

Gender preference in journalism education: why sport misses out

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Abstract

Sports and research into sports journalism feature in only a tiny minority of international articles and conference papers at the academic end of the profession. This article looks at sport's place in the research literature and its importance among journalistic practitioners and their audiences, and theorises that sports research in academic journalism has become unpopular for two measurable reasons: (1) gender, and (2) market forces.

Introduction and rationale

Few topics get politics off newspaper front pages and out of broadcast bulletin headlines faster than an outstanding sporting achievement or a sporting controversy¹. Coverage of sport is also evidently important to media owners, who are the potential employers of graduates from tertiary journalism courses. Sport is “the fastest-growing sector in the British media” (Andrews, 2005, p. 1), which is arguably “the most competitive in the world” (Andrews, 2005, p. 2), “and the same applies in most other English-speaking countries” (Andrews, 2005, p. 1) as well as, for example, the cricket-driven Indian subcontinent and the soccer-fixated world of South America.

This competition has extended beyond the sports pages into transnational media boardrooms, such that “professional as well as amateur sport are increasingly integrated into an emerging global ‘sports/media complex’ ” (Law et al, 2002, p. 280), driven largely by six global corporations “which own or lease the visual product from source to point of consumption by a globally expanding audience, and then rent out ‘their viewers’ and listeners’ attention’ ” (Sage, in Law et al, 2002, p. 281). These corporations are News Corporation, Disney, AOL-Time Warner, Viacom, Bertelsmann AG and Vivendi-Universal (Law et al, 2002), all of which distribute media content into the Australian and South Pacific market, and as such are likely to require Australian sports content – especially specialist journalistic content – from time to time.

Background

Australian Rules football is just one of four codes² popular around its home country but it reached top prominence among national television owners and audiences in 2005-2006 when its organising body, the Australian Football League (AFL), was offered \$AU780 million by Kerry Packer for the rights to televise AFL games on his Nine Network television group for five years from 2007. The rival Seven Network had earlier paid \$20 million for the right to match the offer, which it later did, successfully, in collaboration with a third rival, the Ten Network. The offer marked an increase of more than 50 per cent on the previous price of \$500 million paid by a Nine-Ten-Foxtel³ consortium for the same television rights for the five years to the end of 2006.

Legitimacy for such high fees to televise a single code of football in the relatively small Australian sports market is offered by the latest survey by Sweeney Sports (Sinclair, 2006a), which suggests that AFL has overtaken swimming as the nation's most popular sport. Almost three out of every five Australians (59 per cent) reported some involvement with AFL in 2005. Swimming, the top-ranked sport for the previous three years, slipped to equal second with tennis, on 56 per cent, with cricket fourth on 53 per cent, then a big drop to the other three codes of football: rugby league (42 per cent), soccer (41 per cent) and rugby union (40 per cent) (Sinclair, 2006a). Sports coverage is also one of the biggest sections on the national newsagents' magazine racks:

Most of us who love adventure must live it vicariously ... In the process of getting away from ourselves ... from the routine of office and factory and the common monotony of home ... uncounted millions have found the supreme stimulant in sport. It holds the thrill of the battlefield ... the romance of the stage ... the ambition, joy and sorrow of life itself. (Kofoed, 1932, p. ix)

Kofoed's enthusiasm for the distractive qualities of sport might be considered by many as little more than a reworking of Juvenal's *panem et circenses* – a term coined by the satiric Roman poet to describe the practice of Roman emperors providing free wheat and circus games as a means of pacifying the populace – and based on a review of tertiary journalism courses around Australia, it seems journalism educators take a similar view. Some courses have subjects specifically in sports journalism⁴, but most bundle all “specialist rounds” together in a few generic lectures. Local government rounds, court reporting, and police or emergency rounds are often lumped together with sport as a “grab-bag” of areas which require the same batch of skills. Others contend that any general reporter should be able to cover any specialist area without any specific training.

Methodology

The researchers undertook a literature review and a focused content and frequency analysis of the only national newspaper in Australia to include regular and substantial journalistic sports content⁵, and a frequency analysis of sports-related research in the major Australian journalistic academic research database. The authors undertook two formative pilot studies to map the extent of the research problem: examination of a relevant academic publishing data set; and examination of gender among journalism students and academics in Australia.

Study 1 – sport in academic literature

Dobinson's (2002) bibliography – "Australian Journalism Research Index 1992-2002" – presents nearly 88 pages of citations, representing 10 years of journalism research by Australians in 23 peer-reviewed academic journals from 1992-2002 in Australia, the United States, Britain, Asia and the South Pacific⁶. Only seven titles reflect any sport content in any articles. While it is noted that some articles might have researched aspects of sport not reflected in the titles, academic publishing conventions suggest this limitation would be minimal.

The articles were:

- ♦ Cryle, D. (2002). Press and protest: the Springbok tour of 1971. *Australian Studies in Journalism*, 10/11, 206-222.
- ♦ Breit, R. (2001). Give us a fair go! Legal obstacles to reporting sport on the internet. *Ejournalist*, 1(1).
- ♦ McGregor, J., & Fountaine, S. (1999). The loneliness of the long distance gender researcher: Are journalists right about the coverage of women's sport? *Australian Journalism Review*, 21(3), 113-126.
- ♦ Hodge, E., & Zhang, W. (1995). Sydney's Olympics and the Beijing People's Daily, *Australian Journalism Review*, 17(1), 119-124.
- ♦ Henningham, J. (1995). A profile of Australian sports journalists. *ACHPER Healthy Lifestyles Journal*, 42(3) [149], 13-17.
- ♦ Brown, P. (1995). Gender, the press and history: coverage of women's sport in the Newcastle Herald 1890-1990, *MIA*, 75, 24-34.
- ♦ Baird, K. (1994). Attitudes of Australian women sports journalists. *Australian Studies in Journalism*, 3, 231-253.

Study 2 – gender among journalism students and academics

Most Australian journalism course enrolments are skewed towards females and graduates tend to be female⁷: between 60 and 80 per cent depending on the

course (May, 2003)⁸. Since evidence (Phillips, 2003; Alysen, 2005) suggests that between 66 and 94 per cent of journalism graduates achieve employment either directly in journalism or in journalism-related fields such as public relations and government communications, this suggests about 40 per cent of entry-level journalists across all departments are women, and this aligns closely with industry figures in the dominant Western, English-speaking markets (Cokley, 2004, p. 189). Membership figures from the Journalism Education Association of Australia in August 2006 (Jenkins, 2006) support this overall industry position but disrupt any position that females are similarly over-represented among journalism academics:

Among all those listed as financial and unfinancial, the numbers are: male, 58; female 39. Among the current 2006 financial members only, the numbers are: male, 27; female 25 (Jenkins, 2006).

The gender division of journalists and journalism academics in Australian universities (Jenkins, 2006) therefore follows national and international trends (Cokley, 2004, p. 189): mostly dominated by older males.

Research question

These formative studies prompted the research question: why is sports journalism – which combines two of the most culturally significant and economically influential forces of our epoch – barely visible in the journals featuring the research of journalism educators and in Australian journalism curricula. The following hypothesis is suggested: Given (1) that journalism and communication academics are more likely to be male; (2) that their students are more likely to be female, and (3) that sports newsrooms are populated with male journalists and thus sport reporting is arguably anti-female; then (4) female journalism students are more likely to seek non-sports genre journalism instruction and work experience, reducing demand for sports research among their mentoring academics and consequently reducing the number of articles being researched and published about sport by those academics.

Literature review

Nor does sport rate highly in widely used journalism texts. Oxford University Press's blurb for Conley and Lamb's 3rd edition of *The daily miracle: an introduction to journalism* states the book is "a comprehensive guide to all types of journalism", but sport doesn't rate a single index entry. This omission is due to be addressed in the next edition of the text (Lamb, 2006) but the feature is widespread: two other influential broadcast and electronic

journalism texts – Phillips and Lindgren’s *Australian broadcast journalism* and Alysen’s *The electronic reporter* – also keep sport “on the bench”. However, Alysen et al’s *Reporting in a multimedia world*⁹ does include a sport section.

Sports journalism “is the little red caboose behind the powerful steam engine of institutional news reporting (i.e., government, the courts, crime, education, business, religion, and so on) within the Fourth Estate”, notes McClenehan (1997, p. 338), who attributes the lack of research into sports reporting to scholars not recognising “its division as an ally to legitimated institutions”. Some media academics and critics widely believe that “sports journalism is an oxymoron” (Mason, 2005) and there resides among some journalism educators and researchers a notion that “it’s just sports”: that the sports department is viewed by other journalists as the “toy department” of a news organisation (Schultz, 2005).

The personal experience of the current authors is supported by studies such as Henningham’s (1995) profile of Australian sport journalists, in which sports departments in both print and broadcast organisations were described as “their own little empires” (Henningham, 1995, p. 13), most often a WASP male citadel that sat in splendid isolation from the workplace culture and editorial concerns found in other departments of the newsroom. The “ghetto structure of sports departments in newspapers and print media organisations” makes the division analogous to an occupational cul-de-sac (Henningham, 1995, p. 13). Within the hierarchy of collegial regard that exists inside large newsrooms, sports journalism, suffering from the dual ignominies “of popular appeal and a focus on the body rather than the mind”, is more likely to gravitate towards the lower end of the hierarchy of esteem (Rowe, 1999, p. 39). Despite such professional misgivings, sport is journalism’s biggest sub-discipline (Salwen & Garrison, 1998), but even so, sport journalists, more than those in any other sub-discipline, suffer from having cultivated “shabby reputations” that shadow them in an age of professionalism and accountability (Salwen & Garrison, 1998, p. 98).

Gender

Recent studies in the US (Eastman & Billings, 2000, p. 192) suggest a “very high degree of embedded favouritism toward men’s sports and men athletes, even at times when major women’s sporting events were peaking in newsworthiness”. This favouritism was more evident in the broadcast media¹⁰ than in the print publications¹¹ studied, the authors reported. But within the print sample, this gender bias within *The New York Times* far exceeded that in *USA Today*. This research is supported by a review by McGinnis et al (2003) which suggests that, especially in the areas of sport and leisure, what is associated with men and masculinity is valued over what is associated with women and

femininity. Their research further indicates that even when athletes try to blur gender meanings they risk being labelled deviant (2003), and this apprehension of deviance can have quantifiable effects in sponsorship and fees received. The same applies to sportscasters in the electronic media (Toro, 2005, p. 1), such that male sportscasters appear to have greater credibility than female sportscasters and thus the employability of males is enhanced. This could be the result of exclusionary practices in sports journalism (Claringbould et al, 2004, p. 709) which those researchers suggest depend on processes of division of labour, images and discourses, interactions, and identity work and which result in a situation whereby “most journalists are white men” (Claringbould et al, 2004, p. 709).

The nexus between sport, financial return and political power is identified even more clearly by Helland (2004, p. 11) and Whitlam and Preston (1998, p. 194), who identify a strong symbiosis between sport, sponsors and the media, which, Helland suggests, carries clear implications in terms for sport politics and media politics:

The kinds of sport which draw considerable media attention also attract the biggest and richest heroes or villains and henceforth obtain considerable financial resources ... the question of gender is key here, as is the choice of sports ... this entails that the media which ideally should have treated the sport/media complex with a critical perspective, themselves are implicated in this complex. (Helland, 2004, pp. 11-12)

Sport has been used as a signifier of defiance against the terrorism witnessed since the World Trade Center attacks in 2001 (Toohey & Taylor, 2006, p. 88) and those authors note this illustrates how the media create propaganda links between sport and terrorism and “hegemonic tropes are created around sport and terrorism” (Toohey & Taylor, 2006, p. 71), so that a distilled message of good and evil enables homilies of sport to be employed in metaphors for Western society and values. Similar “war metaphors” are identified by Carmeli (2001, p. 65) during a study of Israeli soccer journalism. He notes (2001, p. 67):

Sports writing ... constructs and disseminates a simplified and polarized conception of reality – both that of the game and that which it mirrors.

There is also a strong relationship between critical reflection and the professionalisation of journalism, notes Schade (2005, p. 1), which suggests also that the inverse is true: that where critical reflection is absent, professionalisation is low.

The central study – methodology

The “Crunching the numbers” section of *The Australian* newspaper’s weekly (Thursday) Media section was used to establish the top-rating TV programs for 2005. The accompanying “News value” list provided a comparison of the most-mentioned items across all media. *The Australian*’s weekly listings covered the 44-week period between week seven of 2005, beginning on February 7, the first official TV ratings week of the year, and week 50, ending on December 10 and from February 7 to December 11 for the “News value” comparison.

OzTam provided the TV ratings and Media Monitors Australia the lists of most-mentioned stories. Oztam uses a “peoplemeter” on each TV in each selected house to record and store four critical pieces of data: time, whether the set is on or off, the channel to which the set is tuned, and how many people are watching (OzTam, 2006).

Sean Sampson, who produced the 2005 “News value” segments for Media Monitors Australia (Sampson, 2006), noted that the lists covered all commercial radio and television stations, the ABC and SBS. He said allowances were made for the fact that, say, Channel 9’s *Today* show is seen on about 45 different capital city and regional stations, so a reference to a story on *Today* or in their regular newscasts would be weighted to take that into account, as would a mention on the John Laws program (or the news) syndicated from 2UE in Sydney to more than 60 stations around the country. Sampson also noted that newspaper mentions were calculated by a simple word search on, for example, “AFL” and “grand final” to arrive at the number of mentions.

While it should be acknowledged this might distort some of the figures for the major sports, given their results sections, there is no evidence this artificially increased the figures for horse racing (given the pages and pages of detailed results every day in newspapers). The only time horse racing made the “top 5 listing” was during the spring racing carnival leading up to the Melbourne Cup race in November. Overall, the “number crunching” shows that viewers flock to their couches when sport is broadcast, and the nation’s print and broadcast media saturate their publications with sports coverage.

The data

The most-watched TV program in Australia in 2005, albeit in a non-ratings period, was the final of the Australian Open tennis in late January, featuring local hero Lleyton Hewitt being defeated by Marat Safin: this drew an audience of 4.04 million (Sinclair, 2006b). The top six programs nationally during the 44-week ratings period (across the five mainland capitals – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth) were all sporting events. Coverage of the

AFL Grand Final attracted 3.394 million viewers across the mainland capitals and was the top-rating program that week and for the ratings year (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005b).

It was also the second-most watched program on regional TV around NSW, Victoria and Queensland, attracting almost 909,000 viewers (Top 10 Regional programs, 2005a). Given that Hobart and Darwin don't rate in the national figures, and both are AFL heartlands, and that only the eastern states' regional figures were included, the total nationwide audience watching the Sydney Swans' win was possibly around 5 million, or approximately a quarter of the Australian population. The Grand Final wrap-up was the second most watched program that week and for the year (3.031 million viewers with another 858,000 in the regionals in the eastern states), and the pre-match program came in at number three that week with 2.487 million viewers to be the fifth most-watched program for the year (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005b). Another six sports-related programs made the mainland capitals' Top 50 that week and three more were in the regional Top 10 (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005b; Top 10 Regional programs, 2005a).

The third highest-rating TV program for the year was the Rugby League Grand Final, with 2.563 million viewers in the mainland capitals (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005c), and another 1.494 million regional viewers (Top 10 Regional Programs, 2005b). The NRL Grand Final presentation was the second most watched TV program in regional areas of the eastern states that week, and the Grand Final entertainment program the third most watched (Top 10 regional programs, 2005b), while those two programs came in 24th and 18th respectively in the capital cities (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005c).

Fourth on the list was the Melbourne Cup horse race, on the first Tuesday in November, which drew just over 2.5 million people in the five mainland capitals (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005d). Nearly a million more (986,122) watched in eastern states regional areas (Top 10 Regional Programs, 2005c). As mentioned above, the broadcast of the AFL Grand Final day pre-match festivities was the fifth most-watched TV program of 2005. Sixth most popular was the Socceroos' qualifying match for the World Cup in late November. The match had 2.484 million viewers in the five mainland capitals and quite probably more than 3 million nationwide (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005e).

By comparison, Seven's US entertainment imports, *Lost* and *Desperate Housewives*, regularly rating as first and second in the Top 50 listings throughout 2005 (often alternating in the top spot, but more often than not one/two), averaged 2 million to 2.2 million viewers when they topped the ratings for the week. Locally, the light-entertainment reality show *Dancing with the Stars* was a ratings winner, again for Seven, but even the final did not come within 140,000 of the audience for the World Cup qualifier (The Top 50 TV programs, 2005a).

Rugby League remained Queensland's favourite sport in 2005. The Grand Final (involving the North Queensland Cowboys), the three State of Origin games, the grand final entertainment and the second preliminary final filled the top six programs for the year (McLean, 2005).

Limitations in the data

The period investigated in this article does not include December 2004-January 2005, so the Boxing Day (2004) tsunami is not mentioned in the data, even though it dominated media coverage in early 2005. The tsunami and the relief effort were still one of the top stories in the first week of the surveys (February 7-13), achieving 5524 mentions in all media, the third highest number for that week (News value, 2005). Also not included in the study are the New Year cricket Test in Sydney, the one-day cricket series, tennis tournaments in the run-up to the Australian Open title, and Australian golfer Stuart Appleby winning the second of his three successive titles in the season-opening US PGA event in Hawaii. Because the data lists concluded with the week of December 5-11, also omitted are two of the biggest events on the Australian sporting calendar – the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race and the Boxing Day cricket Test in Melbourne – and earlier, the Chappell-Hadlee one-day series in New Zealand.

Further limitations resulted from the data collection methods. For each of the 44 weeks under discussion, Media Monitors Australia provided a list of the five most-mentioned stories in the nation's media, and a brief commentary. Only the top five stories nationwide are included, a maximum of 220 "mentions". Only the most important – or most widely-covered stories nationally – rate a mention each week and this is likely to disadvantage major local stories that don't have national impact. It would also appear to favour popular sports, but equally, it is likely to favour major political issues and people in the news. For a story to have impact on the totals, it would have to be in the news for a number of weeks – such as the London terrorist attacks and their aftermath, Hurricanes Katrina and Hilda, Iraq hostage Douglas Wood, the hanging of Van Nguyen, speculation about the sale of Telstra, and the Michelle Leslie saga.

Discussion of the data: summary of findings

The data collected suggest an almost total domination of television non-fiction programming – including news reporting – by sport content. It also suggests by implication, supported by Helland (2004), that this domination is a result of the financial and socio-political power of sports backers and promoters, among whom are the major media employers around the world (Law et al, 2002). These backers and promoters are, in turn, mostly male, since male hegemonic dominance is operative in newsrooms as standard practice (Louw, 2001; Cokley, 2004) and especially in sports newsrooms (Claringbould et al, 2004).

Explanation of findings in detail: an exposition of domination

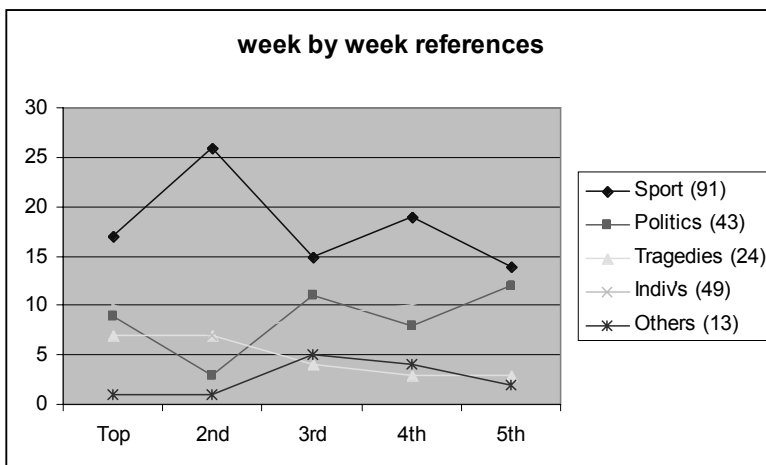
In order to compare the various stories, the authors decided on five categories – sport, politics, tragedies, individuals and “others”.

Table 1: News value lists totalled by category

Category	Weeks mentioned	Percentage	Total no. of stories	Percentage
Sport	91	41.4	902,800	41.9
Politics	43	19.5	369,407	17.1
Tragedies	24	10.9	319,527	14.8
Individuals	49	22.3	453,021	21
Others	13	5.9	112,455	5.2
	220		2,157,210	

Collation of the various “top 5” lists for the 44 weeks surveyed (Table 1) showed that sports stories dominated the Australian news agenda, with nearly twice as many references as its nearest competitor category (91 sporting references to 49 for the “individuals” category). The “individuals” in the news included Douglas Wood, Van Nguyen and Michelle Leslie – all in the news for more than four weeks of the surveyed period – and the Schapelle Corby case. Both measures used – the number of weeks mentioned (and as a percentage) and the total number of stories (and as a percentage) – showed sports coverage as the standout. More than 41 per cent of all the top stories measured in the 44-week period involved sport. A total of more than 900,000 stories of the roughly two million collated involved sport.

Figure 1: How various categories “rated”



Another way of showing the dominance of sport overall is to look at the spread of the various categories in the 44 weeks of lists – where the stories were

between one and five. Figure 1 shows how many times the various categories were either the top story of the week, second, third, fourth or fifth. Again, sport dominates the list with the highest number every time. For 17 weeks (38.6 per cent), stories on sport were the most-mentioned in the nation's media for the week. For 26 weeks (59 per cent), a sports story was second on the list – and on six of those 26 occasions, a sports story was also the most-mentioned story of the week. A total of 15 times (34 per cent) a sports story was third, 19 times (43.2 per cent) it was fourth, and a further 14 times (31.8 per cent) a sports story was the fifth most-mentioned story.

Table 2: The top 25 stories on a weekly basis

Top stories for a week...		
1	Bali bombings	39,350
2	London bombings	31,048
3	AFL Grand Final	30,607
4	Nguyen hanging	29,344
5	H'cane Katrina	28,349
6	H'cane Katrina	26,831
7	Terror arrests	25,398
8	Melbourne Cup	24,673
9	Schapelle Corby	20,650
10	Pope dies	20,478
11	Schapelle Corby	20,432
12	Socceroos	19,786
13	Carr resigns	17,421
14	Indo quake	16,412
15	Brogden	16,283
16	Federal Budget	16,452
17	Ashes cricket	16,350
18	Horse racing	15,978
19	Douglas Wood	15,827
20	AFL	15,733
21	AFL	15,620
22	AFL	15,304
23	Ashes cricket	15,280
24	AFL	15,080
25	AFL	14,994

The top 25 stories for a single week include 11 sports stories, with the AFL Grand Final having the third highest total of media mentions in a single week. Only two of the biggest stories of the year (given there are no figures for Tsunami coverage), the Bali bombings and the London terror attacks, rated more mentions than coverage of the Sydney Swans' AFL victory at the

Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Melbourne Cup was the eighth highest mentioned story in a single week, the Socceroos making the World Cup came in 12th, the loss of the cricket Ashes was 17th and 23rd, the spring racing carnival was the 18th most mentioned story in an individual week, and AFL coverage filled the five remaining positions between 20th and 25th on the weekly list.

Table 3: Sports by weeks in list and total number of stories

Sport	Weeks	Total number of stories
AFL	26	322,812
Cricket	20	179,526
NRL	19.5	166,348
Golf	5	27,092
Tennis	5	59,096
Rugby	4.5	27,613
Horses	4	51,625
Others	7	68,908

Table 3 shows the dominance of AFL in sports coverage. It appeared in the “top 5” list for 26 of the 44 weeks, with a total number of mentions in excess of 322,000 – more than a third of sport’s 900,000-plus total. Cricket came in second with mentions in 20 weeks of the survey period, but its total was little more than half that of the AFL. An argument could be made that cricket would rate higher if the lists had covered January and part of February, and the remainder of December of 2004 – the eight weeks missing from the lists are the “high season” for cricket (and tennis). This is counter-balanced by the fact that 11 of the 20 cricket listings were from the Ashes-losing tour of England.

Rugby league is the third most-popular sport with the nation’s media, and this is understandable as it is largely limited to the eastern mainland states. By way of explanation, the “half mention” shared with rugby was the list’s combining of that week when both the Wallabies and the Kangaroos lost in Europe. After the top three, the totals drop dramatically to five for golf, mainly aided by Robert Allenby’s winning of all three Australian titles in late 2005, five for tennis – the Grand Slams of the French and US Open and Wimbledon – four (and a half) for the out-of-form Wallabies, and four for the Spring horse racing carnival and the Melbourne Cup.

The dominance of AFL is also demonstrated in the distribution of the mentions in the “top 5” News Value lists. Nineteen of the 26 (nearly 80 per cent) mentions of AFL were either top or second on the list. About the same percentage of rugby league mentions were in the lower 60 per cent of the lists – either third, fourth or fifth. Only on one occasion – coverage of the NRL Grand Final – did the NRL top the list of the most-mentioned stories of the week.

About two-thirds of the listings for cricket (13 of 20) were either as the top story of the week or the second most-mentioned, but on only three occasions

was cricket the top story of the week. While the NRL might get nearly as many mentions on the lists as cricket, the sport is nowhere near as popular (as measured by the number of stories published) as either AFL or cricket (Table 4 below).

Table 4: Sports categories by total number of stories

Sport	Story total
AFL	322,812
Cricket	179,526
NRL	166,348
Golf	27,092
Tennis	59,096
Rugby	27,613
Horses	51,625
Others	68,908

Table 4 demonstrates that AFL generated 150,000 more stories than its nearest competitor, cricket, and almost twice as many stories as the third most popular sport – rugby league.

Discussion of the combined data

The strong relationship between critical reflection and the professionalisation of journalism (Schade, 2005, p. 1) together with the simplification of journalism by its sport-focused practitioners (Carmeli, 2001, p. 65) and the data from the Dobinson bibliography support a conclusion that professional reflection regarding sport among journalism academics is low, which suggests journalism academics have a limited professional interest in sport. Results from Claringbould et al (2004) that sports journalism excludes women and people of colour, and the perception data collected from journalists at work (Henningham, 1995, p. 13), combine with demographic data concerning female bias among journalism students to support the hypothesis that demand for sports research is reduced by perceptions among female journalism students that the industry of sports journalism is dominated by white males. The large amount of content data collected from the main study supports the conclusion that the “war” discourse of sport (Carmeli, 2001) continues to be one of wealth and power, and almost completely codified and dominated by “blokey” male behaviour. This behaviour is found in males who appear comfortable and “at home” on the sidelines of rough play, in sweaty changerooms and in pubs and clubs where conversation is loud and drink is strong (see also Kofoed, 1932; Helland, 2004; Toohey & Taylor, 2006).

The demographic data from the Journalism Education Association (Jenkins, 2006) support the hypothesis that the above perceptions are further strength-

ened by the dominance of males among journalism academics, further reducing demand for sport-related instruction and work experience, and demand for sports research among academics. This is strongly supported by the absence of sport as subject material in the dominant university texts prescribed for journalism students.

Conclusion

It is axiomatic that tertiary students believe their studies will lead to employment in the field they have chosen to study, and this is supported by recent evidence (Phillips, 2003; Alysen, 2005). Exactly why a disproportionately high number of females continues to enrol in tertiary journalism courses – even though a strong connection has been shown between sport, financial return and political power, and there are data that the “war” discourse of sport (Carmeli, 2001) continues to be one of wealth and power and almost completely codified and dominated by “blokey” male behaviour – is yet to be explained. The evidence suggests the resulting gender imbalance among tertiary journalism students is driving down the quantum of sports research and publishing conducted by Australian journalism academics, and thus driving down the amount of reflection and potential professionalisation of sports journalism in particular (and, it must be said, journalism in general, given the clear importance of sports to the industry).

Notes

1. Such as the cricket-ball tampering allegations in August 2006.
2. Along with, in order of internationalisation, soccer (also known as “football”), Rugby Union and Rugby League.
3. Foxtel is the News Corporation-controlled network.
4. One of this article’s authors has taught sports journalism as a discrete subject at three Australian universities at various times in the past 10 years.
5. *The Australian*, published by News Corporation.
6. Source journals (publishers current in 2002; some have changed):
 - ♦ *Asia Pacific Media Educator*: Graduate School of Journalism, University of Wollongong, in collaboration with Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology; Department of Communication Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia; Department of Journalism, Monash University, Victoria.

- ♦ *Australian Journal of Communication*. School of English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland.
- ♦ *Australian Journal of Political Science*. Department of Politics, Australian Defence Force Academy, on behalf of Australasian Political Studies Association.
- ♦ *Australian Journalism Review*. Journalism Education Association, Australia.
- ♦ *Australian Journalism Monographs*. School of Journalism and Communication, University of Queensland.
- ♦ *Australian Studies in Journalism*. School of Journalism and Communication, University of Queensland.
- ♦ *British Journalism Review*. British Journalism Review Publishing Ltd.
- ♦ *Canadian Journal of Communication*. Canadian Journal of Communication Corporation, a collaborative venture between Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology and Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing.
- ♦ *The Contemporary Pacific*. Centre for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawaii Press.
- ♦ *Development Bulletin*. Development Studies Network, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra.
- ♦ *Ejournalist*. Central Queensland University.
- ♦ *IPI Global Journalist* (formerly *IPI Report*). International Press Institute, Missouri School of Journalism.
- ♦ *Journal of Development Communication*. Asian Institute for Development Communication, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- ♦ *Journalism Studies*. Routledge.
- ♦ *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, in co-operation with Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of South Carolina, Columbia.
- ♦ *Media, Culture & Society*. Sage Publications.
- ♦ *Media International Australia*. Then published by Australian Film Television & Radio School.
- ♦ *Metro*. Australian Teachers of Media, with assistance from Australian Film Commission, Cinemedia and NSW Film and Television Office.
- ♦ *Pacific Islands Communication Journal*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.
- ♦ *Pacific Journalism Review*. School of Communication Studies, Auckland University of Technology, NZ.
- ♦ *Political Communication*. Taylor & Francis.
- ♦ *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*. Carfax Publishing.
- ♦ *Transformations*. Central Queensland University.

7. Graduation statistics supplied by RMIT Journalism after author Cokley posed an enquiry on the jeanet list-serv in early 2003:

Graduate Diploma			
Year	Male	Female	Total
1996	3	7	10
1997	1	10	11
1998	6	6	12
1999	5	7	12
2000	3	20	23
2001	0	3	3
2002	2	8	10
Bachelor of Arts (Journalism)			
Year	Male	Female	Total
1996	13	18	31
1997	10	22	32
1998	13	27	40
1999	15	25	40
2000	12	74	87
2001	16	29	45
2002	12	24	36

8. In one case, of the 18 students who took a subject called “Sports Journalism” as an elective at one university in the May semester of 2006, 16 were female, and the females, for the most part, were just as keen on reporting sport as the two males.

9. Among the authors of that text was one of this article’s authors.

10. ESPN and CNN.

11. *The New York Times* and *USA Today*.

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