feels that things are slowly changing. According to Peck:

Carolyn Peck: I think that there’s a barrier created by society. Our society is male dominated. I’ve grown up always knowing the male to be the head of the household and the males took care of the females so there’s this dominant mentality. That’s changing, there are more stay at home dads and women are starting to make more of the income, but you still have to consider the way men feel about that.”

### **Does a Disconnect Exist?**

The final research question aims to discover whether a discrepancy exists between the way sports media consumers view female sports broadcasters and the way those same broadcasters view themselves. A disconnect was discovered. This difference in views of women stemmed largely from the roles women are expected to have and the contributions they are thought to make in sports reporting. When asked about the positions women in sports broadcasting often have, participants, both male and female unanimously agreed that sideline reporting was the role most often served. For example, “Craig” said this in a focus group session:

“Craig”: I think mainly you see women as sideline reporters especially with football and basketball. You see very few female play by play commentators. Mostly you’ll see them as maybe a moderator for a pre-game show.

In the same session, 24-year-old male participant “Omar” also added that he sees women in sports broadcasting as “Obviously the host of a pre-game show or someone that will interview someone else at halftime. Former ESPN sportscaster Gayle Sierens says that even though those are the roles women serve now, they’ve come a long way.

Gayle Sierens: I think the roles that they're giving them are much, much bigger than anything that used to go on back in my day, much, much bigger. It bothers me that there's still no women doing play-by-play in the NFL but you do have women now doing play-by-play in college football and most of them are doing a really fine job.

The theme of strong opposition towards women in sports broadcasting appeared frequently, revealing itself in one way or another in every focus group conducted, but most often in focus groups with males present. Much of the opposition came from a seemingly universal belief that women don't have as much of an understanding of sports as their male counterparts. Twenty-year-old male focus group participant "Marshall" said:

"Marshall": I feel like we value a man's opinion more because we really don't look at women as understanding sports like that.

Current ESPN sportscaster Beth Mowins disagreed. In an in-depth interview she said:

Beth Mowins: I think that a woman can do any of the jobs as long as she's prepared, as long as she's good at what she does and I certainly think that women are capable of doing that job, of being an analyst, of being a play by play reporter.

Largely, the focus group participants viewed female sports reporters with little respect. Male participants didn't seem to find value in contributions made by sideline reporting and generally felt that the game wouldn't miss a beat without it. Female focus group participants seemed to feel that there were discrepancies in treatment between males and females in the field but accepted that as the price of admission to an "all-boys club."

When it came to the in-depth interviews, the feedback was different. The results reflected more positive views of women coupled with a much more aggressive attitude

towards gender discrimination. In many cases subjects said they wouldn't allow themselves to be discriminated against. For example, sportscaster Carolyn Peck said:

Carolyn Peck: If you use the excuse the reason you didn't get a job is because you're a female and you let that stop you, then you are your biggest obstacle. You've got to get over that. Just like in any occupation, in broadcasting you've got to work hard, you can't take no for an answer and if you get the answer of no, you find another way to get things done. You cannot allow somebody to tell you that you didn't get the job because you're a woman. You've got to be informed, knowledgeable and prepared. You've got to be confident and not seeking confidence from somebody else.

Former sportscaster Gayle Sierens and current sports reporter Julie Quittner echoed similar sentiments when it came to overcoming obstacles that could present themselves because of their gender during their in-depth interviews. Sportscaster Beth Mowins said that the pressure didn't come from outside, the pressure she felt came from her own competitive nature.

Beth Mowins: I have always been the one who's put pressure on myself to excel whether it was when I was playing or as a reporter, so it's not like I felt that I needed to be better than anybody else in terms of that regard, I was always going to push myself to be the best that I could be, with the understanding that in a lot of instances, people are watching you, watching more closely to see how you're going to do and whether or not you deserve to be there.

## CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS

The major themes of this research are credibility and respect of female sportscasters. In this chapter the researcher will explore whether the viewing audience find females in this field to be credible sources when it comes to presenting sports news. The researcher will also discuss whether the sports media consuming audience respects female sportscasters in the same way that males are respected.

Sideline reporters simply aren't viewed as credible or respected in the same way male analysts are by the sports consuming audience. The actual role isn't taken seriously and the women who hold those roles aren't either. This only furthers a lack of respect for women in sports because they tend to hold roles that the audience doesn't give much credibility to. The researcher came to these conclusions about respect for the sideline reporting role by asking focus group participants if they'd respect male and female sideline reporters in the same way. Specifically, 19-year-old female focus group member "Amanda" said:

"Amanda": It's normal to see a female holding that role. If I saw a male doing that I'd wonder, "Why isn't he in the booth, do you not know as much as the other people up there?"

### **A Return to Theory**

#### **Framing Theory (1993)**

Women are framed in a variety of different ways in sports; many of them are negative. The researcher's findings during focus group sessions heavily supported that claim. In many instances women were judged on things that didn't directly deal with their ability to report sports. "When they are covered, they are often trivialized by

unfavorable comparisons to male athletes that denigrate their athletic prowess, often focusing instead on their appearance and attire” (Bernstein, 2002; Shugart, 2003).

By framing women as sex objects they are diminished as equal society members with viable contributions. They're relegated to the same gender stereotypes women have always been subjected to and it becomes extremely difficult to take them seriously when they're only presented as objects of desire. Female athletes and media personnel alike face the same discriminatory issues in this regard.

“Furthermore, sport media are more likely to use denigrating humor and delve into personal lives in coverage of women in sport” (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Crosset, 1995). This type of framework is more subtle than the ones mentioned previously. However, the effect is the same. Women are presented in a different context, whether they're an athlete, a sideline reporter or a female sports analyst. By diverting our attention to matters out of the professional realm, we as an audience are inclined to believe that the woman's work should be taken less seriously because it's not the focal point. According to this kind of frame questions such as “Who is she dating?” and “What is she wearing?” should take precedent over what she does on the field or in the newsroom.

The researcher argues that the next frame is the most damaging one to views of women in the sporting world. It's the frame that women simply aren't tough enough to handle sports on and off the field. The frame posits that sports should remain an all-boys club because men can handle the pressure while women cannot. As Kinnick (1998) noted, “Research has also demonstrated that media coverage presents women as less able competitors by framing them as emotionally more vulnerable than men.”

This is the most powerful frame because it encompasses more than sports or sports reporting. This frame suggests at the most basic levels that men are stronger and tougher than women. Men can handle the hardships of life while women crack under pressure and should be left with secondary roles.

### **Source Credibility Theory (1953)**

Hovland's Source Credibility Theory (1953) is broken down into trustworthiness and expertise. Sideline reporters aren't seen as having the same amount of expertise as sports analysts by focus group participants. The other side of the equation is trustworthiness. In this, sideline reporters are at a bad start since the position itself is one of low trustworthiness. This is reflected by the fact that both men and women are seen as less trustworthy in the sideline reporting position. Women are seemingly relegated to the position is a gender discussion, but that the position itself lacks trustworthiness can be separated from gender to some degree. Combining trustworthiness and the interplay of objective and subjective aspects of expertise, female sideline reporters are seen as lacking credibility when compared to their male counterparts in the booth.

### **Social Identity Theory (1979)**

Based on the researcher's results, Social Identity Theory (1976) was inconclusive for this study. An "In-group" and an "Out-group" were never explicitly stated by focus group participants or in-depth interview subjects. Generally, focus group members felt that women had a place in sports reporting, even if it was marginal. The researcher believes women were looked at differently because of the kinds of work they do in sports reporting more than anything else. In-depth interview subjects always described themselves as sports reporters that happened to be female. They never

placed themselves in an outside category. Women were identified as sports media personnel, the question of their contributions varied, depending on who the researcher talked to.

### **Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation Theory (1976) was largely supported by the researcher's findings as well. The researcher came to this conclusion based on the roles women in sports reporting tend to have. By relegating women to secondary roles in sports, it becomes easier to see women as second class reporters. Once this view of women has been created, a tendency forms for the audience to take females in the field less seriously than men because the women and men aren't doing the same kind of work.

### **Standpoint Theory (1983)**

Standpoint Theory (1983) was also supported by the researcher's findings. When it came to in-depth interviews compared with focus group sessions, in every scenario there was a difference in the way female sportscasters viewed themselves and the way the audience viewed them. The female sportscasters didn't look at themselves as inept, as the audience tended to. Female sportscasters saw themselves as capable, competitive and goal oriented professionals. Focus group participants (male and female) almost universally described women in sports reporting negatively, while the sportscasters identified themselves positively.

### **Role Congruity Theory**

When it comes to Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory (2002) the bottom line is that people expect males and females to specialize in different leadership roles. Once those lines are crossed problems arise. When people begin to see women holding roles that are typically assigned to men, it's incongruent with gender expectations. The fact

that sports have long been perceived as an “all-boys club” solidifies this theory because women aren’t expected to have the roles that men have always had. This theory was completely supported by the researcher’s findings. Males were expected to be leaders in the sports reporting realm. They were described as being more assertive, knowledgeable and accurate when it came to sports. The agentic stereotypes discussed in the Literature review showed up in every focus group session when men were talked about. In focus group sessions, women were talked about as being supportive, team oriented players in sports reporting. The communal stereotypes associated with women were frequently discussed.

### **Male Hegemony**

The solution to the problem of the male hegemony isn’t easily solved because of how deeply entrenched this way of thinking is in our society. “Hegemonic masculinity is constantly challenged but rarely altered without the consent of men at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The natural solution would be to incorporate more women into the upper echelons of the sports media world with hopes of disassembling the hegemony because of different viewpoints that women would bring to the table. However, some would argue that simply doesn’t happen. “Women in the profession, critics argue, adopt the dominant (hegemonic) values as a matter of course and, thus, become incapable of incorporating real change (Hardin & Shain, 2005; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Since sports broadcasting is a male dominated realm, the researcher believes that some women would try to take on male speaking patterns and delivery techniques to mitigate the differences between themselves and their male counterparts. “Sports and sports broadcasting are structured largely by and for men, and the literature

suggests that both authoritativeness and gender affect perceptions of female sportscasters” (Etling and Young, 2007, p. 121). Speaking that way could help divert attention from the fact that a woman is the one bringing the audience the facts. A latent effect of that approach is continuing the male hegemony because it’s suggesting that the male way is the correct way to do things.

This way of thinking leads to a belief that it doesn’t pay to rock the boat because women are under a microscope as analysts and reporters from the start, much more so than their male counterparts. Forcing women to walk on pins and needles in the sports industry is only perpetuating the male hegemony because women feel pressure from the males who are seen as all knowing authoritative figures with an iron fist hold over their futures in the industry. The researcher argued that all women don’t adopt the hegemonic values and in efforts to divert attention from their femininity. However, the researcher also argued that more women end up trying their best to fit in rather than standing out in a male dominated world. “Even the most attractive and most knowledgeable female sportscaster can’t overcome the stereotype of another pretty face who cannot talk sports. Her sex prevents her from being judged as credible as the least attractive and least knowledgeable male sportscaster” (Torro, 2005, p.2).

The nature of the reporting industry itself is also something the researcher would argue perpetuates the male hegemony. The ideal of objectivity is critical here; it might have something to do with why some women distance themselves from supporting women more overtly in the sports media world. “In a profession where objectivity is valued, they might not want to be seen as advocating for women because doing so is considered selfish and unprofessional” (Chambers et al., 2004). The scenario is a

precarious one for women in the sports world. They're criticized by men and women alike, because they can't mirror men too (due to their femininity if for no other reason) closely in the industry, and they can't openly support women all the time. Holland (1987) argues women newscasters "cannot escape their femininity, yet the possibility of making a contribution that is specifically on behalf of women is ruled out" (p. 148).

The older male focus group participants (ages 23 to 24) were generally more moderate in their views on women in sports broadcasting. They either believed that women served a legitimate purpose with their contributions, or that one day the playing field would be level as far as who has an opportunity to secure a top tier analyst position. This might have social implications because as sportscaster Carolyn Peck alluded to, sports are often a microcosm of the society they reflect. As these changes occur, it's interesting to note that there seems to be more resistance from younger men, but more acceptance from an older crowd.

### **The Focus Groups**

The four conducted focus groups were grouped by gender. The all-male and all-female groups were intended to create an atmosphere in which audience members could express themselves without worrying about having to be politically correct in front of the opposite gender. Those were the focus groups the researcher expected to be the most frank, those were the groups expected to have the most outlandish comments about women in sports broadcasting. In actuality, sentiments towards women in sports broadcasting were uniform across the board. Subjects in every focus group (no matter which gender) expressed the same feelings towards women in the sports reporting field. They spoke about the contributions of women as mildly significant but nothing that

would alter the face of sports if they were discontinued. For example, “Kevin” said in an all-male focus group:

“Kevin”: Well, I think it (sports) would definitely be unaffected. The game of football, the game of basketball wouldn’t change without sideline reporting.

### **The In-Depth Interviews**

All four women spoken to were at different stages of their sports broadcasting careers and all four of them had unique insight to certain subjects which seemed to be a direct correlation to the amount of time they’d spent in the field. For example, a strong, apparent opposition to women in the sports broadcasting realm was a distinct memory to Gayle Seirens, but to a new reporter like Julie Quittner, those same sentiments were unfathomable. By asking four women, all from different time eras similar questions about treatment of women in the sports reporting realm, the researcher composed an outline of thoughts and sentiments towards women in the field over the last 30 years or so.

### **Roles**

Focus group participants perceive women in sports as sideline reporters with few exceptions, depending on if the woman has playing experience at a professional level or not. The focus group members see the sideline reporting role as secondary to the analysis roles carried out in the booth. So since the roles are secondary, it makes sense to assume that the women holding them don’t have the same drive, determination and professional ability as their male counterparts up in the booth. The researcher believes that this is a latent form of opposition, allowing women to participate in the industry with men, but relegating them to jobs that aren’t seen as desired or important to the sport, even if the amount of experience the man and woman have in the field is the same.

Pamela Creedon's book, "Babes in Toyland" (1994) states:

The idea that women writing about sports is unnatural—perhaps a little pathetic—is still common enough to elicit comments even from children more than 30 years after Title IX opened doors for women in sports, and consequently, sports journalism. The women who are employed are too often relegated to lesser, more supportive roles than their male counterparts who have similar if not identical credentials (p.15).

When it comes to future roles for females in the sports industry, the outlook wasn't very optimistic according to focus group participants. In many instances they felt that women would continue to be given the roles they currently have. They seemed to believe that the sportscasting role is going to former athletes and coaches rather than reporters with classical training and as time goes on this trend will only continue to grow. The only time focus group participants agreed that they could see women at a top level analysis position, is if the sport they were covering was one played by women.

Twenty-one-year-old female focus group participant, "Devin" said:

"Devin": The only way I could see it is if they were doing women's sports, like women's basketball and women's softball and stuff like that. I can see former women's athletes dominating those positions. But as far as NBA, NFL and college football? There's no way.

Former ESPN sportscaster Gayle Sierens felt much more optimistic for the future of female sports reporters. She said in an in-depth interview:

Gayle Sierens: I think the sky is the limit for women right now. I think networks are looking for talented women to come in and do a job.

### **Credibility**

In many scenarios, women lost credibility with focus group participants because they generally don't have the same playing experience that males in the field have.

There seemed to be more to it than that because focus group participants still gave

more credit to an analyst like Bob Costas (who doesn't have professional sports playing experience either). In a focus group twenty-year-old male "Corey" said:

"Corey": I would give more credit to Bob Costas. That's just because he's worked NBC and covered the Olympics, he also has his own show on HBO, so I would value Bob Costas' opinion over that of a woman's who's just in the industry because she can report well and is decent looking.

So playing experience seems to be more important for women than for men according to focus group participants. In-depth interview subjects felt playing experience was helpful, but not critical. For instance, according to former ESPN sportscaster Gayle Sierens:

Gayle Sierens: You don't have to play the game of football or any other sport to be a good play-by-play announcer; you just have to know the game.

The only women who were given credibility were women with professional playing experience. Doris Burke was brought up in every focus group and she was seen as a reputable source for sports reporting because of her basketball career. Focus group participants clearly stated that women don't know as much as the men do because they lack the insight gained from playing with other men at the professional level. However, experience doesn't necessarily equate to respect in the case of the focus groups. Men who didn't play sports like Bob Costas for instance, were not talked about in the same way women without playing experience were discussed. The men with no sports experience were still given credence over women in every scenario. The surprising thing to note was the fact that when it came to in-depth interviews, the subjects that had playing and coaching professional experience at the highest level were the main ones saying experience was helpful but not necessary.

The researcher expected males to be the only ones who would look to other males as authority figures when compared to women in the field, but there were some

instances in which female focus group participants mirrored those sentiments. For example, in a mixed gendered focus group twenty one-year-old-female “Brinkley” said:

“Brinkley”: It’s easier for me to see the male as the authority because to me they seem to know more about what’s going on.

In that same focus group session another female (twenty one-year-old “Jen”) added:

“Jen”: I kind of agree with her unfortunately. I feel like a lot of times they put a woman on camera just because she’s a pretty face and she’s not as knowledgeable.

### **Respect**

Focus group participants were asked if they respected sideline reporters the same way they respected analysts and broadcasters that work in the booth. The resounding answer, in every focus group was “No.” In one mixed gendered focus group the answer “no” came after a bout of laughter from males and females alike, as if the notion of respecting the positions in the same way was simply outrageous. Focus group participants were also asked if they respected male sideline reporters and the answer to that was also “no.” At best, sideline reporters were seen as little more than a sideshow, a momentary distraction from the people who actually do the reporting.

Interestingly enough, it was noted that sideline reporters were fed information on questions to ask and things to say. It was also noted that people in the booth were sometimes fed information in the same manner (sometimes from sideline reporters themselves). However, people working in the booth were always talked about with more respect than those on the field. Male focus group participant “Aaron” said:

“Aaron”: People in the booth are perceived as better at their craft, they’re more important.

In Chapter Four, the researcher determined from focus group participant responses that viewers generally didn't respect the contributions made by women to the sports reporting field. In several instances, focus group subjects casually referred to people working in the booth as "guys" rather than people. The researcher also believes that by identifying people in the broadcasting booth that way, audience members are expressing assumptions that men are expected to be given those positions.

The themes utilized to form focus group and in-depth interview questions are all linked. The themes of credibility and respect are directly related to one another. According to focus group participants, a reporter or analyst can't be respected without credibility. More often than not, that credibility comes from playing experience, but there are still a few scenarios in which that experience isn't needed in order to be seen as an authority figure, e.g., Bob Costas. The problems for women in this field arise because they aren't looked at by the audience with respect, nor are they given credibility. Even a female with playing experience like Doris Burke wasn't respected as much as an ex-NBA player because viewers said the NBA and the WNBA aren't comparable. So it seems that the key element which creates credibility (playing experience) isn't enough to bridge the gender gap when it comes to respecting male and female sports media personnel in the same way.

A trend was noted when it came to male focus group participant responses. It seemed like younger men (ages 19 to 22) had more extreme opinions on the roles women serve in sports broadcasting and what the future holds for them.

### **Is a Disconnect Present?**

Female sportscasters view themselves and their contributions to the sports field one way (in a positive, proactive manner), while the general viewing audience view

those same sportscasters quite differently (usually with disdain). To answer research question four: Is there a disconnect between the way sports media consumers view female broadcasters and the way those same female broadcasters view themselves? Yes, there is a disconnect present. The audience tends to view female sports reporters with contempt. While they recognize the positions most likely held by females in the field, they also label those roles as subservient and supplemental. The researcher believes that there is a discrepancy between the thought process females in the sports reporting field are presumed to have by the audience and the way they actually think (according to the sportscasters).

Focus group participants largely described sideline reporters as meek, bewildered women who need to be fed information constantly because they generally know little to nothing of the sport they cover (unless they actually played that sport). Specifically, twenty year-old-male focus group participant “Joey” said:

“Joey”: I think a lot of viewers just wouldn’t trust a woman doing the play by play or just narrating the game although that may not be fair, I think there’s just a bias against women that they might not understand athletics as much as men do.

In contrast, in-depth interview subjects described sideline reporters and women in the sports reporting field in a completely different manner, regardless of playing experience. Former sportscaster Gayle Sierens said:

Gayle Sierens: I don’t think they’re (women in sports reporting) complacent now, I think right now they’re pretty darn aggressive and pretty darn assertive.

Even thoughts on the future of women in sports broadcasting were split right down the middle depending on who was speaking about them. Focus group participants largely agreed that women would never get to a point where they were giving analysis

without the presence of a man. Specifically focus group participant “Craig” said, “As far as them (women) overtaking men and filling the roles of analysts and the guy you see at the desk talking, I don’t see them ever getting those kinds of roles. Maybe more women as hosts, as sideline reporters, maybe in that way, but as far as seeing a table of like even two or three women talking about something like the NBA playoffs, I don’t think we’re ever going to see that.” Not surprisingly, views from in-depth interview subjects differed. Current GTN sports reporter Julie Quittner said,

Julie Quittner: Erin Andrews and Rachel Nichols, I turn them up especially to really take some time and see what they do and try to better myself. Years ago, I would have had to look up to a man, or maybe I wouldn’t have even got in the industry. These women have kind of paved the way for young women like me to feel that I have a chance and work at it. So I think it has come a long way and I think it will continue to grow.

### **Limitations**

The single greatest limitation of this research was sample size. In order to gather a more accurate reading on the thoughts of audience members towards females in sports broadcasting, more people need to be interviewed. Also, the sample size was an issue for the in-depth interviews. More subjects who are actively involved with sports reporting would have given a sharper image of what things are currently like for women working in the field today. However, this is an exploratory study on gender equality in sports reporting. Responses should provide early indicators of how female reporters are viewed by members of the public versus how the position is seen by actual sports reporters.

An important limitation of focus groups to acknowledge is any agenda the moderator may have. The moderator has a duty to facilitate conversation and could steer participants towards reaching certain conclusions if the right questions were

asked. By paying close attention to the responses of the participants and by making certain not to pose leading questions, the moderator should be able to avoid this, but it is worth noting. Every sports broadcaster has gone through different experiences during the course of their careers. Speaking to three or four analysts will not provide a complete representation of the entire female sports reporting world, but this study is exploratory in nature and seeks to discover common themes between audience expectations and the beliefs of the reporters.

The focus group subjects all fit into a college aged demographic. Opinions on women in sports broadcasting might have varied if the pool of ages interviewed was broader than 19 to 24.

### **Future Research**

During the data collection and compilation process, the researcher noted that younger male subjects tended to have much more extreme views on the roles women serve and have the ability to efficiently work in sports broadcasting. It seemed that as the men got older, their views became more moderate. In almost every scenario, a male older than twenty three had optimistic views towards women in sports reporting. This trend could be further researched with a survey or experiment to document and quantify men's views towards women so if a change does actually occur with age, it can be logged.

This study made use of qualitative research instruments. Findings might have been more concrete if coupled with quantitative instruments as well. Utilizing something like a survey or questionnaire to gauge opinions of the effectiveness of female sportscasters and relevance of sideline reporting could have strengthened claims made by qualitative data collection methods.

## APPENDIX A FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### **Sports Viewing**

1. How much attention would you say you pay to the commentary during sports broadcasts?

### **Sports Broadcasters**

1. Does experience as an athlete affect how credible you see them?
2. Does the level of skill an athlete had make the source more credible?
3. Does physical appearance make a difference when it comes to how much attention you pay to a sports broadcaster?
4. Are there physical qualities that are more preferable for certain job positions? For instance, when you hear the term, sideline reporter, describe what that person looks like from your perspective?
5. What qualities does a good sports broadcaster have?
6. What kind of role do you think women most often serve when it comes to sports reporting?

### **Thoughts On Women**

1. Do you think women and men are capable of the same level of sports reporting?
2. Is it easier for you to view a male or a female as an authority for sports knowledge? Why or why not?

### **Secondary Questions**

1. How many hours of sports programming do you watch per week?
2. How many sports broadcasters can you say you are familiar with?
3. How many female sports broadcasters are you familiar with?
4. How many sideline reporters are you familiar with?
5. Do you think there is a discrepancy between the amount of time men and women spend on air in sports broadcasting?
6. What do you think about sideline reporting?
7. How important to sports is sideline reporting?

APPENDIX B  
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Background**

1. How long have you been involved with sports reporting?
2. What are the qualities of a good sports reporter?
3. What made you decide you wanted to choose this career path?

**Sports Reporting**

1. What's it like being a sports reporter who happens to be female?
2. Can you talk about some of the difficulties (if any) you've encountered during your career?
3. Do you think any of the opposition you've encountered has anything to do with your gender?
4. Do you feel there is a discrepancy between the way men and women are treated in your field? Why or why not?
5. What can be done to make the playing field more level for men and women in this industry (if you feel it isn't already)
6. Do you ever feel like you need to prove yourself because you're a woman in an industry that seems to be male dominated?
7. Do you ever feel like you need to be more prepared than your male counterparts?
8. What do you think the future holds for female sports reporters?
9. Do you think positive changes are occurring and what else could be done to further advancement for women in this industry?

## APPENDIX C INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### **Purpose Of The Research Study:**

The purpose of this study is discovering whether there is a disconnect between the way the audience views female sportscasters and the way those same sportscaster see themselves.

### **What You Will Be Asked To Do In The Study:**

In this study, you will be asked a series of questions covering subjects ranging from how much sports media you view on a weekly basis, to how you perceive female sportscasters. There will be a series of general questions, leading to more specific questions about your thoughts on the roles of women in sports broadcasting and reporting.

### **Time Required:**

1 hour- 1hour and 30minutes

### **Risks And Benefits:**

Benefits from this study include shedding some light on the feelings you may have towards females in the sports broadcasting realm. If it is discovered that there is indeed a discrepancy between the levels of respect male and female sports casters receive, other studies aimed at revealing why this is the case may be carried out. There are no risks to you for participating in the study.

### **Compensation:**

You will be compensated with food and drink (Domino's pizza and 2 liter sodas).

### **Confidentiality:**

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You will have the opportunity to provide a pseudonym to be identified by if you so wish.

### **Voluntary Participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

**Right To Withdraw From The Study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

**Whom To Contact If You Have Questions About The Study:**

Tory Dawson 2800 SW Willison Road Apt 611 Gainesville Fl, 32608. (954) 881

5722

**Whom To Contact About Your Rights As A Research Participant In The Study:**

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250;

phone 392-0433.

**Agreement:**

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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