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Professor Bradford

Introduction to College Writing

9/28/2009

### Victory just isn't as Sweet without Fans

Have you ever wondered why the bleachers are always full at the male sporting events yet almost empty at the female ones, even if the female team was having a better season than the male team? This question has often crossed my mind because I played volleyball, basketball, and softball in high school. My softball team won several tournaments and placed in district three years in a row. My volleyball team was district and conference champions three years in a row, and made it to the final four of state all three years. Our girls' teams weren't bad, yet more people went to watch the guys play even if they didn't have a good team. Our football team, for example, won maybe two games a year and all the rest they got their butts kicked, but the football stadium was full every home game. This puzzled me and still does.

I specifically remember one basketball game in particular. It was the ninth grade district tournament, and we had made it to the championship. All of our hard work had paid off and our hearts were racing with happiness and excitement. However, the male basketball team made it to the championship game too, and this meant not very many fans showing up for the beginning of our game. No one ever wanted to watch the girls play, just the guys. I remember peering up into the bleachers right before tipoff and noticing all of our parents sitting up there in red and black clapping and cheering. However, when I glanced over at the student section the bleachers

were about a third of the way full, and out of our classmates who came, there were few actually watching the game. The rest were all texting or talking to the other students. Towards the end of our game, I noticed that the bleachers were filled almost to capacity. Sure, there was a whole gym full of people at the end our game, but they weren't there to watch and cheer for us, they were there waiting for our game to be over so they could watch the guys play after us! Our game ended, and we headed to the locker room with our District Champions plaque. We had to celebrate in the locker room because the guys playing after us needed to warm up before their game started. After freshening up, we all headed out of the locker room with our heads held high to watch and cheer for the guys' basketball team. They may not have cheered for us, but we were going to cheer for them. When we walked out, we truly noticed just how many people had come to watch them play. We couldn't even see a place to sit in the bleachers. Some of our fellow classmates even painted themselves red and black and were standing along the baseline of the court. That's when it hit us. Our hearts sank as we realized just how many people really didn't care if we won or loss. I never really understood this and still don't. We were in the championship just like the guys. We had a good season just like the guys. We even won and the guys didn't, but we were females and that's what I think made all the difference. However, to help get a better understanding as to why people like male sports better than female, I have asked a few friends from around campus for their input.

The first person I had the chance to sit down and talk with was Jacob Goodner, who went to my high school and played basketball. When asked how he felt about women's sports he replied with, "Women's sports are interesting and beneficial to them, but very boring compared to male sports." The reasoning he gave as to why male sports are more interesting to watch is, "Males are stronger, faster, and slightly more intelligent than women when it comes to sports."

When he said more intelligent it shocked me. I can see males being stronger and faster than females that is almost a given, but more intelligent? I have never thought about females being less intelligent than males about a particular sport that both of the sexes play. However, if females don't play that sport then, yes, we aren't as intelligent about it as males, but what does that have to do with people coming and watching females play sports that they *are* intelligent about? When I asked Jacob what he meant by guys being more intelligent than girls about sports he simply said, "Well, guys are more aggressive and lay it all on the line and go after it more than females do, so it appears we know more about the sport since we want to win so much more than girls do." I am not particularly sure if he even had a real reason why he thought girls are less intelligent than males because it sounded to me like he was making that up as he went. However, I must say that girls play sports to win too. Why else would we be playing them? Girls think they lay it on the line just like boys do, or at least I thought I was laying it all on the line when I played. I also asked Jacob why he thinks more people attend male sports games than female even if the males are horrible and the females are good. He replied with, "Because guy sports are more respected." "They have male volleyball in the Olympics now because males are better at it than females." Sure, males are better at most sports than females, but why does that give people a reason to not come watch female sports? Females are playing against other females, and therefore it is competitive just like males playing other males. I also found out in talking to Jacob that guys will watch female sports on television over male sports *if* certain criteria were filled. He told me, "I would rather watch males unless the females were wearing skimpy clothes like they do in beach volleyball." I was not completely surprised by this answer. After all, I must admit that I like to watch male sports just so I can look at the guys, but there are other reasons too, such as their aggressiveness.

However, there is one huge difference between guys wanting to watch girls play to look at them, and girls wanting to watch guys play to look at them. According to Jacob, guys only like watching girls who are wearing clothing such as a bikini to play beach volleyball in, but girls like watching guys no matter what they are wearing. We watch guys when they play basketball in baggy clothing, but do guys watch us play in baggy clothing? No, they don't! Maybe the reason for this is because males and society in general expect us to look more feminine no matter what we are doing. Playing basketball in baggy clothing is crossing into the male gender roles, and some people, whether they admit it or not, just don't like this. Therefore, they just don't watch female sports.

I also talked to my roommate, Olivia Padilla, about why she thinks people like to watch male sports more. Her reasoning was, "Females just aren't as interesting as males, unless it is tennis, then I like to watch females over males because tennis is my favorite sport." After thinking about her answer, I concluded that this holds true even for me. I like to watch the male sports over the female ones of the sports I don't play. The only reason I can think of, as to why people think like this is since we don't play that sport it's all ready not as interesting to us as the ones we do play, so watching the males play that sport more aggressively makes it more enjoyable to watch. I guess that most people find aggressiveness a good quality, since it is one of the reasons why people like watching male sports more. However, I must also add that there are females who are aggressive like guys, but usually those females are not looked as highly upon as aggressive males. Why is this? Maybe the reason is that aggressiveness is looked upon as a male quality that females just don't, or aren't supposed to possess. This once again goes back to females crossing the boundary between male and female gender roles. Olivia and I also discussed why she thinks male sports are more interesting, and her answer was, "Because they

are the opposite sex, and I am attracted to them.” Most girls feel this way about guys, and I guess that would make females want to watch those handsome, muscular guys out there sweating more than females. She also made another point I have not thought about. When discussing the reasons for people watching bad male teams over females she brought up the fact that “people like rooting for the underdog.” After thinking back at how many people want to go to the games where they are playing some big name team that is expected to win, I have to agree with her statement. There are numerous people who go to watch their team, the underdog, play some ranked team in hopes that they upset the other team. But still there are underdog female teams that people don’t want to watch!

Another person I interviewed was Jake Bunch, a freshman here at UCA. When I was talking with him about girls’ sports he told me, “They are just too boring and too slow paced for my liking, especially basketball.” I must agree that girls’ sports are usually much slower paced than males’ sports, but this is only because males are faster than females and usually have more stamina to keep the pace of the game up. Another interesting thing that came up while I was talking to Jake is he claimed, “It’s hard to watch girls, and it puts me to sleep if I do.” I really didn’t think that girls are that boring to watch, but obviously through the eyes of males girls’ sports are just not that interesting. Another idea that Jake brought up is that guys hate to lose. Jake told me, “Since guys hate losing so much, it makes it that much more interesting to watch than girls who usually don’t care as much if they win or lose.” I don’t believe that this statement is entirely true because I knew some girls, including myself, who took it to heart if they lost. There are girls out there who care about winning just as much as guys do and are very competitive.

I also interviewed Caroline Proctor, a freshman here at UCA that was involved in basketball, softball, track, and cheerleading in high school. When I asked her about female sports she replied with, "Female sports can be just as interesting as male sports because girls, for example in basketball, use strategy rather than strength." "Female sports should be equal to male sports, and people shouldn't discriminate against female sports just because we aren't as strong as males." I do agree with her statement that females use more strategy in basketball while males use strength, but I don't think people are going to pick watching strategy over strength. Watching strategy even sounds boring to me. However, when I asked her if she would rather watch male or female sports on television, she told me, "Males because I am attracted to them, and they are more athletic than girls and therefore more interesting." So when it comes down to it, females enjoy watching male sports more, even if they complain about not many people coming to their games. I have to admit that this applies to me as well.

I concluded there really isn't just one answer to this question. From guys being more aggressive to watching them because they are good looking, people have their own reasons for watching male sports more than female ones. Then again, it may not be the physical part of it at all, but the fact that society just looks at sports as a male thing and believe females should not be stepping over the gender roles line. However, no matter what, the fact is people like to watch male sports more than female. I may never fully understand why, but have found some of the reasons my peers gave, apply to me as well.

## Works Cited

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