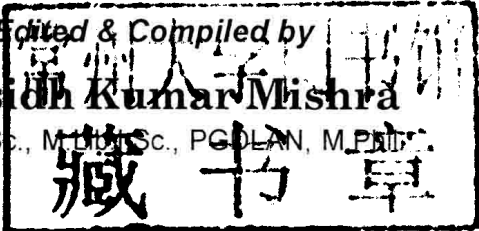




SPORTS JOURNALISM

Prasidh Kumar Mishra

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Edited & Compiled by
Prasoon Kumar Mishra
B.Lib.I.Sc., M.Lib.Sc., PGDLAN, M.Phil.


SPORTS PUBLICATION

7/26, Ground Floor, Ansari Road,
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002

Phones: (Office) 6574

(Mobile) 986802883

E-mail: laksha

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SPORTS PUBLICATION

7/26, Ground Floor, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002

Ph.: (Office) 65749511, 23240261 (Mobile) 9868028838

(Residence) 27562163 (Fax) 011-23240261

E-mail: lakshaythani@hotmail.com

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Preface

This book discusses the major areas of sports journalism the impact of the media on sport and vice versa. Drawing on research into world media events such as the major games, it shows how the study of the sport raises complex issues of identity, culture and politics which have implications for society as a whole.

Sports journalism is a design of journalism that reports on sports events and topics. While the sports department within some newspapers has been mockingly called the *toy department*, because sports journalists do not concern themselves with the ‘serious’ topics covered by the news desk, sports coverage has grown in importance as sport has grown in wealth, power and influence.

Sports journalism is an essential element of any news media organisation. Sports journalism includes organisations devoted entirely to sports reporting — newspapers such as *L'Equipe* in France, *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in Italy, *Marca* in Spain, and the now defunct *Sporting Life* in Britain, American magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* and the *Sporting News*, all-sports talk radio

stations, and television networks such as Eurosport, ESPN and The Sports Network (TSN).

A uniquely comprehensive text, sports journalism emphasises the skills that students will need in order to be successful in the industry. With extensive coverage on reporting, anchoring, and production, this text offers thorough and effective descriptions of the sports reporter and anchor's function in a broadcast environment. Going beyond the essential skills, this book also offers important historical background on the evolution of the sports industry, some grounding in the business of sports, and sports broadcasting. Covering all aspects of sports journalism, this text features reporting, writing leads, style, tricks of the trade, shooting on location, editing, producing, live event production, ethics, and resume tapes, as well as tips on seeking employment in the industry.

Coverage of essential reporting, play-by-play and anchoring skills unique insights into historical context and social implications, tips on pursuing a career as a sports reporter/anchor in radio or television are very useful."

We hope that the discussion made in this book will help the readers to understand and learnt about the different aspects of "Sports Journalism" in a most comprehensive way to face the present and future challenges which are occurred in this field.

—Thanks

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1

Introduction

Definition of Journalism

Journalism is the production of news reports and editorials through media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television, and the Internet. Journalists—be they writers, editors or photographers; broadcast presenters or producers—serve as the main purveyors of information and opinion in contemporary society. “News is what the consensus of journalists determines it to be.”

From informal beginnings in Europe of the 18th century, stimulated by the arrival of mechanised printing—in due course by mass production and in the 20th century by electronic communications technology—today’s journalistic enterprises include large corporations with global distribution.

The formal status of journalism has varied historically and, still varies greatly from country to country. The modern state and hierarchical power structures in general have tended to consider unrestricted flow of information as a potential threat, and inimical

to their own proper function. Hitler described the Press as a “machine for mass instruction,” ideally, a “kind of school for adults.” Journalism at its most vigorous, by contrast, tends to be propelled by the implications at least of the attitude epitomised by the Australian journalist John Pilger: “Secretive power loathes journalists who do their job, who push back screens, peer behind facades, lift rocks. Opprobrium from on high is their badge of honour.”

Censorship, governmental restriction or even active repression of individual journalists and non-state organs of communication continue to cause, at best, intermittent trouble in most countries. Few formal democracies and no authoritarian governments make provision for protection of press freedom implied by the term *Fourth Estate*.

The rise of internet technology, in particular the advent of blogging and social networking software, further destabilise journalism as defined traditionally, and its practitioners as a distinct professional category. Combined with the increasing transfer of advertising revenue from print and broadcast media to the internet, the full effect of the arrival of the “citizen journalist” — potentially positive (proliferation having thus far proved more difficult to police) as well as negative— is not yet known.

Media

Print

A **story** is a single article, news item or feature, usually concerning a single event, issue, theme, or profile of a person. *Correspondents* report news occurring in the main, locally, from their own country, or from foreign cities where they are stationed.

Most reporters *file* information or write their stories electronically from remote locations. In many cases, *breaking stories* are written by staff members, through information collected and submitted by other reporters who are out on the field gathering information for an event that has just occurred and needs to be

broadcast instantly. Radio and television reporters often compose stories and report “live” from the scene. Some journalists also interpret the news or offer opinions and analysis to readers, viewers, or listeners. In this role, they are called commentators or columnists.

Reporters take notes and also take photographs or shoot videos, either on their own, or through a photographer or camera person. In the second phase, they organise the material, determine the focus or emphasis (identify the peg), and finally write their stories. The story is then edited by news or copy-editors, who function from the *news desk*. The headline of the story is decided by the news desk, and practically never by the reporter or the writer of the piece. Often, the news desk also heavily rewrites or changes the style and tone of the first draft prepared by the reporter / writer originally. Finally, a collection of stories that have been picked for the newspaper or magazine *edition*, are laid out on dummy (trial) pages, and after the *chief editor* has approved the content, style and language in the material, it is sent for publishing. The writer is given a *byline* for the piece that is published; his or her name appears alongside the article. This process takes place according to the frequency of the publication. News can be published in a variety of formats (broadsheet, tabloid, magazine and periodical publications) as well as periods (daily, weekly, semi-weekly, fortnightly or monthly).

Television

In a broadcast system (television), journalists or reporters are also involved with editing the video material that has been shot alongside their research, and in working on the visual narrative of the story. Broadcast journalists often make an appearance in the news story at the beginning or end of the video clip.

In television or broadcast journalism, news analysts (also called news-casters or news anchors) examine, interpret, and broadcast news received from various sources of information. *Anchors* present this as news, either videotaped or live, through transmissions from on-the-scene reporters (news correspondents).

News films (“clips”) can vary in length; there are some which may be as long as ten minutes, others that need to fit in all the relevant information and material in two or three minutes. News channels these days have also begun to host special documentary films that stretch for much longer durations and are able to explore a news subject or issue in greater detail.

The desk persons categorise news stories with various formats according to the merit of the story. Such formats include AVO, AVO Byte, Pkg, VO SOT, VOX POP, and Ancho Visual.

- The AVO, or Anchor Voice Over, is the short form of news. The story is written in a gist. According to the script visual is edited. The anchor reads the news while the visual is broadcast simultaneously. Generally, the duration of an AVO is 30 to 40 seconds. The script is three to four lines. At first the anchor starts to read the news, and, after reading one or one-and-a-half lines, the visual is aired, overlapping the face of anchor.
- The AVO Byte has two parts: An AVO, and one or more bytes. This is the same as an AVO, except that as soon as the AVO ends, the Byte is aired.
- The Pkg has three parts: Anchor, Voice Over, and Sign Off. At first a Script is written. A voice over anchor reads the anchor or anchor intro part.

Wire Services

“Wire services” are typically news agencies that provide news to publications, broadcasters and media houses by the minute. They work through technical tie-ups and arrangements with practically all mainstream news organisations, who pay them for the content that they provide. The public does not have direct access to this content, unless it is featured by a local newspaper or television channel. Most of these agencies, like Reuters for instance, work on international, local, and national fronts.

Often, *routine news* is sourced directly from these agencies, by the news desk. Routine news is information related to

announcements, press conferences, statements made by government or corporate officials, and any other mundane facts. The news desk receives updates from agencies every few minutes. Information related to the outbreak of a calamity, or important developments concerning national issues is usually obtained from agencies itself. These news items often go without any reporter's byline, that is, the credit is given to the newspaper in general, or is attributed to the agency that has sent out the information (or "broken the story"). If not very impactful, they are carried as small *news briefs*. On television, these items are the snippets displayed on the *ticker*: the rolling text at the bottom of the screen. Reporters who work for agencies do not usually get any credit for their work, as it is sent out as an "agency copy". Wire agencies are extremely important to the functioning of journalism; they are the backbones of most news organisations today, who heavily depend on them for important, routine content. They provide the material that an organisation may not be able to cover through its own limited resources alone.

Exclusive stories on the contrary, are the stories or news items that a publication or channel has obtained through its own resources; it is when a reporter associated with a particular organisation has found certain information through personal *sources*, and not through public announcements or from PR officials. The exclusivity of a story is also dependent on the condition that no other news channel or publication carries it simultaneously. Often, a reporter may find an exclusive story, but finds that it has lost its exclusivity when his or her source gives out that information to other newspapers and channels. While routine stories may provide the basic material that is required, exclusive stories are the ones that form the editorial identity or the voice of the newspaper.

Morning newspapers are obliged to carry both routine and exclusive news; afternoon editions usually have to go a step further and work hard on *follow-ups* and their own exclusive stories. Most afternoon dailies do not carry routine news at all. Their content is lighter, and is meant to be a second reflection of the day's events.

Magazines and weeklies also focus entirely on features and exclusive stories.

Internet

The Internet has allowed the formal and informal publication of news stories through mainstream media outlets as well as blogs and other self-published news stories. Journalists working on the Internet are J-Bloggers, a term coined by Australian Media Academic Dr. Nicola Goc to describe journalists who [blog] and [blog]gers who produce journalism. “J-Bloggers: Internet bloggers acting in the role of journalists disseminating newsworthy information, who subscribe to the journalistic ideals of an obligation to the truth and the public’s right to know” (Media and Journalism: Theory to Practice (2008) Melbourne: OUP, p45) .

Newscasters

Newscasters function at large stations and networks that usually specialise in a particular type of news, such as sports or weather. Weathercasters, also called weather reporters, report current and forecast weather conditions. They gather information from national satellite weather services, wire services, and local and regional weather bureaus. Some weathercasters are trained meteorologists and develop their own weather forecasts. Sportscasters select, write, and deliver sports news. This may include interviews with sports personalities and coverage of games and other sporting events.

Article Topics and Writing

Articles are written about topics that are considered notable by the editors of the publication, with notability varying depending on the focus and audience of the publisher. Large agencies or companies may have reporters that are specialised to discuss specific topics (a *beat*); smaller agencies are more likely to have a small number of reporters covering all areas of interest. Investigative

reports may cover lengthy stories that require days or weeks to gather sufficient information. Articles must be produced to meet a limited deadline determined by the broadcast or print time of the specific publication and working hours may vary according to the deadlines set and depending on projects or last-minute developments may be long or irregular.

Styles

Newspapers and periodicals often contain features written by journalists, many of whom specialise in this form of in-depth journalistic writing.

Feature articles are usually longer forms of writing; more attention is paid to style than in straight news reports. They are often combined with photographs, drawings or other “art.” They may also be highlighted by typographic effects or colors.

Writing features can be more demanding than writing straight news stories, because while a journalist must apply the same amount of effort to accurately gather and report the facts of the story, he or she must also find a creative and interesting way to *write* it. The *lead* must grab the reader’s attention and yet accurately embody the ideas of the article.

In the last half of the 20th Century the line between straight news reporting and feature writing has blurred. Journalists and publications today experiment with different approaches to writing. Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Hunter S. Thompson are some of these examples. Urban and alternative weekly newspapers go even further in blurring the distinction, and many magazines include more features than straight news.

Some television news shows experimented with alternative formats, and many TV shows that claimed to be news shows were not considered as such by traditional critics, because their content and methods do not adhere to accepted journalistic standards. National Public Radio, on the other hand, is considered a good

example of mixing straight news reporting, features, and combinations of the two, usually meeting standards of high quality. Other US public radio news organisations have achieved similar results. A majority of newspapers still maintain a clear distinction between news and features, as do most television and radio news organisations.

Science Journalism

Science journalism is a relatively new branch of journalism, in which journalists' reporting conveys information on science topics to the public. Science journalists must understand and interpret very detailed, technical and sometimes jargon-laden information and render it into interesting reports that are comprehensible to consumers of news media.

Scientific journalists also must choose which developments in science merit news coverage, as well as cover disputes within the scientific community with a balance of fairness to both sides but also with a devotion to the facts.

Many, but not all, journalists covering science have training in the sciences they cover, including several medical journalists who cover medicine.

Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism, in which journalists investigate and expose unethical, immoral, and illegal behavior by individuals, businesses and government agencies, can be complicated, time-consuming and expensive — requiring teams of journalists, months of research, interviews (sometimes repeated interviews) with numerous people, long-distance travel, computers to analyze public-record databases, or use of the company's legal staff to secure documents under freedom of information laws.

Because of its inherently confrontational nature, this kind of reporting is often the first to suffer from budget cutbacks or interference from outside the news department. Investigative

reporting done poorly can also expose journalists and media organisations to negative reaction from the subjects of investigations and the public, and accusations of gotcha journalism. When conducted correctly it can bring the attention of the public and government to problems and conditions that the public deem need to be addressed, and can win awards and recognition to the journalists involved and the media outlet that did the reporting.

New Journalism

New Journalism was the name given to a style of 1960s and 1970s news writing and journalism which used literary techniques deemed unconventional at the time. The term was codified with its current meaning by Tom Wolfe in a 1973 collection of journalism articles.

It is typified by using certain devices of literary fiction, such as conversational speech, first-person point of view, recording everyday details and telling the story using scenes. Though it seems undisciplined at first, new journalism maintains elements of reporting including strict adherence to factual accuracy and the writer being the primary source. To get “inside the head” of a character, the journalist asks the subject what they were thinking or how they felt.

Because of its unorthodox style, new journalism is typically employed in feature writing or book-length reporting projects.

Many new journalists are also writers of fiction and prose. In addition to Wolfe, writers whose work has fallen under the title “new journalism” include Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion, Truman Capote, George Plimpton and Gay Talese.

Gonzo Journalism

Gonzo journalism is a type of journalism popularised by the American writer Hunter S. Thompson, author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* and *The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved*,

among other stories and books. Gonzo journalism is characterised by its punchy style, rough language, and ostensible disregard for conventional journalistic writing forms and customs. More importantly, the traditional objectivity of the journalist is given up through immersion into the story itself, as in New Journalism, and the reportage is taken from a first-hand, participatory perspective, sometimes using an author surrogate such as Thompson's Raoul Duke. Gonzo journalism attempts to present a multi-disciplinary perspective on a particular story, drawing from popular culture, sports, political, philosophical and literary sources. Gonzo journalism has been styled eclectic or untraditional. It remains a feature of popular magazines such as *Rolling Stone* magazine. It has a good deal in common with new journalism and on-line journalism.

Celebrity" or "People" Journalism

Another area of journalism that grew in stature in the 20th Century is 'celebrity' or 'people' journalism, which focuses on the personal lives of people, primarily celebrities, including movie and stage actors, musical artists, models and photographers, other notable people in the entertainment industry, as well as people who seek attention, such as politicians, and people thrust into the attention of the public, such as people who do something newsworthy.

Once the province of newspaper gossip columnists and gossip magazines, celebrity journalism has become the focus of national tabloid newspapers like the *National Enquirer*, magazines like *People* and *Us Weekly*, syndicated television shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition*, *The Insider*, *Access Hollywood*, and *Extra*, cable networks like E!, A&E Network and The Biography Channel, and numerous other television productions and thousands of websites. Most other news media provide some coverage of celebrities and people.

Celebrity journalism differs from feature writing in that it focuses on people who are either already famous or are especially attractive, and in that it often covers celebrities obsessively, to the