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Game, Set, and Match: A Content Analysis on The Commentating of Tennis Broadcasters for the
2018 US Open Championship Weekend

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Media and Communication
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

by
Ana Gerbasi
March 2019

Dr. Susan E. Waters, Chair

Dr. Brian Johnston

Dr. Leslie McCallister

Keywords: Gendered Language, Portrayal, Content Analysis, Framing Theory

ABSTRACT

Game, Set, and Match: A Content Analysis on The Commentating of Tennis Broadcasters for the 2018 US Open Championship Weekend

by

Ana Gabriela Gerbasi Blanco

Previous research has shown a difference on the athletes' portrayal based on gendered language use on television broadcasting of sporting events. A content analysis on the 2018 Tennis US Open Championship Weekend for both men's and women's tennis matches explains the structure of the broadcasting commentating done by the network that has the rights to this tournament. The study looks at different categories of the content of the comments and the descriptors that are used to refer to both female and male athletes. Framing and priming theories were the theoretical frameworks for this study. Findings revealed no significant change was observed with athletic skill and strategy-based comments for either gender. The findings also showed that descriptors related to emotionality were more common in the commentary with women and that stat-based comments were more common in the commentary on the men's side.

DEDICATION

Home is not a place, it's a feeling.

This study is dedicated to the two most loving and caring people in my life, my mother and grandmother, who have inspired me to keep growing as a person and professional from miles away. Also, I would like to dedicate this study to my country, Venezuela. I was lucky enough to grow there and be raised in the land, time went by and we had to part ways but I cannot wait to see you again, and see you free.

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From the bottom my heart, thank you all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women were not allowed to compete in the Olympics in 1896 because it was considered inappropriate. Four years later in the 1900 Paris Olympics, women were only allowed to compete in golf or tennis, and the total female representation was 1.6% (International Olympics Committee, 2009). Fast forward to 2019 and female sport representation is available for consumption on a variety of platforms in multiple sports. Whether by traditional television, streaming or other consumption methods, the media plays an impactful role in the audience's interpretation of sporting events (Halbert & Latimer, 1994). There are many positive effects to the exposure of female sport to the masses such as increased endorsement deals and influence on young girls throughout the world (reference). There are also many negatives effects as well. Often times the media devalues and marginalizes women through the sexualization of female athletes' physique and compsure (Shugart, 2003). The way female athletes are portrayed in the media helps mold society's view of not just athletes but women in general (Davis & Tuggle, 2012). The purpose of this study is to review past research and to examine the differences in how the media currently portrays male and female athletes to determine whether the traditional or gendered of comment exists in tennis. This study will look at six matches: three women's tennis matches and three men's tennis matches that took place during the championship weekend of the 2018 US Open Championship broadcast under the ESPN network. A consistent team of broadcasters provided commentary throughout these matches and their comments were analyzed to determine if there is any difference in the language used to describe female and male tennis players.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender in Sports

When it comes to studies about gender portrayal, the literature suggests that female athletes described as attractive were going to be perceived more positively than those that were not described as attractive (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). Based on this description, the idea of the media having control over how the audience perceives an athlete differently because of the way they are described is a very powerful tool. Many studies have demonstrated a presence of gender bias in televised sports broadcasts (Billings & Eastman, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003; Billings, 2005; Billings, Angelini & Eastman, 2005; Knight & Giuliano, 2001; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Shugart, 2003; Bissell & Duke, 2007). The use of differential language by on-air sports commentators has supported assumptions of athletic gendered roles surrounding athletic performance for many years (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). These findings are not limited to US Sport; gendered linguistic differences have occurred within other nations' sport commentary (Billings, Angelini, MacArthur, Bissel, & Smith, 2014). The sexualization, or gender bias, of athletes is accomplished in a variety of ways, such as passive objectification and sexualization of performance; these are not new to the business of sport. However, they appear to be less obvious, and part of the legitimate coverage in today's media (Shugart, 2003). These gender-biased comments have taken a different turn over the course of the last few years.

Sport commentators have the ability to focus an audience's attention to aspects of an event that might be missed by the casual fan (Halbert & Latimer, 1994). This power to influence the masses can also be unintentionally framed in a gender-biased manner. For example, in the

sport tennis, physical attractiveness for female athletes has been shown to be three times that of male athletes (Billings, Angelini & Eastman, 2005). Bissell & Duke (2007) analyzed women's volleyball games for the 2004 Olympics, and found that 65 - 80% of the comments made by commentators were not coded under the "calling the game" and "reporting the score" categories (Bissell & Duke, 2007). The results of this study suggest that a majority of comments during the game were not related to the actual competition, but rather the athlete's strength, agility, athleticism (Bissell & Duke, 2007). Another content analysis in the early 2000s examined the language of the 2000 Summer Olympics. This research suggested that female athletes were viewed as having less athletic skill and less commitment to their sports than male athletes (Billings & Eastman, 2002). Billings et al. (2002) found the discussion by commentators about athletic performance showed that comments about physicality and athleticism was 61% for men and comments about intelligence/mental skill, hard work/effort, determination/motivation were higher for men than women. Positive consonance, looks and appearance and background were higher for females than for males. A similar study by the same researchers examined the 2002 Winter Olympics, and the results suggested that female athletes were consistently praised for superior athletic skills, which contradicted the results from the 2002 study (Billings & Eastman, 2003). Regardless of gender, focusing on attractiveness to the point of exclusion of athletic ability, had consequences on how the audience perceived the athlete. The media negatively impacts an athlete's image by focusing on the athletes' attributes instead of their athleticism (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). Focusing on athletes' images and physical appearances affect the sports industry as a whole. The selling of women in the media has been based on their sexualization and has been established by the fact that most of the sports audience in general is primarily formed by males (Shugart, 2003). For example, the crowd has admired an

athlete like Anna Kournikova for her physical appearance, causing the promotion of her as an athlete to be based on her body, which served as an endorsement for sexual appeal (Bissell & Duke, 2007). Up until 2007, Kournikova earned \$11 to \$15 million solely through modeling and endorsements (Bissell & Duke, 2007).

There has been a lot of progress made with women's participation since the Olympic Games were introduced in 1896. The 2012 London Olympics had that highest female participation in Olympic history, and was the first time ever that female athletes received more air-time than men (female beach volleyball and gymnastics) (Billings et al., 2014). The Cambridge University Press' initial results on the Rio Olympics indicate that there was small progress in equality for screen time devoted to men's and women's sports, yet "hegemonic masculine themes" continue to trivialize female athlete's success (Villalon, Abels, & Nauright, 2017).

Framing Theory in Sports

Framing theory. Framing refers to a set of different concepts or ideas on how different people perceive and communicate about society and develop a particular concept of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Framing theory's biggest assumption is that an issue can be interpreted from a different perspective and can be explained as having implications for different values and considerations (Chong & Druckman, 2007). When it comes to news production and framing, researchers look at how journalists frame a certain issue. Framing can be found across the different media outlets and networks and can be used with different topics like politics, sports, cultural issues and even business marketing (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2009). Research also suggests that media framing could influence the audience's judgment and perception of a certain issue that is talked about, and because of framing's long-term effect once this perception is defined, it can be difficult to redefine (Bronstein, 2005). In other words, framing helps the

audience's decision-making process by making certain topics more important and giving less attention to others.

Framing effects are conceptualized as having long-term effects (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2009). Frames in communication are important because they affect the audiences' attitudes and behaviors towards a specific topic. Different researchers have tracked the different framing styles to identify trends by the media to influence consumer. (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Halbert & Latimer, 1994). Framing is part of human communication overall because our values and beliefs bring a personal frame to the way we communicate (Moy, Tewksbury and Rinke, 2016). Framing is also considered a mental shortcut and happens without noticing (Bajracharya, 2018).

The sociological roots of framing are mostly based on Erving Goffman's 1974 work that discussed frames of reference. Goffman's work suggests that audiences rely on certain interpretative schemes that go beyond causality, and they are called "primary frameworks" (Goffman, 1974, p. 24). Goffman suggests that there are two different categories within the primary frameworks and both play a particular role in how audiences interpret information. The undisclosed assumption for these primary frameworks is that people use them unconsciously (Goffman, 1974). One of these primary frameworks is referred to as "natural" meaning that events have a physical nature and take a natural interpretation without attributing to a societal force (Goffman, 1974). The other primary framework is considered to be from a social influence. This social framework suggests that events have a social influence. These factors can vary and are part of the social atmosphere (Goffman, 1974). Also, "primary frameworks from a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture" (Goffman, 1974, p. 29).

Framing theory can be a very powerful tool for the media because the media can encourage some stories and discourage others (Bajracharya, 2018). Framing is a very broad theory that has many effects in different areas of the media. To better understand framing, we need to understand the differences between framing and other closely related theories that are used within media effects. The Media framing in sports has been studied extensively during the last few decades. Many studies have found that female athletes are portrayed with far less favorable comparisons to male athletes and are often being highlighted for their physical appearance or fashion attire (Shugart, 2003; Billings, Angelini and Eastman, 2005; Eastman & Billings, 2002 ; Billings and Eastman, 2003; Knight & Giuliano, 2001; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Bissell & Duke, 2007). While looking at sport research, professionals suggest that media frames provide a fascinating approach to analyzing sport programming (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Gender can be portrayed differently in sport broadcasting just as in news coverage. Framing can help define how consumers perceive different athletes (Billings et al., 2005). One of the biggest stories in sports media has to do with the different portrayals of female athletes. Gender can be portrayed through a ‘network- influenced shaping function in which discourse and images are manipulated to appeal to the desired or anticipated viewing audience’ (Billings et al., 2005, p. 157).

Knowing the Game of Tennis

Tennis is an individual sport that is played in almost every part of the globe. The professional tennis tour consists of elite athletes throughout the world. Tennis is a unique sport where players compete without the assistance of coaches or other support. Singles tennis is played between two contestants from the same gender. Tennis gives equal gender opportunities

in the ranking and participation areas. Both female and male tennis players play the exact same number of tournaments a year.

Tennis Grand Slams are the highest and most prestigious events in the tennis world. There are four Grand Slam events: Australian Open (Melbourne, Australia), Roland Garros (Paris, France), Wimbledon (England, United Kingdom), and US Open (New York, United States). These tournaments are spread throughout the year and offered on an annual basis.

When it comes to scoring, each set will be played first player to six games. In case of a tie at five-all, players must win two more games and reach seven games. In case of a six-all tie, players must play a 7-point tiebreaker, which must be won by a two-point difference.

Because the US Open 2018 is considered one of the four Grand Slams. As Table 1 illustrates the scoring system is different depending on gender.

Table 1. *US Open match length (2018)*

Events	Length of Match
Women's Singles	Best of three sets
Men's Singles	Best of five sets
Women's Doubles	Best of three sets
Men's Doubles	Best of three sets
Mixed Doubles	Best of three sets

In tennis, it is important to know the code of conduct , because it can impact score. If a player violates a conduct code, the referee of the match will give that player a warning. If that same player commits another violation, the referee will proceed to take a point away from that

game, the next violation will be a game penalty and lastly, the next violation the player will be disqualified from the match.

Background of the Network: ESPN

ESPN, Inc. is a sports entertainment network that provides its services through radio and cable television networks, internet, broadband, and wireless platforms. ESPN programming consists of sports, such as soccer, rugby, cricket, golf, tennis, basketball, motor racing, and others (ESPN, 2019). ESPN owns the rights to broadcast the four Tennis Grand Slam events each year in a variety of languages.

Background of the Broadcasters

ESPN has a team of English speaking broadcasters that are chosen to work Grand Slam Tennis event. This team of broadcasters may vary from tournament to tournament and can be formed by former tennis players, sports journalists, or sports broadcasters.

Table 2 shows a roster of the broadcasters that are part of the US Open 2018 championship weekend team, their gender, nationality, and background.

Table 2. *US Open Broadcasters for the 2018 Grand Slam event*

Name	Gender	Nationality	Background
Chris McKendry	Female	American	Journalist
Brad Gilbert	Male	American	Former tennis player
Tom Rinaldi	Male	American	Reporter
Patrick McEnroe	Male	American	Former tennis player
John McEnroe	Male	American	Former tennis player
Chris Fowler	Male	American	Sports broadcaster

Pam Shriver	Female	American	Former tennis player
Cliff Drysdale	Male	South African	Former tennis player
Darren Cahill	Male	Australian	Former tennis player
Chris Evert	Female	American	Former tennis player
Mary Jo Fernandez	Female	American	Former tennis player

Background of the players: US OPEN 2018 Championship weekend.

Table 3 shows the players that participated in the US Open 2018 championship weekend, along with some background information such as nationality, year when they turned professional and biggest achievements in their career.

Table 3. *US Open 2018 players*

Name	Nationality	Year turned professional	Biggest achievements
Serena Williams	American	1995	72 singles titles, 23 Grand Slams titles, four-time Olympic Medalist
Anastasija Sevastova	Latvian	2006	3 singles titles
Madison Keys	American	2009	3 singles titles
Naomi Osaka	Japanese	2014	1 singles titles, 2 Grand Slams titles
Rafael Nadal	Spanish	2001	80 singles titles, 17 Grand Slam Titles
Kei Nishikori	Japanese	2007	12 singles titles
Juan Martin Del Potro	Argentinian	2009	22 singles titles, 1 Grand Slam title
Novak Djokovic	Serbian	2003	73 singles titles 15 Grand Slams

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a higher number of success descriptors for men than women during the US

Open Championship weekend

H2: There will be a higher number of failure descriptors for women than men during the US

Open Championship weekend

H3: There will be a higher number of emotionality descriptors for the women than men during

the US Open Championship weekend

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Content Analysis

Content analysis is the study of “recorded human communications” (Babbie, 2004, p. 314). Media content analysis was introduced in 1927 by Harold Lasswell to study propaganda (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Media content analysis allows us to examine a range of data of our choice to identify popular discourses and their meaning (Matthes & Kohring, 2008).

Communication is considered an aspect of social interaction. Content analysis procedures directly operate on transcripts of human communications (Weber, 1990). The main concepts we are analyzing during this study are descriptors and the actual content of comments made by broadcasters.

Selection of Matches

The semifinal and finals matches for the US Open Championship weekend are broadcast in their entirety providing an opportunity to get a complete analysis for comparison. Table 4 shows the matches and players that participated in each match and the final results.

Table 4. *Competitors and Results in the 2018 US Open Championship Weekend*

Match	Competitors	Winner (Result)
Women’s Semifinal	Serena Williams vs. Anastasija Sevastova	Serena Williams (6-3, 6-0)
Women’s Semifinal	Naomi Osaka vs. Madison Keys	Naomi Osaka (6-2, 6-4)
Men’s Semifinal	Rafael Nadal vs. Juan Martin Del Potro	Juan Martin Del Potro (7-6 (7-3), 6-2, retired)
Men’s Semifinal	Kei Nishikori vs. Novak	Novak Djokovic (6-3, 6-4, 6-

	Djokovic	2)
Women's Final	Naomi Osaka vs. Serena Williams	Naomi Osaka (6-2, 6-4)
Men's Final	Juan Martin Del Potro vs. Novak Djokovic	Novak Djokovic (6-3, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3)

For this study 11 hours and 56 minutes of match play were recorded. Out of those hours, 7 hours and 34 minutes were part of the men's matches and 4 hours and 22 min were part of the women's matches. All commentary was transcribed and afterwards coded. Material included the comments made by the broadcasters from the moment the players entered the court to the moment they left the court; the study includes on court interviews and mid-match interviews. Pre-match and post-match broadcasting was not included, instead the study focused solely on what the broadcasters and interviewers from the ESPN network discuss during match play.

Codebook

The coding for this study was adapted from studies by Billings and Eastman. The unit of analysis that was used to determine the coding was 'descriptors' which can be defined as any adjective, adverb, adjectival phrase or adverbial phrase that was applied to the athlete (Billings 2005). Descriptors were classified by using the Billings and Eastman (2002) coding taxonomy which has 12 categories showing different categories pertaining to the attributions of success or failure and the characterization of the athlete (physicality or personality). Descriptors were classified to whether the descriptor was of either success or failure and whether the descriptor was going to describe the direct athletic performance or the physicality/personality of the athlete. In the original taxonomy, 'personality' is measured with two different indicators: outgoing/extroverted and modest/introverted. For purposes of this study, these two were

combined into one indicator called ‘personality’ and it was measured by high and low level descriptors

Table 5 explains different variables that the descriptors can fall under why the athlete regardless of the gender may succeed or fail.

Table 5. Explanations of Success/Failure by Gender (adapted from Billing and Eastman, 2002)

Variable	Success	Failure
Concentration	Focus, head in the game	Not focused
Athletic Skill- Strength	Strength, fast, coordination, flexibility, balance, agile	Weak, slow, uncoordinated, imbalanced,
Athletic Skill- Ability/ Talent	Ability to play	Poor execution
Composure	Positive body language, positive verbal language, calm	Angry, negative body language, negative verbal language
Commitment	Effort, engagement, charge	Given up, not engaged.
Courage	Grit, bravery, spirit, firmness, daring	Fear, humility, weakness, cowardice
Experience	Comments on past achievements	

Table 6 contains descriptors that refer to the athlete’s personality and physical appearance in general and the athlete’s emotional state during the match..

Table 6. *Personal/Physicality traits by gender (adapted from Billing and Eastman, 2002)*

Variable	High Level Description	Low Level Description
Personality	Outgoing/extroverted	Modest/Introverted
Emotionality	Happy, euphoric, emotive, enthusiastic	Sad, heated, fiery, nervous, sentimental
Attractiveness	Good looking, skin tone, handsome, well dressed, sexy, trim body size, fit	Shabbily dressed, not fit, not trim body size, not sexy
Size/ Body	Big, strong, tall	Small, weak, short

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examines the descriptors used for both female and male athletes, as well as the content of the comments from broadcasters. This section will include the results from the data gathered from content analysis of six tennis matches, three for the women and three for the men. A count was conducted to analyze the data and do a comparison of the number and percentage of descriptors that fall into each category. The first hypothesis was addressed.

H1: There will be a higher number of success descriptors for men than women during the US Open Championship weekend

The results of success descriptors for men and women can be found in Table 7. The total number of successful comments for men were found to be 184 compared to 139 for women supporting the hypothesis that a higher number of success descriptors for men than women would be seen during the US Open Championship weekend. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient ($r = 0.983$) indicated that strong relationship was seen between the two data sets. An independent t-test ($p > 0.05$; t-stat -1.943; df(6)) reveal no statistical significance for the findings.

Table 7. *Count and Totals on Explanations of Success/Failure by Gender*

Variable	Female		Male	
	Success	Failure	Success	Failure
Concentration	14	18	17	17
Athletic Skill- Strenght	21	5	31	9

Athletic Skill- Ability	49	15	74	28
Composure	19	24	21	21
Commitment	13	3	14	4
Courage	16	4	15	3
Experience	7	3	12	5
TOTALS	139	72	184	87

H2: There will be a higher number of failure descriptors for women than men during the US Open Championship weekend

The results of failure descriptors for men and women can be found in Table 7. The total number of successful comments for men were found to be 87 compared to 72 for women contradicting the hypothesis that a higher number of success descriptors for men than women would be seen during the US Open Championship weekend. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient ($r = 0.838$) indicated that strong relationship was seen between the two data sets. An independent t-test ($p > 0.05$; t-stat -1.069; df(6)) reveal no statistical significance for the findings.

H3: There will be a higher number of emotionality descriptors for the women than men during the US Open Championship weekend

The results of emotionality descriptors for men and women can be found in Table 8. The total number of emotionality comments for men were found to be 38 compared to 89 for women supporting the hypothesis that a higher number of emotionality descriptors for men than women would be seen during the US Open Championship weekend. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient ($r = 0.503$) indicated that mild relationship was seen between the two data

sets. An independent t-test ($p > 0.05$; t-stat 1.16; df(3)) reveal no statistical significance for the findings.

Table 8. *Count and Totals on Personality/Physicality by Gender*

Variable	Female	Male
Personality	21	13
Emotionality	56	11
Physicality	2	3
Body	10	11
TOTAL	89	38

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Findings

Previous studies have shown some gendered language that is used to describe athletes and frame the audience to a specific view (Billings & Eastman, 2002, 2003; Billings 2005). As the literature suggests, framing is a very powerful tool for the media because of the amount of control a small group can have on a larger population. While looking at the results, there are several points that need to be discussed to understand the data.

Portrayal of the athletes by gender. When it comes to explanations of success and failure by gender on athletes, it is important to remember that critiques on athletes should be based on their athletic skill and effort while competing in any type of professional sport. The fact that the number of athletic skill descriptors is high in comparison to other areas is a good factor for the media. Looking at this section of the data, it is also relevant how composure appears to be a very important factor on whether an athlete will succeed on a competitive environment.

When exploring personality and physicality, there was a difference in the number of descriptors that fall under emotionality for the women's matches. Again, the study suggests that there is a pattern to point out the emotionality in female tennis players more than in the men's side. The study is suggesting the comments made about the female athletes are framing the audience to look at the women's matches as an emotional battle more than an athleticism battle.

It is important to make note that during this broadcasting of the US Open 2018 a couple of things occurred. First of in the first men's semifinal, Rafael Nadal (male) retired due to an injury. During the match, he showed signs of frustration and lost his composure a few times because he was in pain leading to comments like the following:

- *“The trainer is back, the first time he came and taped Nadal’s knee, and Nadal after the tape job lost 2 games straight and got angry and ripped it off”*
- *“He (Nadal) looks a little bit resigned at the moment. Certainly not a word that goes with the name Rafael Nadal.”*

The second event that occurred during the women’s championship match between Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka was that Serena Williams was given three violations for coaching abuse, racquet abuse and verbal abuse. In a Grand Slam final and in professional tennis overall, this is not common. After this event happened, most the commentary from the broadcasters was based on Serena’s composure and emotionality, leading to comments like the following:

- *“She (Serena) is fuming, she told the crowd to quiet down. She needs to regroup.”*
- *“Serena broke her racquet out of frustration, that is a code violation and you add that to the code violation she received for coaching and that is a point penalty, extremely rare in a Grand Slam final.”*

An additional count that was particularly interesting was the mention of the word ‘pressure.’ The word pressure was mentioned 12 times in one of the women’s semifinals (Naomi Osaka vs. Madison Keys) and it was only mentioned 4 times in the three matches for the men’s side. The word was relevant because of how many times it was mentioned in the context of affecting the composure of the athlete because of feeling the pressure and not being able to control the nerves. For example, in the Madison Keys vs. Naomi Osaka semifinal a comment was made:

“Both of these players are peaking; Madison Keys has played great in her previous matches and so did Osaka. This match is going to be a lot of who can hold their nerves better.”

This statement was made at the beginning of the match during the warm-up, setting up the audience to investigate the players emotionality and composure throughout the whole match. Nerves and pressure are clearly part of every professional sport, but the questioning comes on why these comments are happening more during women's matches than men's matches in this particular case.

An additional area of interest found in this study when it came to the breakdown on other comments. A higher number for statistically-based numbers was shown for the men's matches. Commentators would mention statistics just like serve speed, number of times a certain player would go to the net, first serve percentage, etc., making the men's matches more analytical. When it comes to the women's matches, comments that were considered constructive criticism were higher by 1, making the women's matches more critic based. However, if we look at the numbers for the men's matches, the count for constructive criticism comments for the men is higher than the women's matches, yet not the highest out of all the categories. Again, this may or may not be due the fact that men's matches last longer.

Table 9. *Count and Totals on Specifics on Broadcaster's Commentary.*

Variable	Female	Male
Conceptual Repetition	13	8
Statistic-based	22	35
Constructive Criticism	23	26
Personal Life	19	21
Strategy	44	53
TOTAL	139	165

The data suggests that strategy appears to be the most important topic for broadcasters and the biggest part of the content of the broadcasting. While watching a sporting event on T.V. listening to analytical perspective from former tennis players is interesting, and the study suggests that the analysis of the strategy is definitely there during air-time. As the results also show when it comes to the women's matches, comments that had constructive criticism content had a higher count than for men.

Gender of the broadcasters. An additional finding that was interesting was that men's matches are called only by male broadcasters and women's matches are called by both female and male broadcasters is interesting and raises the question of why is this set up this way if the broadcasting staff that ESPN provides for these tournaments seems to be experienced in the sport. There should be a reason as to why female broadcasters do not get to work on men's matches, and it would be interesting to determine if this is a repetitive situation or if it was just a coincidence during this particular event. There may or may not be a difference based on who is broadcasting the match, because broadcasters have different styles of commentating. As mentioned before, most of the staff that forms the ESPN roster for this event is highly experienced in the field of tennis because they played professional tennis and/or currently coach on the tour. When it comes to the few broadcasters that are not former tennis players, they are still considered experienced spokespeople in the sports world.

Lastly it is important to take into consideration that there were many comments that were not taken into consideration for this study. During the broadcasting there were comments made on the conditions of the tournament and the city, the court conditions, attendance for the event, entertainment comments, mentions of celebrities that attended the match, comments of previous matches of the tournament, etc. One last thing that it is important to remember is that at the end

of the day the broadcasting of tennis events is meant to entertain the audience as well as talk about the sport itself, so it might not be expected for the whole air-time transmission to be all about tennis.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations

This study was based on a relatively small sample that may or may not be generalizable to a larger population. Grand Slam events are ideal for this kind of study due to the consistent broadcasting of matches. The events that occurred during the tournament may or may not had an implication on the final results. Situations like having a player retire early from a match or a player almost getting disqualified from a final are not common and it completely changed the topic of the commentating.

Future Directions

It would be interesting to possibly look at the whole two weeks of a Grand Slam full coverage. The data and results will be more accurate. One more thing that would be good for this type of study would be to have categories where other parts of the commentating like ‘calling of the score’ or ‘comments on daily conditions’ could possibly fall under.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that there is still a difference of some kind in the way athletes are getting portrayed on the media. However, the way this difference has shifted throughout the years could be irrelevant to a certain extent if the bottom line is that there is still a difference on the portrayal and description of the narrative.

Athletic skill and strategy will always be a part of the broadcasting commentating on sporting events, and hopefully both genders keep getting recognized on the tremendous athletic skill and athleticism these athletes have regardless of gender, race, or nationality.

One area that needs to be examined in depth is the fact that women are being portrayed as emotional and not necessarily in an athletic way. There will always be some emotion in sporting events, but to center the topic of conversation around the emotionality of the athlete frames the audience to pay more attention to that than the athletic skill set and strategy-tactical part of the game. This area of the commentating is particularly concerning because there should not be a difference at all on how female and male athletes get portrayed.

Overall, keeping an eye on the media can be beneficial because the ultimate goal is for air-time for sporting events to be entertaining and analytical for the audience when it comes to narrating the event and what is currently happening during competition.

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