Rhizomatic Forces In Sports

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Institution: New Jersey Institute of Technology
Course: STS 325-003 - Sports, Society and Technology
Instructor: J. Britt Holbrook
Thesis

- Sports are not just about the game.
  - Some people use sports to superficially mask the chaos of socio-politics, even though sports actually laments them.

- Influences on sports include: betting, the LGBTQ+ community, sponsorships, etc.

- **Sports are not an excuse to be superficial of blissfully ignorant to how these things impact society and vise-versa.**
Politics encompasses all social, political and economic turmoils within a governed body.

Historically sports and politics don’t mix.

Politics by nature are very polarizing and sports are supposed to be social gatherings.
Division Isn’t Good For Business

- It’s usually best for athletes to stay neutral on certain issues.
- Having people disagree with an athlete’s stances or values compromises the bottom-line.
Protests [Contemporary]

- Continuing a long, prolific line of civil activists before him, Colin Kaepernick has become the forefront of civil rights protests in sports, for better or for worse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Left-Leaning</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Right-Leaning</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
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5 Broad distinctions of differing views
Sports are not an excuse to be superficial or blissfully ignorant to how these things impact society and vise-versa.
Underground Betting, Gambling, and Scandals

Underground betting can impact the outcome of sporting events when people who are participating are betting on that specific event.
1919 Black Sox World Series Scandal

- Eight White Sox players threw the 1919 World Series for financial gain after being bribed by gamblers.
- All eight players banned from baseball for life.
- Shoeless Joe Jackson found guilty despite:
  - .375 Batting Average
  - .394 On-Base Percentage
  - .563 Slugging Percentage
  - 1.000 Fielding Percentage
  - All equal to or better than his performance in the 1917 World Series.
2007 NBA Betting Scandal

- NBA referee Tim Donaghy gambled on games in which he was referee.
- Banned from refereeing.
- Sentenced to 15 months in prison.
Pete Rose

- Pete Rose banned from baseball for betting on games he played in.
- Major League Baseball Rule 21 (d) states: “Any player, umpire, or club or league official or employee, who shall bet any sum whatsoever upon any baseball game in connection with which the bettor has a duty to perform shall be declared permanently ineligible.”
- MLB career hits leader with 4256 hits.
1978-1979 Boston College Point Shaving

- Multiple players on the Boston College Men’s Basketball team paid by gamblers to shave points on games.
- Unsure how many players involved.
- Orchestrated by Rocco and Anthony Perla.
- Shows that scandals go past the world of professional sports.
Impacts of Fantasy Sports

• Greater focus towards individual player analysis in team-based sports/competitions (Football, Basketball, Baseball, League of Legends)
• Viewership (and its relationship to viewer engagement)
• Out-of-game engagement and bolster to social media
What Matters to Fantasy Players

- Injuries
- Player mentality
- Player activity
- Skill by position (in team-based sports)
- Peak and floor performance
- High and mid-level players
- Trends
- Prizes

**POINT GUARDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAYER</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>LAST WEEK</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>MPG</th>
<th>PPG</th>
<th>RPG</th>
<th>APG</th>
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<th>FT %</th>
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<td>43</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
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<td>8.2</td>
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<td>2. Damian Lillard, POR</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<td>3. Chris Paul, LAC</td>
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<td>34.4</td>
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<td>38.1</td>
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<td>5. Kyle Lowry, TOR</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
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<td>76.3</td>
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<td>8. Kemba Walker, CHA</td>
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<td>9. Eric Bledsoe, PHO</td>
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<td>10. Monta Ellis, DAL</td>
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Fantasy Critics

- Influx of casual fantasy players has brought about viewers who only care for highlights
  - Increase in interest in social media and sports shows on TV/YouTube, but detracts from actual games
- Sport event attendance decreased
- Looking at players as a means to an end
- Cases of drastic measures in person to bolster roster performance
  - Marlins became hungover in 2007 in a cause to boost John Maine’s play for a fantasy team
### Football-NFL TV Viewing: % by Frequency of Viewing

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<td>1-2 times/yr.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Base: # of NFL Fans Viewing Games on TV (+ 000)  
136,361 146,066 138,653 130,295 136,279 128,481

Source: SBRnet/Tag: Frequent

### Football-NFL Attendance: % by Frequency of Attending

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<td>1/yr.</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
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<td>56.6</td>
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<td>2-3 times/yr.</td>
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<td>4+ times/yr.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Total # of NFL Fans Attending Games (add 000)  
20,336 19,190 19,643 18,205 20,438 17,933

Source: SBRnet/Tag: Frequent
Argument for Fantasy Sports’ Positive Impact

• Gets viewers interested beyond just their favorite teams
• Benefit for ESPN sideshows, YouTubers, other forms of media
• Extra motivating factor to cheer for players during big games
LGBT Practical Impact On Sports

Speaking as an NFL team manager, I'm aware that some coaches say that Michael Sam's being openly gay is an unwelcome distraction.

Some players say they'd be uncomfortable sharing a locker room with him.

Tough bull patties! I'd be pleased as can be to have Michael Sam playing on our team!

As long as you don't get flagged for holding, that would just weird me out.
LGBT Practical Impact On sport

- Stigmatization towards LGBT soccer fan during games (e.g. 2018 World Cup.)
- Alienating Athletes
*Carlos and Tommie Smith raising their fists on the podium at the 1968 Mexico City Black Power Salute*
1967 - Muhammad Ali evades the draft
1996 - Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf suspended
2010- Phoenix Suns immigration protest
October 7th, 2017 - J.T. Brown
Where did this all come from?

“I’m seeing things happen to people that don’t have a voice, people that don’t have a platform to talk and have their voices heard, and effect change.”

- Colin Kaepernick

Notable Events:

- Charles Kinsey: 7/22/16
- Philando Castile: 7/6/16
- Anton Sterling: 7/5/16
- Jamar Clark: 11/16/15
- Tamir Rice: 11/23/14
- Michael Brown: 8/9/14
- Eric Garner: 7/17/14

*Photo taken August 10th, 2016 during training camp. Via USA Today Sports
Blacklisted From Football? P.E. #1

- It’s pretty well understood that for whatever reason, be it bad publicity or polarizing stances from team offices and players, Colin Kaepernick hasn’t been offered a contract by any NFL team since his last season with the 49ers in 2016.

Self-empowerment campaigns & social media activism.

- Colin Kaepernick is amidst a lawsuit of the NFL over colluding to keep him out of the league.
Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.
Nike Protests

Never Nike T-Shirt

$25.00

Color: Black
Size: S

ADD TO CART

Never Nike t-shirt with the American Flag proudly flying on the left sleeve. Display your patriotic support for our country and disgust for Nike and Colin Kaepernick. This is the perfect shirt to wear under your uniform or off duty.

Support police, Fire, EMS and Veterans. They are true heroes, not athletes. Thank you to all those in law enforcement who protect us.

nevernike.com - accessed on 9/27/2018
31%

Increase in Nike’s sales after Kaepernick ad
Other Sponsorships/Pressuring Athletes
NJIT v. Michigan

- **343/344** Division 1 Men’s Basketball programs had a conference - NJIT was the only one that didn’t.
- NJIT finally join the Atlantic Sun Conference in 2015
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