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THE POWER OF ONE:
THE EFFECT OF ONE ATHLETE'S BEHAVIOR ON A SPORT

by
Jennifer L. Field

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Masters of Arts Degree of The Graduate School of
Rowan University
July 20, 2000

Approved by

Date approved July 20, 2000

ABSTRACT

Jennifer L. Field
The Power of One
The Effect of One Athlete's Behavior on a Sport
1999
Advisor: Dr. Suzanne Sparks FitzGerald
Public Relations Graduate Program

This is a study of whether or not the effects of one athlete's behavior are broad enough to be felt throughout a sport. The researcher focused on three athletes whose behavior was thought to have left a permanent scar on the three sports involved. The athletes were: (1) Pete Rose, who was part of the Philadelphia Phillies 1980 World Series team and later became the manager of the Cincinnati Reds, who was accused of betting on baseball games, (2) Mike Tyson, former undisputed heavy weight champion of the world, who was convicted of rape and bit the ear of opponent Evander Holyfield during a title match and (3) Tonya Harding, Olympic figure skater whose boyfriend injured team mate Nancy Kerrigan prior to the 1994 Olympics.

A content analysis of newspaper articles regarding the three athletes was conducted. Intercept surveys of the general public were also conducted to gauge how fans' feelings about the sports were affected by the actions of the three athletes.

Directly following the controversial incidents surrounding the three athletes studied, the images of the athletes were damaged. The image and reputation of the sport of boxing were also damaged. Fans' negative opinions of Tyson and Harding remain.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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This is a study of whether or not the effects of one athlete's behavior are broad enough to be felt throughout a sport. A content analysis was implemented and intercept surveys were conducted in order to study the cases of Pete Rose, Mike Tyson and Tonya Harding, three athletes whose negative actions were thought to have affected the sports involved.

Directly following the controversial incidents surrounding the three athletes studied, the images of the athletes were damaged. The image and reputation of the sport of boxing was also damaged. Fans' negative opinions of Tyson and Harding remain.

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To my parents, Roy and Diane Field, for always supporting me. You told me I could do it, even when I wasn't sure I could. You taught me to ignore the things that I thought would hold me back, and not to lose sight of my goal. Thank you for all of your help these past two years, but more importantly, these past 25 years. In addition, thank you for providing the technological equipment possible to complete this thesis, and my entire Masters Degree.

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Chapter One

Importance of the Problem

Sports is a 100-billion-dollar industry in America. Sports fans not only attend games, but they also purchase sports-related merchandise and apparel, generating millions in revenue.

Whether it be team sports or individual competition at the professional, Olympic or college level, it seems Americans love sports. They purchase magazines and other publications focusing on their favorite sports. They watch television networks completely dedicated to sports. If it has to do with sports, they'll read it, watch it, go to it and buy it, not to mention bet on it.

Jackie MacMullen (*Sports Illustrated*, 1998) quoted Philadelphia 76ers Vice-President of Marketing Dave Coskey as saying (regarding promotion at one of the games) "Ten years ago, sports were a pastime, but now they have become a business. It's very competitive and we wanted to appeal to families and kids. If they have fun, we have got a shot at getting them back here."

Maintaining loyal fans is the number one challenge of sports public relations practitioners. In order for fans to continue attending games and events and purchasing merchandise, they must remain loyal, game after game, and season after season. Sometimes this means standing by their team loss after loss or by a sport controversy after controversy.

Across the country, sports employs thousands of people. Careers and livelihoods depend on the sports industry. Entire cities thrive based on the revenue generated by sports facilities.

When an incident occurs to damage a sport's or a team's image, fan loyalty drops. Thus, ticket sales and merchandise sales decline, resulting in a potentially devastating loss of revenue. Clearly, the financial effect of a drop-off in fanship is felt far beyond the individual athletes, coaches and franchise owners. It is estimated that the sports industry accounts for 4.5 million jobs.

After several National Basketball Association (NBA) players had physical conflicts with referees during games, fans were disgusted with the types of behavior that players were exhibiting and the lenient punishments they received. MacMullan (*Sports Illustrated*, 1996) referred to one incident where a player shoved an official into a scoring table as an act of "blatant stupidity that blackened the eye of his team, and of the NBA." The writer said another incident in which a player head butted the referee "left the NBA with a public relations migraine."

In recent years, sports leagues and franchises have hired teams of consultants charged with the difficult job of reshaping the image of a controversy plagued team or sport. One example is the Dallas Cowboys football team, which hired a retired player and his wife to develop a plan that would help players stay out of trouble after several drug suspensions and rape allegations plagued the season.

Problem Statement

Can an individual athlete's actions damage the image of an entire sport? This is a study of whether or not the effects of one athlete's behavior are broad enough to be felt throughout a sport. The researcher will look at three controversial incidents in recent sports history that the researcher believes left a permanent scar on the face of the three different sports involved. Through research, she will determine if the images of the sports involved were damaged and if so, if they have yet to be fully repaired.

Purpose

This researcher will study the cases of three athletes that research indicates have damaged the image of their sports. This researcher will study (1) Pete Rose, National

League first baseman and outfielder, who was part of the Philadelphia Phillies 1980 World Series and later became the manager of the Cincinnati Reds. In addition to being convicted of filing false income tax returns, Rose has been accused of placing bets on baseball games. She will also study (2) Mike Tyson, heavyweight boxer and former undisputed heavy weight champion of the world who, after a string of out-of-the-ring incidents including a divorce, rape charges and time spent in jail for assaulting motorists following a fender bender, bit the ear of Evander Holyfield during a title match. And finally, she will study (3) Tonya Harding, Olympic figure skater whose boyfriend hit team mate Nancy Kerrigan in the leg with a wrench during the 1994 Olympics, rendering her with permanent damage and unable to participate in the competition.

The researcher chose these three athletes because they were involved in highly-publicized incidents. Informal research was conducted, consisting of brief interviews with sports fans, to conclude that these three cases should be included in the study.

The researcher chose to study the question because it was crucial for sports public relations practitioners to comprehend the extent to which one player can affect the image and reputation of an entire sport. These practitioners must be able to gauge the depth of an individual athlete's problem and determine if there will be a lasting negative effect on the entire sport or team. With this knowledge, practitioners can begin to restore the image of the affected team or sport.

The hypotheses regarding the three cases include:

Hypothesis I: It is expected that Pete Rose damaged his personal reputation and to some extent the reputation of baseball as a sport. As a member of a World Series-winning team, he was a hero. Filing false income tax returns, and betting on baseball,

though he has never admitted it, (it is not known if he bet on his own team) caused the nation a great disappointment in a hero of its favorite pastime.

This hypothesis was supported by Erika Duckworth in the *St. Petersburg Times* on July 21, 1990 when she wrote, "The image of baseball superstar Pete Rose walking dejectedly from a courtroom was too much for some fans."

Hypothesis II: It is expected that Mike Tyson damaged the image of the sport of boxing not only because of his actions, but also because he was continually allowed to re-enter the ring after controversy after controversy.

This hypothesis was supported by Jeffrey Benedict and Alan Klein in the *Los Angeles Times* on August 17, 1995, when they wrote that the overwhelming majority of cases against celebrity athletes are either dismissed or result in lenient plea agreements and sentences. Later in the same article, they wrote that most athletes are never accused of criminally violating women, but those who are, enter the legal system with built in advantages.

Hypothesis III: It is expected that Tonya Harding damaged the reputation of ice-skating when she asked her boyfriend to injure Nancy Kerrigan.

Tom McCollister (*The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 1994) reported that more than four out of ten American's surveyed said that whether Harding would be convicted and punished for her role in the attack on Kerrigan or not, they had lost faith in her and she should withdraw from the US Olympic team.

An editorial that ran in *The Arizona Republic* (1994) said, "The honor of representing one's country in the Olympics is not granted subject to contrary findings in a criminal court: demonstrated character deficiencies can and should be considered in

assembling a team. This is why Harding should be banned from the Olympic figure skating competition that gets underway Feb. 23 in Lillehammer, Norway.”

The results of this study will show that an individual athlete’s actions can damage the image of an entire sport.

Procedure

To study the question, “Can an individual athlete’s actions damage the image of an entire sport,” this researcher conducted a content analysis of newspaper articles to determine what was published in newspapers across the country about the three cases included in the study. She rated the tone of each article as positive, negative or neutral in six categories. The categories were as follows: image of the individual athlete, reputation of the individual athlete, image of the sport in the case, reputation of the sport in the case, fan reaction and fan behavior and overall tone of the article.

This researcher also conducted 50 intercept surveys of the general public for each of the three cases. The surveys were designed to gauge how fans’ feelings about the sports were affected by the incidents that occurred.

The intercept surveys regarding Pete Rose and Mike Tyson were conducted at two restaurant/bars in Somers Point, New Jersey on weekends during the football season. The researcher chose this location because it was populated by fans of baseball and boxing, primarily men.

Some of the intercept surveys regarding Tonya Harding were also taken at the restaurant/bars. The remainder of these surveys were conducted outside of a supermarket because the researcher found that primarily women consider themselves figure skating

fans and fewer women frequented bars than men.

Delimitations

This researcher will not focus on other cases in which athletes have damaged their own reputations or the image of their teams or their sports. This study will not include any literature about the athletes included in the study that is not relevant to the incidents. Articles about the athletic accomplishments of the athletes included before the incidents focused on in this study will not be included.

Terminology

In order to understand the purpose, research, recommendations and overall content of this thesis, a reader should understand how the researcher defined the following key terms:

Athlete - Any person who competes or participates in a sport on the professional, Olympic or college level.

Image – The representation of the form, features, likeness, personality or identity of someone or something.

Reputation – The broadly and commonly held long-term evaluation of someone's character or personality.

Content Analysis - Author George V. Zito writes, "A content analysis is a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken, or published communications by systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis." (Berger, 1998)

Intercept Study - A short survey probing a random, non-scientific sample's attitudes, opinions and feelings toward a particular issue, as defined by Laura E. Litrenta (*Professional Sports Teams and Fan Relations*, 1999)

Chapter Two

Sports Relations

“Wanted: Marketing and promotions professionals to help restore baseball’s image. Must be creative, innovative and capable of working miracles. Job security excellent (providing there’s not another strike).” This is how author Bobby Clay (Black Enterprise, 1995) begins “Eight Great Careers in the Sports Industry.” In the wake of professional baseball’s strike, the National Basketball Association’s lockout and reports of athletes being arrested, charged and convicted with drug use, theft, physical and sexual assault and murder, not to mention athletes’ greed and generally poor attitudes, public relations practitioners have become key players in the sports industry. Clay said, “Every sports team, league office and conference worth a salt now employs a public relations or sports information director.”

It’s not only individual teams and franchises that employ sports relations professionals. Paul Holmes reported in The Plain Dealer in 1996 that the major league baseball Acting Commissioner at the time had hired a headhunter to find the world-class marketing expert who could develop a strategy to take the game into the next century and reposition baseball as the national pastime. Holmes wrote in the article headlined “Baseball Seeking A Makeover Specialist” that the expert’s responsibilities would include “helping baseball, damaged by two years of strike-shortened seasons and the cancellation of the 1994 World Series, take steps to win fans and sponsors back.”

Clay quoted Larry Lundy, director of client services for a Texas-based marketing group

as saying, “I think sports is probably one of the hottest industries around. A lot of jobs are just coming to the forefront. Of the eight sports jobs that Clay referred to, two –Sports Information Director and Marketing and Promotions Director – were communications based positions.

Athlete Behavior

To determine whether instances of violence, sexual assault, gambling and other types of immoral behavior exhibited by individual athlete affect the image of the entire sport, it is necessary to explore the reasons that these athletes exhibit such behavior. Arisitides (American Scholar, 1996) said in “Trivial Pursuits” that today, among athletes, there are “a great number of what can only be called sad cases: guys with drug and booze problems, women athletes with serious eating disorders, let us not even speak of paternity suits.” Aristides quotes Chicago Journalist Bill Brashler as saying, “Drug taking and dealing, alcoholism, drunk driving, spousal abuse, manslaughter, tax evasion – the sports page reads more like a police blotter. Culminating, of course, with O.J.”

Violence

Robert E. Leach (American Journal of Sports Medicine, 1997) said in “Violence and Sports” that we, as a public, accept violence and abusive behavior from athletes. He pointed out that everyday, we read in the newspaper about some sports personality who has been involved in violence. The pattern of violent behavior by professional athletes, both on the playing field and off, has become commonplace and continues now because, Leach says, we not only accept this behavior of them, but we have also come to expect it.

According to Douglas S. Looney, (The Christian Science Monitor, 2000) a recent book says that one in five pro-football players has been charged with or convicted of a serious crime.

Leach attempts to account for athletes displaying violent behavior by saying that from an early age, male athletes in our society are cosseted, praised and singled out for special treatment. He said of athletes, "Early on they realize that the rules are different if you throw a football well, dunk a basketball or hit home runs.

Leach also says that the societal rules are relaxed for professional athletes. He used Mike Tyson as an example, saying, "He got a year's vacation and made 27 million dollars for biting another boxer." What did Tyson learn from his punishment? "We accept violence and abusive behavior from athletes that would result in loss of job and reputation if it occurred from a teacher, computer programmer or doctor," Leach said.

Jackie McMullen (Sports Illustrated, 1996) also wrote of the leniency of the punishments that professional athletes receive after exhibiting violent behavior. In "The Refs Cry Foul" he reported several incidents of assault against referees by National Basketball Association players. He quoted one NBA ref saying, "What are they waiting for, one of these guys to haul off and belt me in the face? What good is some bogus fine going to do if I walk off the court with a broken nose?"

Leach (1997) says that because many sports are violent in nature, for example boxing and football, this could lead to violence off the field as well. "Boxing is intended to cause injury," he said. "Football is not gentle," Much of professional athletes' is filled with violence as they prepare for competition on the professional level.

In addition to physical violence, athletes are also known to exhibit extreme anger

during their performances and in their personal lives. Michael Bamberger (Sports Illustrated, 1996) in “He Thrives on Anger” talked about the effect that one player’s anger has had on his career. That player, Albert Belle, of the Cleveland Indians, has lashed out at fans and members of the public, as well as journalists. Bamberger quotes Belle’s friend Ray Mancini as saying that Belle thrives on anger and that to him, the game is a battle.

Referees, other athletes and journalists are not the only victims of the violence and outbursts of anger perpetuated by professional athletes. Male athletes, according to research, are also prone to sexual violence against women. Mindy Stomblor (Contemporary Sociology, 1999) analyzed Jeffrey R. Benedict’s article “Athletes and Acquaintance Rape” where Benedict says that it is more because of their celebrity status than their athleticism that athletes are prone to sexual violence against women. Benedict says that athletes are offered “unlimited access to sexual activity with no consequences or responsibilities because of their fame, thus leading to the belief that they are then entitled to anything they want and this “muddies the consensual waters.” Benedict says that professional athletes perceive their sexual encounters with groupies (women who seek out the company of athletes to engage in celebrity sex) as fringe benefits to which they are entitled.

Leach (1997) said the pattern of violent behavior by athletes will continue because, “many of these athletes seem to get away with various forms of violence.” He also says he fears this must be sending the wrong message to many younger men. Stomblor (1999) quotes Benedict as saying he holds a complacent public responsible because it ignores violations by professional athletes as long as the athletes perform well.

Research points to the fact that violent behavior exhibited by athletes does have a lasting effect on the image of the sports in which the athletes participate. McMullen (1996) called one incident of violence by an NBA player against a ref during a game a “blatant act of stupidity that blackened the eyes of the storied Lakers franchise and the National Basketball Association.” He said another incident when Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman headbutted a referee left the league with a “public relations migraine.”

Greed

Another quality fans do not appreciate is the greediness of the owners, coaches, players and even the referees. Strikes, contract disputes and players pouting over ungranted salary requests are having a negative effect on the popularity of pro-sports in general. Charles Gordon (MacLean's, 1992) said in “Owners and Players are Killing Sports” that the behavior of the people who own and play on the teams that will kill pro sports, not government interaction or lack of fan loyalty. He says, “The reason: money.”

Fans are disturbed by the fact that athletes are not loyal to their fans, teams or cities and only seem to care about money. Fan loyalty is not rewarded, Gordon says. “Fans know that they have been giving teams and players their loyalty, and they have been getting nothing back,” said Gordon. He questions the fans ability to recover from certain incidents and asks, “Will they make the same commitment again?”

Fan and Media Reaction

“Deploring the greed of players and owners, offended by the sexual adventure and the drunken driving, we decided we would support the home team anyway – somehow,”

Gordon said (1992). But this may not always be the case. Fans do sometimes take matters into their own hands even when the perpetrator is a member of the home team. Tim Kurkijan (Sports Illustrated, 1996) reported in "Public Enemy No. 1" that after Baltimore Oriole Roberto Alomar spit at an umpire following an argument about a pitch, "the media lit into Alomar as if he were a murderer." In the weeks that followed the incident, each time that Alomar took the plate he was booed, yelled at and taunted by the fans.

Aristides (1996) said, "Sports have crossed the line of a kind that a once-charming neurotic might cross into harmful psychosis. It's neither amusing nor refreshing anymore." The author is a self-proclaimed former sports fan. He once wrote an essay called "Obsessed with Sports," which was published in Harpers Magazine, but he now says he wishes he had dedicated the time he spent watching sports to learning to play the harpsichord.

Athlete and Coach Reaction

When an athlete demonstrates behavior that is considered to be violent or immoral, fellow athletes, coaches and managers often speak out about the athlete and the incident. Sometimes, they speak in the athlete's defense, other times, they are just as bothered by the incident as the fans.

In the incident involving Roberto Alomar spitting at the umpire, others in baseball came out in his defense, painting him as a great guy who made a mistake. "The criticism got to him, said catcher Mark Parent told Kurkijan. "But he's not a monster. He doesn't have a rap sheet. I've known him and his family since he was 17. He's a nice kid from a great family. His parents taught him the right and wrong way. Now, people think he's Ty

Cobb.”

Former teammate Dave Stewart was quoted by Kurkijan as saying “He’s a harmless guy who doesn’t bother anyone,” of Alomar. Manager Sparky Anderson said “One hundred percent out of character. If you asked me if he was capable of this, I would have laughed at you. He’s a good kid. Ask everyone, I mean everyone, and they’ll tell you the same thing. He has always been a pro.” And Alomar’s brother, Sandy Alomar Jr., also a professional baseball player, said, “This has hurt Roberto more than anyone knows. But the people who have criticized him have made mistakes too.”

According to Kurkijan’s reports, even after his teammates defended him, Alomar was booed throughout the playoffs. Kurkijan said, “There are those who will never forget what Alomar did (to the umpire). But there are also a great many who will never forget Game Four, when, once again, he became a hero, eluding to the fact that Alomar’s only successful attempt at repairing his image may come through athletic accomplishments, not apologies.

Even the roughest of football players commented on Tyson’s ear-biting incident. An anonymous writer (Sports Illustrated, 1998) in an article called “The Devil Himself” interviewed Conrad Dobler, a former guard for the St. Louis Cardinals, who was known as a rough and dirty player. The writer said, “Dobler fought, clawed and bit his way into Sports Illustrated’s cover as professional football’s dirtiest player.

In the article, Dobler is quoted as saying, “I bit a finger, but I didn’t know they’d be paying \$35 million for ears, referring to the Mike Tyson incident. “I would’ve done that, taken a couple of psychological exams and been set for life.”

Effect on Team

When one member of a professional sports team is exhibiting destructive behavior, it can effect not only the reputation of the entire team, but also the success of the team. Steve Marantz (Sporting News, 1997) in "Giving Fans the Slip" asked if NBA Seattle Super Sonics season ticket holders should feel cheated because their club's equilibrium was upset by a star whose behavior off and on the court was erratic and suspicious, referring to Shawn Kemp. Because of his behavior, which included repeated tardiness, poor performance and reportedly drinking the night before games, Marantz said the Super Sonics were "planked salmon." In fact, he says that Kemp ruined what should have been another run at the NBA title, and a possible rematch with the Bulls in the finals.

Negative Events in Sports

Poor athlete behavior is not the only factor that can have a negative effect on the image of a team or sport. Bob Klapisch (Sporting News, 1995) wrote in selling "Diamonds" that the attendance figures at ballparks in the month of April, the first month of the season following Major League Baseball's strike, sent "a hard-to-ignore message." In the first four games of the season, clubs suffered a drop-off of 142,000. Klapisch quoted Kathleen Francis, director of marketing development for Major League Baseball, as saying, "Obviously, rebuilding the game's credibility is going to be a long-term process."

Klapisch quoted Judy Heater, the player's union director of licensing as saying that to help recover from the strike, the players themselves have engaged in fan-friendly activities, although there has been no directive from the union itself. She said that the

players are “very, very aware of how important the fans are, especially now.”

Kendra L. Darko (American Demographics, 1999) in “Batter Up!” tells how teams began to recover in terms of fan turnout following the strike. Starting in 1995 when “fans were disenchanted and growing scarce,” franchises, starting in California, but quickly catching on across the country, began evaluating the fans who attended their games by gathering demographic information. In exchange for a little demographic information, says Darko, fans receive souvenirs, such as an authentic Louisville Slugger, or perks only skybox patrons had access to before.

The primary reason for implementing the program was to conduct demographic research. However, Brook Govan, marketing manager for the Compadres Club says in the article that there were additional reasons for the program. “We had a number of fans who were nameless and faceless. We knew about our season ticket holders, but not about those buying tickets on a game-to-game basis. We wanted to create a baseline to judge how we’re doing year to year based on our marketing goals. Also in the article, Darko quotes EDCS Vice-President of Business Development Ann Vyenielo as saying, “The rationale behind the programs varies with the teams. Some simply wish to improve customer service, while others hope to attract potential advertisers’ dollars. For most though, boosting attendance is the number one attraction.”

Image Restoration

There are ways for sports franchises to restore their images, according to an anonymous author (Jet, 1997) who wrote an article headlined “Former Dallas Cowboy Calvin Hill and wife Janet Hill as Consultants for Team.” According to the author, the

Dallas Cowboys football team was in desperate need of image restoration after the team was plagued with problems like drug suspensions and rape allegations. The author said these incidents had “tarnished its reputation as America’s team.”

In an attempt to reshape its image, the Cowboys hired former Cowboy Calvin Hill and his wife Janet, parents of NBA star Grant Hill. The Hills were responsible for devising and implementing a plan that addressed safety and security issues as well as helping the players learn to deal with their celebrity status and other personal issues.

In summary, the literature reviewed for this study confirms that sports relations plays an important role in maintaining fan loyalty and that sports franchises work hard to overcome the damaging effects of individual athletes’ negative behavior. The research showed that the most common type of negative behavior among athletes is violence, but that other illegal and immoral activities also plague athletes. Much of the literature reviewed suggested that while sports fans are affected by athletes’ negative actions and poor behavior, we, as Americans, have come to expect it of athletes.

Chapter Three

Overview of Study Design

To answer the question, “Can an individual athlete’s actions damage the image of an entire sport?” both quantitative and qualitative research methods were utilized to study the incidents surrounding athletes Pete Rose, Mike Tyson and Tonya Harding.

A content analysis was conducted. The purpose of this quantitative research method was to examine how newspapers across the country covered the incidents surrounding the three case studies. This allowed the researcher to determine the attitude of the public directly following the incidents that occurred; Pete Rose’s betting on baseball and income tax fraud, Mike Tyson’s rape charge and ear biting during a fight and Tonya Harding’s role in the attack on Nance Kerrigan.

Each of the articles included in the content analysis was coded positive, negative or neutral the following categories:

- Image of the individual athlete.
- Image of the sport.
- Reputation of the individual athlete.
- Reputation of the sport.
- Fan reaction or behavior.
- Overall tone of the article.

Inner-coder reliability was achieved by a second coder participating in the analysis of the articles. That coder was chosen and trained by the researcher.

In addition, intercept surveys of the public were conducted. The purpose of this qualitative research method was to gauge the public's current opinion about the three athletes involved in the cases being studied and the sports they participated in. This enabled the researcher to evaluate the public's opinion after time has passed since the incidents occurred. (See Appendix A.)

Data Collection

The intercept surveys of the public were collected in person in locations where the researcher found fans of each of the three sports included would be accessible.

Respondents for surveys regarding Pete Rose and Mike Tyson were found at two different sports bars in Somers Point, New Jersey. Some of the respondents for the surveys regarding Tonya Harding were also found in those establishments. In addition, respondents for the surveys regarding Harding were found leaving an Ocean City grocery store. Respondents for all surveys were selected at random.

The content analysis included newspaper articles published only in American newspapers. Newspaper articles included in the content analysis were taken from various newspapers published across the country including, but not limited to *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *the Daily News* (of New York), *Houston Chronicle*, *New York Times*, *The Phoenix Gazette*, *The San Diego Union Tribune* and *USA Today*. Articles written by Associated Press reporters that were published in several different newspapers on the same day, were only included in the analysis only once.

Sample

One hundred and fifty intercept surveys were completed for the study. Fifty surveys were taken regarding each of the three cases; Pete Rose, Mike Tyson and Tonya Harding. The prospective respondents were chosen at random and asked a screening question. For the Pete Rose surveys, that question was, "Would you consider yourself a baseball fan?" and for the Mike Tyson surveys, that question was, "Would you consider yourself a boxing fan?" For the Tonya Harding surveys, the prospective respondents were asked "Would you consider yourself a figure skating fan?" If they answered "no," they were given a second screening question of "Do you follow figure skating during the Olympics?" Prospective respondents that answered "no" to the screening questions were not included in the survey sample. This is because the purpose of the survey was to gauging fans of the three sports' attitudes. Therefore, non-fans were not included.

Included in the content analysis of newspaper articles regarding Pete Rose, were articles published from the day that an investigation in his gambling and income tax history was open. These articles were published between March 22, 1989 and April 22, 1989. Also, articles regarding Rose published during the dates June 21, 1989 and June 27, 1989 were included. These articles focused on a week of hearings regarding the investigation into Rose's activities. The break in the coverage of the events surrounding Pete Rose was clear.

Included in the content analysis of newspaper articles regarding Mike Tyson's rape charge were articles published from the day the investigation opened and 30 days

following. These articles were published between August 18, 1991 and September 18, 1991. Articles regarding the incident in which Tyson bit Evander Holyfield's ear during a title match included in the analysis were published from the day of the fight to 30 days following. These articles were published between June 30, 1997 and July 30, 1997.

Included in the content analysis of newspaper articles regarding Tonya Harding were articles published from the day she became a suspect in the case involving the assault on Nancy Kerrigan and approximately three weeks following. At the same time, the Olympic committee began considering whether or not to send Harding to the events. These articles were published between January 12, 1994 and February 1, 1994. The break in the coverage involving this case was clear and choosing these articles to include was logical because of the sheer mass of articles published on this case.

Data Analysis

The results of both the intercept surveys and the content analysis were tabulated by hand. The results of the intercept surveys were studied to determine the percentage of respondents whose feelings about the sports in question were effected by the incidents surrounding each of the three athletes: Pete Rose, Mike Tyson and Tonya Harding. Several cross tabulations, including those regarding the gender of the respondents were also performed. The results of the content analysis were studied to determine the percentage of articles that portrayed each of the six categories being coded in a positive, negative or neutral manner. Several cross tabulations were also made of these results. All results of the study are presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Results

The results of this study reveal fans' current feelings about the sports involved in the three case studies, which were Pete Rose, who was accused of betting on baseball; Mike Tyson, who was convicted of rape and bit opponent Evander Holyfield's ear during a title match and Tonya Harding, who had her boyfriend/ex-husband injure fellow skater Nancy Kerrigan. The results also reveal how the sports of baseball, boxing and figure skating were affected by these incidents, as well as the attitude of the public directly following the incidents in the three case studies. The researcher assumed that the results of this study would show that an individual athlete's actions can damage the image of an entire sport.

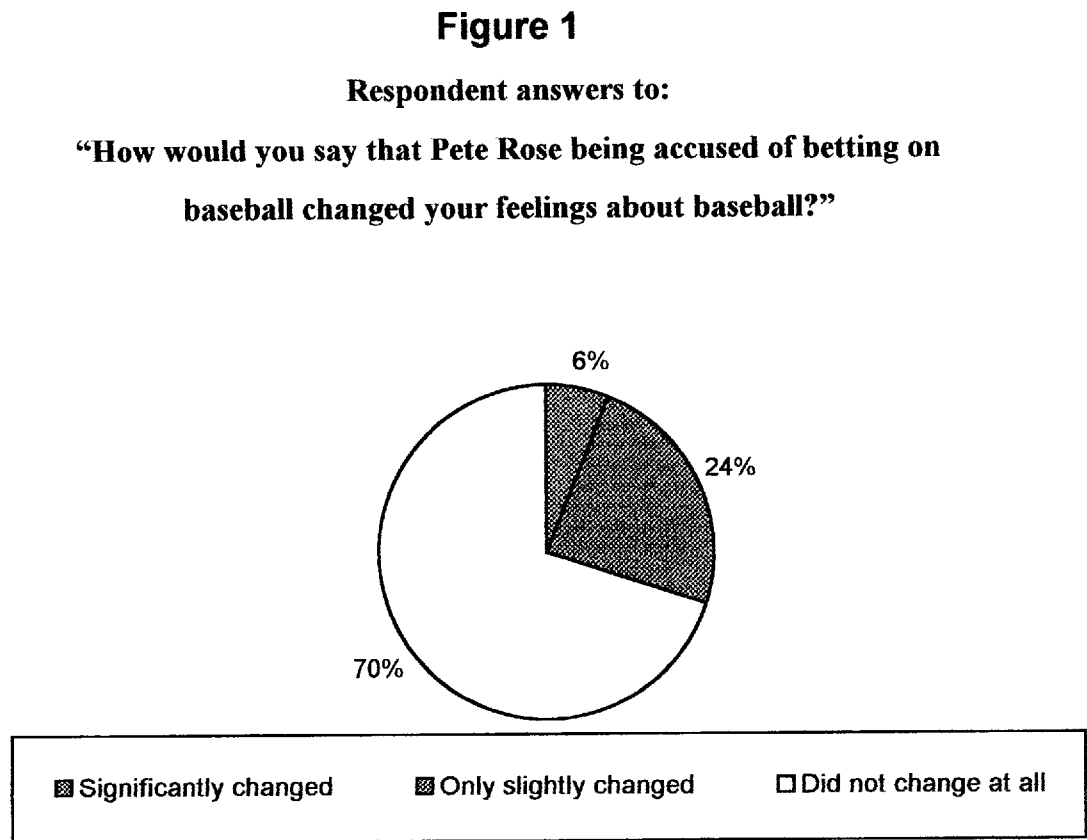
Several hypotheses formed the basis of this research. The results of the research correlating to each of the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: It was expected that Pete Rose damaged his personal reputation and to some extent the reputation of baseball as a sport. As a member of a World Series-winning team, he was a hero. Betting on baseball, though he has never admitted it, (it is not known if he bet on his own team) caused the nation a great disappointment in a hero of its favorite pastime.

Intercept studies showed that the majority of baseball fans do not feel that Pete

Rose being accused of betting on baseball had a lasting negative effect on the sport of baseball. Their feelings for baseball were not changed because of the incident. Also they did not have any less respect for the sport of baseball because of it.

Of the survey respondents, 78 percent were male and 22 percent were female. One hundred percent of baseball fans surveyed said they remembered the incident of Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the respondents' answers to the question, "How would you say that Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball changed your feelings about baseball?"



Of the respondents who said that Rose being accused of betting on baseball did not affect their feelings about baseball at all, 86 percent were male and 14 percent were

female. Of the respondents who said that the incident only slightly affected their feelings about baseball, 67 percent were male and 33 percent were female. Of the respondents who said that the incident significantly affected their feelings about baseball, 67 percent were female and 33 percent were male. In total, 30 percent of respondents revealed that Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball had some affect on their feelings about baseball.

While there were three times as many male respondents as females, these findings show that females were more affected than males by the accusations about Pete Rose. This is shown because of the total number of female respondents, 55 percent said revealed that Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball had some effect on their feelings about the sport of baseball. Of the total number of male respondents, 23 percent revealed that Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball had some effect on their feelings about baseball.

Respondents' answers to the question, "Do you have any less respect for the *sport* of baseball because of Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball?" showed that the incident did not affect the level of respect for the sport of baseball for held by the overwhelming majority of fans. Ninety percent of respondents said they had no less respect for the sport because of Rose being accused of betting on baseball, while 10 percent said they did have less respect for the sport because of this incident.

Of the respondents who said that as a result of Rose being accused of betting on baseball, they had less respect for the sport of baseball, 60 percent were male and 40 percent were female.

A cross tabulation of results of the two questions showed that of the respondents

who said that because of the incident they have less respect for the sport of baseball, three also said that their feelings about baseball had changed significantly because of the incident, one said that his/her feelings about baseball changed slightly because of the incident and one said that his/her feelings about baseball had not changed at all because of the incident.

The content analysis of newspaper articles regarding accusations that Pete Rose bet on baseball showed that the incident damaged his own image, but did not affect the image of baseball. In the first group of articles analyzed, published between March 22, 1989, which was the day an investigation into Rose's income tax and betting habits was opened, until April 22, 1989, 30 days following the opening of the investigation, 100 percent of seven articles portrayed Rose's image in a negative manner. However, all of the articles portrayed Rose's reputation in neutral manner.

All of these articles portrayed both the image and reputation of the sport of baseball in neutral manner. None of the articles included any fan behavior or reaction. Of the articles, only one was coded as having a negative tone overall.

In the second group of articles analyzed, published between June 21, 1989 and June 27, 1989, hearings began regarding how the investigation into Rose's actions would proceed, 78 percent portrayed Rose's image in a negative manner. Eleven percent portrayed his image in a neutral manner and eleven percent in a positive manner. Of these articles, one portrayed Rose's reputation in a positive manner and all others portrayed his reputation in a neutral manner.

Of all of these articles, only one portrayed the image of baseball in a negative manner. All others portrayed both the image and reputation of the sport of baseball in a

neutral manner. Only one article included fan reaction. That reaction was coded as both negative and positive because it conveyed both the negative and positive reactions of fans to the incident.

Of the articles in this second group, 67 percent were coded as having a negative tone overall, 22 percent were coded with a neutral tone overall and 11 percent were coded with a positive tone overall. The findings regarding this group of articles support the researcher's hypothesis that Rose damaged his personal reputation, and to some extent the reputation of baseball as a sport.

III: It is expected that Mike Tyson damaged the image of the sport of boxing not only because of his actions, but also because he was continually allowed to re-enter the ring after controversy after controversy.

Intercept studies showed that more than half of fans feel that Mike Tyson's rape conviction and his later biting Evander Holyfield's ear during a title match had lasting negative effect on the sport of boxing. Their feelings for boxing were changed because of the incidents. However, the majority of fans surveyed did not have any less respect for the sport of boxing because of these two incidents in Tyson's life.

Of the survey respondents, 82 percent were male and 18 percent were female. One hundred percent of boxing fans surveyed said they remembered both Tyson's rape conviction and his biting Holyfield's ear. In response to the question, "How would you say that Mike Tyson's rape conviction and biting Holyfield's ear during a title match changed your feelings about boxing," 48 percent said their feelings were not changed at all, 44 percent said their feelings were slightly changed and 8 percent said their feelings were significantly changed. This finding shows that, in total, 52 percent of respondents

revealed that these two incidents in Tyson's life had some effect on their feelings about baseball, while 48 percent revealed that it had no effect.

Of the respondents who said that Tyson being convicted of rape and biting Holyfield's ear did not affect their feelings about boxing, 87 percent were male and 13 percent were female. Of the respondents who said that the incidents only slightly affected their feelings about boxing, 77 percent were male and 23 percent were female. Of the respondents who said that the incidents significantly affected their feelings about boxing, 75 percent were female and 25 percent were male.

While there were more than twice as many male respondents than female, these findings show that females were more affected than males by Mike Tyson being convicted of rape and biting Holyfield's ear. This is evident because of the total number of female respondents, 67 percent revealed that Mike Tyson's actions had some effect on their feelings about boxing. Of the total number of male respondents, 49 percent revealed that Mike Tyson's actions had some affect on their feelings about boxing.

In response to the question "Do you have any less respect for the *sport* of boxing because of these two incidents in Mike Tyson's life," the majority of respondents revealed that they did not have any less respect for the sport because of the incidents. Eighty percent of respondents said they had no less respect for the sport, while 20 percent of the respondents said they did have less respect for the sport because of the incidents.

Of the respondents who said that as a result of Tyson's rape conviction and biting Holyfield's ear during a title match, they had less respect for the sport of boxing, 70 percent were male and 30 percent were female.

A cross tabulation of results of the two questions showed that of the respondents

who said that because of these two incidents in Mike Tyson's life they have less respect for the sport of boxing, three also said that their feelings about boxing had changed significantly because of the incident, six said that their feelings about boxing changed slightly because of the incident and one said his/her feelings about boxing had not changed at all because of the incident.

The content analysis of newspaper articles regarding Mike Tyson being accused, and eventually convicted of rape, showed that the incident damaged his own image and the image of boxing. The articles analyzed, published between August 18, 1991, the day an investigation into allegations against Tyson were open, until August 18, 1991, 30 days following the opening of the investigation, 100 percent of 18 articles portrayed Tyson's image in a negative manner. In addition, 22 percent, portrayed Tyson's reputation in negative manner, while the remainder portrayed his reputation in a neutral manner.

Ten of the articles included in the analysis regarding Mike Tyson's rape allegations portrayed the image of boxing in a negative manner and four portrayed the reputation of boxing in a negative manner.

The one article including fan reaction portrayed that reaction in a negative manner. Of the articles, 13, or 72 percent were coded negative for their overall tone.

The analysis of newspaper articles regarding Mike Tyson biting opponent Evander Holyfield's ear during a title match showed that the incident damaged his own image and reputation. The incident also had some effect on the image and reputation of the sport of boxing. Of the articles analyzed, which were published between June 30, 1997, which was the morning following the fight, until July 30 1997, 30 days following the fight, 75 percent portrayed Tyson's image in a negative manner and 69 percent

portrayed Tyson's reputation in a negative manner.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of how the articles included in this section of the content analysis portrayed the image of the sport of boxing. In addition, Figure 3 shows the breakdown of how they portrayed the reputation of the sport of boxing.

Figure 2

**How articles portrayed the
image of the *sport* of boxing.**

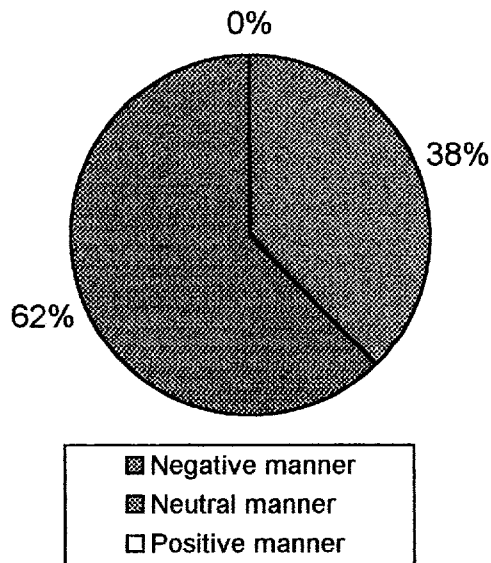
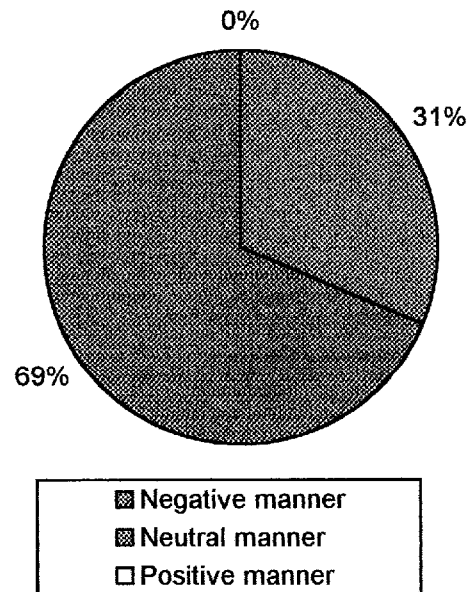


Figure 3

**How articles portrayed the
reputation of the *sport* of boxing.**



Of the articles included, 44 percent contained some fan reaction or behavior and all of those, 100 percent, were coded as negative. Of the articles, half were coded as having a negative tone overall and half were coded as having a neutral tone overall. This supports the researcher's hypothesis that Tyson damaged the image of the sport of boxing.

HHH: It is expected that Tonya Harding damaged the reputation of ice-skating when she was involved in having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan prior to the 1994 Winter Olympics.

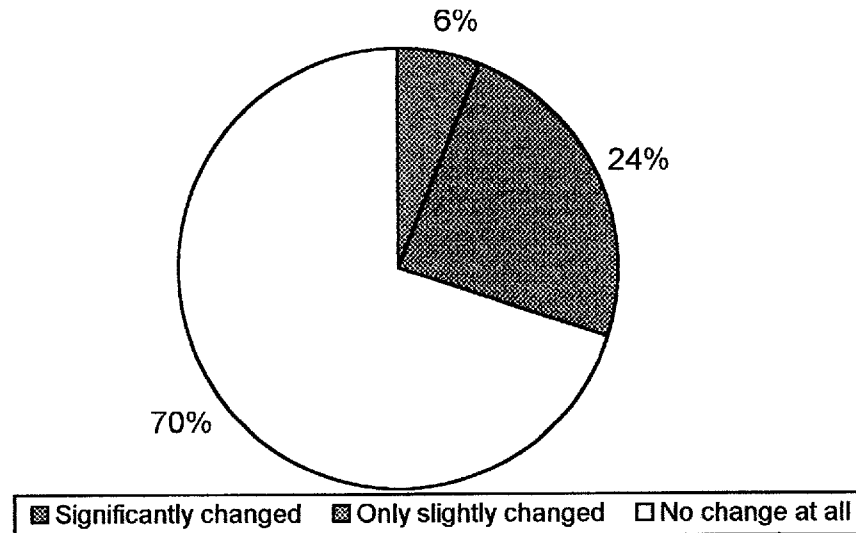
Intercept studies showed that the majority of figure skating fans do not feel that Tonya Harding' involvement in having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure fellow skater Nancy Kerrigan had a lasting negative effect on figure skating. Their feelings for figure skating were not changed because of the incident. Also they did not have any less respect for the *sport* of figure skating because if it.

Of the survey respondents, 76 percent were female and 24 percent were male. One hundred percent of figure skating fans surveyed said they remembered Tonya Harding's involvement in the assault on Nancy Kerrigan. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the respondents' answers to the question, "How would you say that Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan changed your feelings about figure skating."

Figure 4

Respondent answers to:

**“How would you say that Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure
Nancy Kerrigan changed your feelings about figure skating?”**



Of the respondents who said that Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Kerrigan, did not affect their feelings about figure skating at all, 71 percent were female and 29 percent were male. Of the respondents who said that the incident only slightly effected their feelings about figure skating, 80 percent were female and 20 percent were male. Of the respondents who said that the incident significantly effected their feelings about figure skating, 100 percent were female. In total, 38 percent of respondents revealed that Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Kerrigan had some effect on their feelings about figure skating.

While there were three times as many female respondents than males in surveys regarding Tonya Harding, these findings show that females were more affected than males by Harding's involvement in the plot to injure Nancy Kerrigan. This is shown

because, of the total number of female respondents, 42 percent revealed that the incident had some effect on their feelings about the figure skating. Of the total number of male respondents, 25 percent revealed that the incident had some effect on their feelings about figure skating.

Respondents' answers to the question, "Do you have any less respect for the *sport* of figure skating because of Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan?" showed that the incident had only a slight effect on the level of respect for the sport of figure skating by fans. Eight-two percent of respondents said they had no less respect for the sport because of Harding's actions while 18 percent said they did have less respect for the sport because of this incident.

Of the nine respondents who said that as a result of Harding's involvement in the plot to injure Kerrigan, they had less respect for the sport of figure skating, 89 percent were female and 11 percent were male.

A cross tabulation of results of the two questions showed that of the respondents who said that because of the incident they have less respect for the sport of figure skating, 22 percent also said that their feelings about baseball had changed significantly because of the incident, and 22 percent said that their feelings about boxing changed slightly because of the incident.

The content analysis of newspaper articles regarding Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan prior to the 1994 Winter Olympics showed that the incident damaged her own image, but did not affect the image or the reputation of figure skating. The articles analyzed were published between January 12, 1994, which was the day it was announced that she was suspected to be involved in the incident, until

February 1, 1994, amidst the decision by the Olympic committee of whether or not to send her to the Olympics. Of these articles, 81 percent portrayed Harding's image in a negative manner. In addition, 19 percent, portrayed Harding's reputation in negative manner, while the remainder portrayed his reputation in a neutral manner.

One of the articles that included in the analysis regarding Tonya Harding's involvement in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan portrayed the image of figure skating in a negative manner and three of the articles portrayed the image of figure skating in a positive manner. The remainder of the articles portrayed figure skating in a neutral manner.

The three articles that included fan reaction portrayed that reaction in a negative manner. Of the articles, 33 percent were coded negative for their overall tone. The remaining 67 of the articles were coded neutral for their overall tone. These findings do not support the researcher's hypothesis that Tonya Harding's actions damaged the reputation of figure skating. They show that only her personal reputation was damaged.

Other Findings

In conducting the intercept surveys, the researcher recorded additional comments that were offered by the survey respondents. Regarding Pete Rose, 26 percent of survey respondents offered an additional comment beyond the answers to the survey questions. Eight respondents, or 16 percent of all those surveyed, noted that they feel that Pete Rose should be allowed back in baseball and should be allowed into the Baseball Hall of Fame. One respondent commented that Rose is a "slimeball." In addition, three respondents voiced the opinion that it was the major league baseball's strike, not Rose's actions, that

changed their feelings about baseball. Finally, one respondent said he believed that Daryl Strawberry is “giving baseball a bad name.”

Regarding Mike Tyson, 14 percent of those surveyed offered an additional comment. The most popular additional comment was that respondents wanted to clarify the fact that they have less respect for Mike Tyson, but not for the sport of boxing. Four respondents, or 8 percent of those surveyed offered this comment. One respondent said that he had less respect for the sport of boxing because of “all the poor behavior in boxing” not just Tyson’s behavior. Another respondent re-iterated that Tyson has “personally disgraced himself. Finally, one respondent expressed that Tyson deserves to be “banned for life for what he has done.”

Regarding Tonya Harding, four percent of those surveyed offered an additional comment. One respondent pointed out, “She’s a porn star,” while another noted that he/she believes Harding has disgraced herself and ruined her reputation.

Chapter Five

General Findings

By conducting both qualitative and quantitative research, this researcher has found the hypotheses that formed the basis for this study to be somewhat supported. Data acquired through the content analysis of newspaper articles regarding the three cases - former major league base ball player and manager Pete Rose, who was accused of betting on baseball; former undisputed heavyweight champion of the world Mike Tyson, who was convicted of rape and bit opponent Evander Holyfield's ear during a title match; and figure skater Tonya Harding, who played a role in having her boyfriend/ex-husband attack fellow skater Nancy Kerrigan - showed that the three athletes' actions damaged their own images. Also, the content analysis showed that while it may have only been to a small extent, the images of the three sports – baseball, boxing and figure skating – were also damaged. Because these findings were acquired through quantitative research, they support the hypotheses, although by less than a majority number.

However, the findings of the intercept surveys are not consistent with the findings of the content analysis and do not support the hypotheses. According to the conclusions of the intercept surveys, designed to gauge fans' current feelings about the three cases after time has passed, the incidents committed by the three athletes did not effect the reputation of the sports. Therefore, this study shows that while negative behavior by an athlete does affect his/her own image and reputation, it does not have a lasting effect on the entire sport.

Discussion

The hypotheses that formed the basis for the research will now also be the focus of the discussion of the results of the research findings of both the content analysis and the intercept surveys.

HI: It is expected that Pete Rose damaged his personal reputation, and to some extent, the reputation of baseball as a sport. As a member of a World Series-winning team, he was a hero. Rose's filing false income tax returns and betting on baseball, though he has never admitted it, (it is not known if he bet on his own team) caused the nation a great disappointment in a hero of its favorite pastime.

The content analysis of articles published regarding accusations that Pete Rose bet on baseball showed that his personal image was being damaged by the negative press. At the time directly following the investigation into the allegations, the public, according to the media, held a negative opinion of Rose.

A literature review supported the idea that the betting scandal had damaged Rose's reputation. In 1990, Gerald Posner (Penthouse) wrote, "It does not seem like a mere four years since Rose achieved that crowning moment of glory, breaking Cobb's record. It seems like much longer. Maybe the dark clouds swirling around him have so damaged his reputation that fans can no longer just remember the clean image of Charlie Hustle."

However, the intercept surveys conducted showed that now, 11 years later, his actions have not had a negative effect on the image or reputation of baseball. In fact, according to the comments offered by the survey respondents, it seems as if his actions have had very little lasting, negative effect even on his own image. Fans now feel that Rose should be reinstated into baseball and become eligible for election to the Baseball

Hall of Fame.

Of the 13 comments offered by respondents of the intercept survey regarding Rose, only one, the comment that “Pete’s a slimeball,” reflected negatively on the athlete. Eight respondents’ comments reflected positively on the athlete, noting that Rose should be reinstated into baseball and be voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Four of the 13 comments did not pertain to Rose at all, but rather offered other reasons why fans might hold a negative opinion of baseball. Three respondents mentioned the strike and one mentioned Daryl Strawberry, another professional baseball player who has been suspended many times for drug use. It can be concluded from this survey that Rose’s actions did not have a lasting negative affect on his reputation.

Hypothesis II: It is expected that Mike Tyson damaged the image of the sport of boxing not only because of his actions, but also because he was continually allowed to re-enter the ring after controversy after controversy.

The content analysis of articles regarding Mike Tyson’s rape conviction and the incident in which he bit Evander Holyfield’s ear during a title match showed that directly following both of those events, the public held a very low opinion of Tyson and that his image had been severely damaged. His reputation was also somewhat damaged. In addition, during the ear biting, the second of the two incidents, the content analysis also showed the Tyson’s reputation had been damaged even further by the incident. This is perhaps because it was not the first time he had been involved in negative activities. After the rape, Tyson’s image was damaged, but after the rape and the ear biting, his reputation was damaged along with his image.

The content analysis of articles published following the rape allegations showed

that the incident had caused the image of the sport to be portrayed somewhat negatively in the press. Half of the articles coded portrayed a negative image of the sport of boxing. However, only eight percent of the articles coded portrayed boxing as having a negative reputation.

Of the articles analyzed regarding the incident in which Tyson bit Evander Holyfield's ear, 37 percent were coded negatively regarding the image of boxing, showing that again the image of the sport had been somewhat damaged. However, this time, the reputation of the sport took a stronger hit because of Tyson's behavior. Thirty one percent of the articles coded portrayed boxing as having a negative reputation.

Of the seven comments offered by respondents of the intercept surveys, six reflected negatively on Mike Tyson. Four respondents said they had less respect for Tyson, not for the sport of boxing, one said Tyson deserves to be banned from boxing for life and one said Tyson personally disgraced himself. Only one comment, the fact that a fan said he had less respect for boxing because of the behavior of all boxers, reflected negatively on the sport as a whole. The results of this research show that the image and reputation of boxing were damaged by Tyson's actions immediately following the two incidents and that the sport has suffered long-term damage because of the actions of Tyson.

IIII: It is expected that Tonya Harding damaged the reputation of ice-skating when she asked her boyfriend to injure Nancy Kerrigan.

The content analysis of articles regarding Tonya Harding's role in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan showed that directly following the incident, the public held a very low opinion of Harding and her image had been severely damaged. In addition, 19 percent of

the articles analyzed were also coded negatively for Harding's reputation. This researcher concludes that Harding's negative reputation at the time directly following the incident was due only in part to her role in Kerrigan's attack. Harding's already established reputation as a "tough girl" also played a role in these articles reflecting her negative reputation.

Because 17 percent of the articles analyzed portrayed the image of figure skating negatively, it is concluded that the image of figure skating was temporarily damaged by the actions of Harding and the controversy that surrounded Kerrigan's injury. However, only one article was coded as reflecting negatively on the reputation of the sport of figure skating. That article did not discuss the athletes' behavior, but rather how competitive the sport has become.

Of the two comments offered by respondents of the intercept surveys regarding Tonya Harding, one, the comment that Harding disgraced herself, supported the findings of the content analysis that Harding damaged her image and reputation. The other comment, made by the respondent who pointed out that Harding is a "porn star" shows that she will not be remembered for her talent on the ice, but rather for her other controversial activities.

Further Research

Further study is needed to assess how sports fans' loyalty toward certain teams or sports is affected following the negative actions of one player. One focus of the additional studies should be gender differences. These studies should evaluate the effect the incidents have on the loyalty of female sports fans versus the loyalty of male sports fans. The study conducted by this researcher found notable differences in the way female

fans feel about certain sports following negative behavior by one athlete. Another researcher could conduct a study based on the hypothesis that female sports fans are more affected by the negative behavior of athletes.

Also gender related, a study could be conducted to determine if female athletes are treated differently in the media following a controversial or negative incident than male athletes. Another researcher could conduct a study that evaluates the activities of female athletes versus those of male athletes and how they are treated by the media. The researcher should also look at how fans' loyalty is affected by these incidents after time has passed. The researcher could replicate this study using the same categories and coding system for a content analysis.

Further research could also be conducted focusing on how one athlete's negative or controversial behavior affects an entire team. Baltimore Oriole Roberto Alomar, who spit at an umpire, and New York Yankee Daryl Strawberry, who tested positive for drugs several times, as well as Atlanta Braves pitcher John Ricker, who made derogatory comments regarding women, immigrants and minorities to a sports reporter, are examples of athletes who could be included in this type of study.

One finding of this study, separate from the desired findings, is the fact that fans are still upset about the baseball strike. Further research could also be conducted in the field of sports public relations regarding fan relations to determine what can be done to mend the relationship between baseball fans and the sport of baseball.

In conclusion, sports is a 100-million-dollar industry, which employs 4.5 million people in America. Fan loyalty is necessary for a sports team, franchise or organization to profit and to succeed. When fan loyalty drops, ticket sales and merchandise sales

decline, resulting in a potentially devastating loss of revenue. Therefore, it is necessary to study and understand the causes for inclines and declines in fan loyalty.

In order to maintain loyal fans, it is important for entire sports, as well as sports organizations, to have positive images and reputations. This study showed that the negative behavior of individual athletes is one of the contributing factors for sports' negative images and reputations.

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Pete Rose Intercept Study Tool

May I ask you a few quick questions about sports? Your opinions will be used as research for a graduate thesis about professional sports.

Note: Is respondent male or female? _____

1. Do you consider yourself a baseball fan? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no, abort survey)

2. Do you remember Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no, abort survey)

3. How would you say that Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball changed your feelings about baseball? (Circle one.)

Significantly changed

Only slightly changed

Did not change at all

4. Do you have less respect for the *sport* of baseball because of Pete Rose being accused of betting on baseball? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

Comments: (Do not ask respondents for comments, but note them if they are given.)

Mike Tyson Intercept Study Tool

May I ask you a few quick questions about sports? Your opinions will be used as research for a graduate thesis about professional sports.

Note: Is respondent male or female? _____

1. Do you consider yourself a boxing fan? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no, abort survey)

2. Do you remember Mike Tyson being convicted of rape? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

3. Do you remember Mike Tyson biting Holyfield's ear during at title match? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no to questions 2 and 3, abort survey)

4. How would you say that Mike Tyson's rape conviction or biting Holyfield's ear changed your feelings about boxing? (Circle one.)

Significantly changed

Only slightly changed

Did not change at all

5. Do you have less respect for the *sport* of boxing because of these two incidents in Mike Tyson's life? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

Comments: (Do not ask respondents for comments, but note them if they are given.)

Tonya Harding Intercept Study Tool

May I ask you a few quick questions about sports? Your opinions will be used as research for a graduate thesis about professional sports.

Note: Is respondent male or female? _____

1. Do you consider yourself a figure skating fan? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

2. Do you usually watch figure skating during the Olympics? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no to question one and two, abort survey)

3. Do you remember Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan prior to the 1994 Winter Olympics? (Circle one.)

Yes

No (If respondent answers no, abort survey)

4. How would you say that Tonya Harding having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan changed your feelings about figure skating? (Circle one.)

Significantly changed

Only slightly changed

Did not change at all

5. Do you have less respect for the *sport* of figure skating because of Tonya Harding's having her boyfriend/ex-husband injure Nancy Kerrigan? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

Comments: (Do not ask respondents for comments, but note them if they are given.)