

# **Sports & Entertainment Marketing**

## **Unit Eleven Outline, 2020-21 School Year**

### **Unit 11:**

## **Sports & Entertainment Communications**

### **OVERVIEW**

*The topics covered in unit eleven introduce the various components of sports and entertainment communications including publicity, public relations, community relations and media relations. A key concept discussed is the integration of publicity with the sponsorship component of the sports and entertainment business model, as well as aligning publicity plans with promotional and sales efforts. Unit eleven also examines the various methods organizations employ to effectively communicate information about their products and services with customers, media and fans.*

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### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Explain why sports and entertainment communications are important
  - 2) Define publicity
  - 3) Differentiate between publicity, public relations, media relations and community relations
  - 4) Identify the three approaches to media relations
  - 5) Describe the three ways community relations programs are implemented
  - 6) Name the six functions of sports and entertainment communications
  - 7) Explain how publicity impacts other areas of sports and entertainment business
  - 8) Create a press release with all its essential elements
  - 9) Recognize the types of information typically included in press kits
  - 10) Understand some of the social issues that impact the business of sports and entertainment
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### **LESSONS**

- Lesson 11.1** Sports & Entertainment Communications  
**Lesson 11.2** Publicity  
**Lesson 11.3** Functions of Sports & Entertainment Communications  
**Lesson 11.4** Integrating Publicity  
**Lesson 11.5** The Publicity Plan  
**Lesson 11.6** Press Releases  
**Lesson 11.7** Press Kits  
**Lesson 11.8** Social Issues in Sports and Entertainment
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### **KEY TERMS**

**Community Relations**  
**Goodwill**  
**Public Relations**

**Ethics**  
**Media Relations**  
**Publicity**

**Foundation**  
**Press Release**  
**Publicity Stunt**

## Lesson 11.1

### Sports & Entertainment Communications

- A. Sports and entertainment information
  - 1. Provides specific news as it pertains to sports teams and organizations, events and all other forms of entertainment
  - 2. Could include event schedules, player statistics, actor profiles etc.
- B. Sources of sports and entertainment information
  - 1. Any news or media outlet is a potential source of sports and entertainment information
    - a. MTV, *Sports Illustrated*, Jim Rome radio show, movies.com, *USA Today*
  - 2. Almost any type of information an individual could want is accessible through the media
    - a. Radio, TV, Print, Online
- C. Role of sports and entertainment communications in SEM
  - 1. The role of a communications staff employed by a sports or entertainment organization is to effectively disseminate information for the benefit of the business
  - 2. Communications staff plays an integral role in the shaping and management of the organization's image
- D. Publicity plays an even more crucial role to a sports and entertainment organization's success in the age of the Internet <sup>2</sup>
  - 1. The world of public relations has changed drastically, especially for entertainers whose careers are based on gaining and keeping public opinion
  - 2. How else has technology and the Internet shifted trends in the entertainment business climate? <sup>2</sup>
    - a. Musicians can now start a career entirely over the Internet using a web site and a strategic online marketing plan
      - i. From weekend warriors to independent bands and Grammy-winning artists, thousands of musicians have embraced social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube to upload material, promote tour dates and albums while interacting with fans in an effort to build and/or grow a fan base
      - ii. Internet radio stations like Pandora and YouTube offer music "discovery" services to help aspiring artists launch their careers <sup>3</sup>
      - iii. Justin Bieber was originally "discovered" by a talent executive on YouTube when he was searching for new talent online. Pop stars Justin Timberlake and Usher would later engage in a bidding war to sign Bieber (he eventually signed with Usher). <sup>4</sup>
        - (a) Since then, other artists like Tori Kelly, Soulja Boy, Lana Del Rey and The Weeknd have launched their careers through YouTube
      - iv. Shawn Mendes launched his pop career in six seconds...by posting a clip to Vine, a now defunct video sharing app that only allowed six second videos
        - i. In 2019, Lil' Nas X broke the record for most consecutive weeks at the top of the Billboard charts with his breakout song (featuring Billy Ray Cyrus), "Old Town Road"
          - (a) The song debuted on the popular social media platform, TikTok
          - (b) Lil' Nas X attributes strategic marketing to his success, even posting on [Twitter](#), "the rumors are true i am a marketing genius"
        - ii. A variety of streaming platforms has made it easier for artists to be discovered
          - (a) [Rolling Stone](#) estimates "self-releasing" artists could generate \$2 billion in revenues this year, up from \$643 million just two years ago

- b. Actors, artists and celebrities engage with fans using social media to promote albums and films, create buzz and dispel rumors
  - i. Four of the top five people in the World with the most [Twitter](#) followers include pop stars, giving them incredible reach and influence
    - 1. Barack Obama (121m followers)
    - 2. Justin Bieber (112.3m followers)
    - 3. Katy Perry (108.4m followers)
    - 4. Rihanna (97.7m followers)
    - 5. Taylor Swift (86.7m followers)
  - ii. At times, an artists' social media following can be as important as their talent in terms of attracting attention from directors and fans
    - (a) Said veteran casting director Mike Fenton in an interview with thewrap.com, *"There is no question that today if you have good numbers on social media, you have become a better choice to be cast. It would behoove actors to generate a social media presence."* <sup>5</sup>
- c. Movie studio executives have the ability to place movie trailers online for people to download or stream in an effort to promote upcoming films
  - i. Consumers can watch trailers for upcoming films like the highly anticipated 2020 releases of '[TENET](#)', '[Black Widow](#)', or '[Wonder Woman - 1984](#)'
    - (a) By August of 2020, the 'TENET' trailer had already been viewed almost 29 million times on YouTube while the official trailer for 'Wonder Woman -1984' had been viewed 34 million times and 'Black Widow' 44 million times
- d. Fans can discuss topics surrounding their favorite entertainers and celebrities on web sites like www.IMDB.com and read movie reviews with apps like Rotten Tomatoes
- e. Sports and entertainment organizations have embraced technology and social media as an additional means for communicating information to fans
  - i. For example, a baseball team might turn to social platforms like Twitter to keep fans updated during rain delays
- 3. The instant accessibility provided by social media applications like Twitter can pose challenges for sports and entertainment communications professionals
  - a. Sports and entertainment organizations have less control now over the flow of information between the organization and its fans
    - i. In one of the first examples of a sports star bypassing traditional communication channels (like press conferences and press releases), legendary Yankees captain Derek Jeter announced that he would be retiring via Facebook <sup>6</sup>
      - (a) Click [here](#) to read the transcript of the official announcement posted on Jeter's Facebook page
      - (b) Soon after retirement, Jeter launched *The Players Tribune*, a media platform that gives first-person reflections, thoughts and experiences from professional athletes and offers athletes a unique platform for sharing their voices with fans
    - ii. In 2019, Kevin Durant announced his decision to leave the Golden State Warriors in free agency to join the Brooklyn Nets on the Instagram page for 'The Boardroom', an online series looking at sports business produced by Durant and business partner Rich Kleiman
      - (a) Click [here](#) to see the IG post
  - b. Athletes and celebrities now enjoy a unique platform to communicate directly with fans, providing a medium for delivering unfiltered opinions and dialogue
    - i. For example, Beyoncé announced she was pregnant via Instagram
    - ii. Instead of relying on traditional media channels, social media platforms allow athletes to tell their side of the story on their own terms

- c. Social media can also create headaches for both the organization and/or the athlete/celebrity when the individual posts a controversial message
  - i. Just before the 2016 NFL Draft began, a picture was tweeted from Laremy Tunsil's own account of the prospect smoking something out of a gas mask while images of text messages asking his assistant athletic director at Ole Miss for money were posted to his Instagram feed (his account was hacked), leading to a tumble down the draft board
    - (a) According to [\*Fortune\*](#), Tunsil's draft day slide cost the NFL rookie between \$8 and \$13 million based on the lower draft position (he was projected to be selected between picks 3 and 6 but fell to the Miami Dolphins at pick 13)
  - ii. After Roseanne Barr sent a racist tweet in 2018, ABC quickly responded by cancelling the sitcom (one of its most popular shows), costing her at least \$5.5 million (she was making \$250,000 per episode and the show had already been renewed for a second season) and likely much more had the show enjoyed the same success for multiple seasons <sup>7</sup>
  - iii. Swimmer Ryan Lochte posted an incriminating photo of himself with an IV infusion with a caption suggesting the activity was helping him to recover after a workout, prompting an investigation that resulted in a 14 month ban from competition

## Lesson 11.2

### Publicity

#### A. Publicity

1. **Publicity** is public information about a company/team, good, or service appearing in the mass media as a news item at no cost to the organization <sup>8</sup>
  - a. When the *New York Times* reviews a movie in their publication (and online), that particular motion picture is gaining publicity
  - b. When musicians perform at award shows or other major events, they are generating publicity
    - i. J. Lo and Shakira music sales and streaming statistics skyrocketed following their 2020 Super Bowl halftime performance <sup>9</sup>
      - (a) Sales of the songs they performed during the halftime show saw a huge increase in sales of music downloads (Shakira's "Whenever, Wherever" saw a jump of 1,264% in sales downloads while J. Lo's "On the Floor" saw a 1,193% spike)
      - (i) Collectively, their entire catalogs (all of their music) experienced an 893 percent sales gain while on-demand streams (audio and video combined) jumped 193%
2. In the world of sports and entertainment communication, publicity is generated and defined by three primary components
  - a. Public relations
  - b. Media relations
  - c. Community relations
3. Publicity is essentially a by-product of those three components
4. Organizations use publicity as a vehicle to increase sales
5. Disadvantages of publicity
  - a. Publicity cannot be controlled by the organization
    - i. For example, the *New York Times* may give a film a negative review, discouraging consumers from purchasing tickets and going to the theater
  - b. Perceived as more credible than advertising

#### B. Public relations

1. **Public relations** are activities that promote the image and communications an organization has with its employees, customers and public <sup>9</sup>

#### C. Media relations

1. **Media relations** refers to the relationship between an organization and the media <sup>10</sup>
2. The goal of media relations is to develop and maintain a positive relationship with mass media outlets
3. Media's impact on sports and entertainment publicity efforts
  - a. "Magnifying glass effect" of media coverage <sup>11</sup>
    - i. This effect refers to the constant media coverage of newsworthy events taking place, as well as the reactions and interpretations of those events by other sources
    - ii. Click [here](#) to read a story published on awfulannouncing.com's website suggesting the "TMZization of sports is now complete", criticizing news outlets like ESPN for focusing on gossip or celebrity driven stories rather than covering real sports news
  - b. Featuring sports and entertainment news related items has proven to be profitable for media organizations
    - i. Increases circulation
    - ii. Boosts ratings
    - iii. Amplifies number of readers/listeners

- c. A *media blitz* is a term used to reference an intense communications campaign which utilizes various aspects of media to reach as many consumers as possible
    - i. Every year, the NBA engages in a daylong media blitz to kick off coverage of the NBA All-Star Game and the celebrity-driven events that surround the game
    - ii. Organizations will often strategically launch a media blitz as way to support a sales or marketing effort
      - (a) In the lead up to the 2018 Ryder Cup, the PGA Tour launched a media blitz that sent team captain Jim Furyk on a 9,000-mile, 14-city trophy tour beginning at Yankee Stadium (the Team USA captain took the championship trophy from the last Ryder Cup to each stop) <sup>12</sup>
        - (i) After throwing out the first pitch at the Yankees game and posing with players for photos, Furyk made an appearance at the Empire State Building and on the Today Show
          - 1. Click [here](#) to see a video of Furyk's appearance on the Today Show
      - (b) As the franchise ramped up sales efforts leading up to the opening of a new stadium, the Minnesota Vikings launched an all-out media blitz surrounding their "Vikings Legacy" program right before the NFL Draft.
        - (i) Click [here](#) for more on the team's strategy and goals from sportstao.com
    - iii. Each year to kick off the college football season, the SEC launches a 4-day media blitz, where the media provides extension coverage of all the teams in the conference, discusses trending topics and high-profile athletes are discussed at length
4. What effect on an organization can media relations have? How can publicity and the media impact a sports or entertainment brand?
  - a. A perception exists that the media tends to seek out and report stories with negative connotations implicating sports and entertainment organizations, celebrities and athletes
  - b. Many factors influence this journalistic tendency
    - i. Inflated contracts of athletes and entertainers (some which have a tendency to flaunt their riches)
      - (a) In 2020, the Kansas City Chiefs signed to their star quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, to the richest contract in NFL history, providing him with the opportunity to earn \$503 million over the span of the ten-year deal
        - (i) Over the course of his contract, Mahomes will make \$137,808 per day. According to the latest figures, the median household income in the U.S. was \$61,372 per year.
      - (b) Boxer Floyd "Money" Mayweather, who earned *\$300 million* in 2015 and topped Forbes' annual list of the World's wealthiest athletes for the third year in a row, told *USA Today* in a story that his hobby is "collecting money" and lives in a 22,000-foot home with multiple garages for his collection of sports cars and bragged to [CNN](#) of an \$827,000 gambling win <sup>13</sup>
        - (i) Mayweather's huge payday in 2017 after the fight with UFC champion, Connor McGregor, reportedly pushed him over the \$1 billion mark in career earnings
          - 1. The only other athletes to surpass \$1 billion in career earnings are Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods
          - 2. In 2017, Mayweather was also under investigation by the IRS as they claimed he owed over \$22 million in back taxes from 2015
            - a. In 2019, Mayweather finally paid his tax debt
          - 3. Click [here](#) for a slideshow from MSN examining the "24 Crazy Ways Floyd Mayweather Spends His Money"
      - (c) International soccer star, Neymar, dropped \$18,000 on sneakers during a shopping spree in 2017, all broadcast online for fans to see in an episode of Complex's *Sneaker Shopping series*



- (i) Click [here](#) to watch the episode on YouTube
  - (d) *Forbes* reported that the world's 100 highest-paid athletes banked a cumulative \$3.6 billion last year, down 9% from the previous year, representing the first time that figure has dropped in four years (due in large part to the pandemic's impact on the business of sports and entertainment) <sup>14</sup>
    - (i) Click [here](#) for the complete rankings in 2020
  - (e) The Boston Red Sox traveled to Europe for their 2019 "London Series" games vs. the Yankees in style, reportedly chartering the most luxurious private plane in the world
    - (i) According to [Darren Rovell](#), a six hour trip for up to 88 people in flat first class seats with a full bar costs around \$500,000
  - (f) According to [NFL.com](#), Joe Burrow, the number one pick in the 2019 NFL Draft, will make more than \$36 million on his first contract, despite not ever having thrown a pass in the league
  - (g) In 2019, according to a [Forbes](#) report, the wealthiest rappers were:
    1. Jay-Z (\$1 billion)
    2. Dr. Dre (\$800 million)
    3. Sean 'Diddy' Combs (\$740 million)
    4. Kanye (\$240 million)
    5. Drake (\$150 million)
  - (h) When the Paycheck Protection Program was established during the pandemic in 2020, it was designed to provide financial support to struggling small businesses during times of economic duress
    - (i) However, the Los Angeles Lakers (a franchise valued at \$4.4 billion according to [Forbes](#) latest rankings of the most valuable teams in sports) applied for, and received, a \$4.6 million loan from the federal government as part of the program
      1. Recognizing the negative publicity that the loan would create for the franchise, the team did return the money. According to [CNN](#), a Lakers spokesperson said in a statement: "The Lakers qualified for and received a loan under the Payroll Protection Program. However, once we found out the funds from the program had been depleted, we repaid the loan so that financial support would be directed to those most in need. The Lakers remain completely committed to supporting both our employees and our community." <sup>15</sup>
- ii. Gambling
- (a) In 2016, a huge scandal rocked the tennis world when two Italian players, Daniele Bracciali and Potito Starace, were accused of criminally conspiring to fix at least two matches for an illegal gambling ring
    - (i) The chief prosecutor in the case said in an interview that he suspected the gang of corrupting another 30 international matches at tournaments including Wimbledon and the French Open <sup>16</sup>
  - (b) The #2 ranked badminton player in the world, Kento Momota, was kicked off the Japanese team and disqualified from the 2016 Rio Olympics after he was found guilty of repeatedly gambling at an illegal casino
  - (c) Officials say the illegal betting market generates hundreds of billions of dollars every year, and the International Olympic Committee goes to great lengths to prevent events from being "fixed." Sports betting is perfectly legal in the United Kingdom and is considered a legitimate part of the national economy but, in 2012, the country's gambling establishments partnered with government officials leading up to the London Games to report and prevent any event fixing. The BBC reported that Olympic organizers also set up an intelligence team to monitor suspicious betting patterns and tip the

government with any information on individuals that may have attempted to fix Olympic events.<sup>17</sup>

- (d) The 2018 legalization of sports gambling in the United States has organizations at all levels debating how [concerned](#) they should be about the potential of compromised integrity of their respective sports
- (e) In 2019, the coach who led Nigeria to two Olympic Games medals has been [banned](#) for life by FIFA for agreeing to receive bribes to fix soccer matches

**\* DISCUSSION IDEA \***



*Ask students how (or if) they think the legalization of could change the industry. Who stands to gain from the new law? Who might be influenced negatively? Do they think we will see examples of match fixing or point shaving? Considering the potential for gambling addiction, is it ethical to allow the practice of betting on sports? USA Today had a great story offering some perspective on the influence betting could have on college sports. Consider sharing the story (click [here](#) for the article) in class and discussing the merits of legalized sports gambling with your students.*

iii. Violence

- (a) Following several years of highly publicized domestic violence cases, several NFL players were implicated (but not necessarily charged) again in 2018 in assault cases that continued to generate a lot of negative publicity for the league and teams they played for
  - 1. Last year, the NFL donated \$10 million in funding to a coalition of non-profit organizations working to prevent sexual violence
- (b) Boxer Floyd Mayweather has a long history of domestic violence issues, some dating back at least five years when they resurfaced prior to his 2015 bout with Manny Pacquiao
  - (i) Click [here](#) to read more from cosmopolitan.com.
- (c) NASCAR [suspended](#) Sprint Cup driver Kurt Busch just two days before the Daytona 500 (for actions detrimental to stock car racing) after a judge ruled he almost surely choked and beat a former girlfriend
- (d) Major League Baseball took a proactive approach to avoid some of the negative publicity that has followed the NFL in the wake of last year's high-profile domestic violence issues by implementing a comprehensive new policy that gives the league commissioner (Rob Manfred) ultimate discretion in doling out punishment<sup>18</sup>
  - (i) Click [here](#) to read the details from foxsports.com
- (e) Women have also been implicated in domestic violence cases
  - (i) The WNBA suspended two of its biggest stars (Brittney Griner and Glory Johnson) for seven games after they were arrested for domestic violence in 2015
  - (ii) In 2017, WWE female superstar, Paige, faced domestic violence charges after getting into a physical argument in the Orlando airport
    - 1. Paige became the first female WWE superstar to be [suspended](#) for domestic violence



- (iii) Riquana Williams of the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks was [suspended](#) without pay for ten games as a result of a domestic violence incident in 2019
- iv. Performance Enhancing Drugs
  - (a) The use of steroids and performance enhancing drugs has been well chronicled in recent years with prominent athletes having their legacies tainted by alleged drug use
    - (i) UFC star Jon Jones had his license to fight revoked last year, fined \$205,000 and was facing a potential 4-year ban after a second violation of the league's doping policy
    - (i) Several athletes were suspended from participating at the 2018 Winter Games when they tested positive for banned substances in PyeongChang, including a Japanese speed skater and a Slovenian ice hockey player <sup>19</sup>
      - 1. 32 Russian athletes were not allowed to compete in PyeongChang in response to Russia's alleged state-sponsored doping program that marred the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia
        - a. A Russian curler was stripped of his bronze medal after testing positive for a banned substance in PyeongChang
    - (ii) Seattle Mariners star Robinson Canoe was suspended 80 games in 2018 after testing positive for PED use <sup>20</sup>
    - (iii) New England Patriots star wide receiver Julian Edelman was forced to sit out the first four games of the 2019-20 NFL season for violating the league's policy on performance-enhancing substances
  - (b) A 2009 Marist College Center for Sports Communication poll suggested that 70% of baseball fans thought players who used steroids should not be admitted to the Hall of Fame, 24% believed they should be given this honor, and 6%, at the time, were unsure <sup>21</sup>
    - (i) Fast forward to 2013, when Marist conducted a poll asking the same questions just prior to MLB's suspensions of those involved in the Biogenesis case, and 78% now think players who have used steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs should not be eligible for the Hall of Fame, 18% think they should, and just 4% are unsure. <sup>21</sup>
    - (ii) Two years ago, a poll from Marist suggested 68% of baseball fans nationally think the MLB has taken the right steps to curb the league's PED problem
  - (c) In 2015, reports of rampant doping by distance runners cast a dark cloud over marathon competitors as a report from the London suggested that 32 medal winners at the world's top six marathons registered suspicious blood tests over a 12-year testing period and of the 5,000 athletes tested, more than 800 of the blood results came back "abnormal" <sup>22</sup>
  - (d) David Howman, the chief executive of the World Anti-Doping Agency, said in an interview that he believes one out of every ten Olympic athletes are using performance enhancing drugs <sup>23</sup>
- ii. Escalating costs for attending events
  - (a) A whopping 63 percent of respondents to an Associated Press poll suggested that the high price of attending MLB games was "by far the biggest problem in Major League Baseball" <sup>24</sup>
  - (b) Nearly half (49%) of fans polled in Sacramento about Kings' ticket prices for the new downtown arena suggested that, "Yes, the team plans to cater mostly to high-income customers"
  - (c) In 2016, Walt Disney Co. raised prices by as much as 20% for fans that want to attend their parks when they are the busiest – during peak times adults now pay \$119 per ticket in Anaheim and \$124 in Orlando

- (d) According to a [Time Magazine](#) report, it cost a family of four over \$600 for tickets to see a Chicago Cubs game, *not* include parking, concessions or any merchandise <sup>25</sup>
        - (i) Hot dogs at Wrigley Field cost nearly \$6 apiece, bottled water is \$5.25 and peanuts are \$4.75
        - (ii) Comparatively, according to Minor League Baseball, the average cost for a family of four to enjoy a MiLB game in 2017 was \$64.97 – this *includes* two adult tickets, two child tickets, four hot dogs, two sodas and two beers<sup>26</sup>
      - (e) According to the *Sports Business Journal*, average ticket prices for entertainment include: Broadway show (\$88), Disney (adult \$85), NFL (\$77), NHL (\$57), NBA (\$48), MLB (\$27) <sup>27</sup>
    - iii. Recruiting violations and other unethical behavior in collegiate sports
      - (a) In 2019, three former adidas employees were [sent](#) to prison for their role in schemes to pay high-profile high school basketball players to play at adidas-sponsored college basketball programs
      - (b) The University of North Carolina went to court in 2017 to battle allegations of academic fraud that span nearly a decade
        - (i) The school is accused of keeping athletes eligible by enrolling them in classes that required little work and no attendance
      - (c) Michigan State's football program faced NCAA sanctions after reports of a sexual assault [scandal](#) rocked the University in early 2020
    - b. Each respective league or governing body/organization has their own guidelines for discipline, however, intense media scrutiny often makes such punishments seem insufficient to the general public, creating further fan disenchantment
    - c. Athletes and entertainers have a unique platform to involve themselves in a positive manner within the community. It is the responsibility of an athlete or celebrity (or sports/entertainment property) to direct media attention toward these efforts.
    - d. Many teams, organizations, leagues, athletes and entertainers do an excellent job of using the media to communicate positive contributions
      - i. Those organizations who successfully communicate positive messages have an effective community relations strategy
  - 2. Three approaches to media relations <sup>29</sup>
    - a. Reactive
      - i. Responds to informational and other inquiries from media sources and external entities
      - ii. Player interviews, appearances, biographies, profiles etc.
    - b. Proactive
      - i. The point of initiation is the organization rather than an external entity or media source
      - ii. Organizations take the initiative in providing information and creating publicity
      - iii. Distribution of press kits, press releases
    - c. Interactive
      - i. Refers to an organization's effort to create and maintain a strong relationship with the media
- B. Community Relations
- 1. **Community relations** focus on an individual or organization's commitment to bettering their respective community <sup>30</sup>
  - 2. The goal of a community relations effort is to assist in achieving an organization's public relations objectives related to enhancing public understanding, gaining public approval and acceptance, ultimately leading to public support <sup>31</sup>
  - 3. Community relations are typically implemented one of five ways
    - a. Player or celebrity initiated

- i. The Michael J. Fox Foundation auctioned off a limited-edition collection of Nike shoes inspired by the actor's Back to the Future character. The high-profile auction [raised \\$9.4](#) million for the foundation, the largest private funder of Parkinson's disease research in the world. <sup>32</sup>
- ii. Thousands of athletes and celebrities, from Justin Timberlake and Cristiano Ronaldo (in his underwear), participated in one of the most successful viral fundraising campaigns we have ever seen in the Ice Bucket Challenge, a cause tied to generating awareness and raising funds for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease
  - (a) As a result, the ALS Association raised \$220 million in donations (compared to \$1.9 million the previous year), including 453,210 new donors to the Association
- iii. Beyoncé [partnered](#) with three charities (United Way Worldwide, Chime for Change and Global Citizen) on her 2016 Formation World Tour
  - (a) A VIP ticket contest was offered for fans that made a donation to the United Way in support of the Flint Water Crisis
- iv. In 2020, Kevin Love became one of the first NBA players to lend financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic when he announced on [Instagram](#) that he would give \$100,000 to event staff at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse
- b. Team or organization initiated
  - i. Sports teams and athletes are often quick to lend a helping hand when their communities suffer through natural disasters
    - (a) Last year, the Carolina Panthers donated \$1 million to the American Red Cross and \$450,000 to provide relief for victims after Hurricane Florence devastated the region
      - (i) The team also [provided](#) aid to high school athletic programs affected by storm damage
      - (ii) Panthers' QB Cam Newton and defensive star Julius Peppers each donated \$100,000 to hurricane relief efforts
  - ii. The Buffalo Bills teamed up with the United Way and launched the "Character Playbook" educational initiative, a digital course offered in middle schools that focuses on youth character development and building healthy relationships
    - (a) Bills alumni director Marlon Kerner [said](#) "You have social media, bullying, cyber bullying, teen issues with dating, violence – so we want to teach them how to resolve conflicts in a more positive manner."
  - iii. The Miami Dolphins Foundation (whose mission is devoted to providing and supporting signature education, health, youth athletic programs and volunteer activities that inspire and engage communities throughout Florida) raised over \$600,000 through its annual "FinsWeekend", an event that features former and current players, cheerleaders and staff participating in activities like fishing and golfing <sup>34</sup>
  - iv. The San Antonio Silver Stars of the WNBA played their annual breast cancer awareness game on a [pink court](#) painted by breast cancer survivors in an effort to raise awareness and funding for the initiative
  - v. In 2017, MiLB's Quad Cities River Bandits [added](#) two new amusement park rides to their stadium setup and directed all profits from the attractions to the "Carousel Charitable Trust", a non-profit serving underprivileged children in the Quad Cities
  - vi. When New York City hospitals were overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center [transformed](#) into a 350-bed health care facility to help treat patients who were sick with the coronavirus, along with a meal distribution center that delivered 25,000 meals every day throughout the city

- c. League or governing body initiated
    - i. The NFL is engaged in an effort to fight childhood obesity with the [NFL Play 60 program](#)
      - (a) From the NFL website: “As a brand and leader that believes in the power of sport, the promise of young fans and whose players embody health and fitness; the NFL and its Clubs are committed to reversing the effects of the childhood obesity epidemic. NFL PLAY 60 is a national youth health and fitness campaign focused on increasing the wellness of young fans by encouraging them to be active for at least 60 minutes a day.”<sup>35</sup>
    - ii. Click [here](#) to read how social media has helped raise awareness of the [NBA Cares](#) Campaign, the league’s official global community outreach initiative that addresses important social issues such as education, youth and family development, and health and wellness.
    - iii. According to the league’s [website](#), the NHL response to the COVID-19 health crisis included \$15 million in contributions from players, owners and club foundations, over 500,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) donated, and over 1,000,000 meal and food donations
  - d. Community initiated
    - i. Often times community or event organizers will call on athletes or celebrities to participate in an event to help raise levels of awareness
      - (a) West Virginia was hit hard by floods in 2016 and called on West Virginia University to help with relief efforts
        - (i) Dollars for Disaster Donation jars were placed around campus and various WVU athletic teams hosted drop-off sites to collect water and other needed items
  - e. Brand initiated
    - i. Brands will create community relations initiatives to utilize the powerful platform of sports and entertainment to encourage positive action and behavior
      - (a) Every year, ESPN raises awareness and money for cancer research through the [V Foundation](#)
      - (b) Last year, Nike distributed \$250,000 to 26 Portland area community groups through the Nike Community Impact Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation
        - (i) The program aims to provide area you with positive experiences through “sports and physical activity, and advance healthier, supportive and more inclusive communities.”
        - (ii) According to the [Portland Business Journal](#), the Fund has awarded 356 grants, worth \$3.75 million-plus, since launching in 2010
      - (c) When the coronavirus health crisis struck in the spring of 2020, Under Armour quickly [responded](#), donating \$1 million to Feeding America and another \$1 million to youth sports nonprofit Good Sports, along with manufacturing 500,000 masks and thousands of face shields and hospital gowns for frontline workers
4. Foundations
- a. A **foundation** is an association established by an organization, athlete or celebrity to maintain, assist, or finance other institutions or programs that are of an educational, charitable, or social nature<sup>36</sup>
  - b. Many athletes and celebrities have used their “celebrity status” to make a positive impact on issues important to them
  - c. Celebrity foundations can help individual athletes and entertainers shed negative images
  - d. Many high-profile athletes and celebrities have formed foundations or take an active role in supporting or leading foundation-related activities

- i. Derek Jeter formed his foundation during his rookie season with the New York Yankees. The foundation's mission states aims to 1) create signature programs which will acknowledge and reward youths who avoid drugs and alcohol and those who choose healthy lifestyles 2) fund organizations which help prevent and treat teenage substance abuse and 3) leverage the integrity and popularity of Derek Jeter by hosting special events for today's youth which serve as a platform for his message <sup>37</sup>
- ii. In 2016, Michael Jordan [donated](#) \$1 million to the Institute for Community-Police relations and another \$1 million to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund amidst widespread tensions surrounding police-related shootings
- iii. In 2017, Chance the Rapper [donated](#) \$1 million to support budget-strapped Chicago Public Schools and Bruno Mars donated \$1 million to aid victims of Flint's water crisis <sup>38</sup>
- iv. Author J.K. Rowling was named president of One Parent Families, a U.K. nonprofit that supports, educates and advocates for single parents. Rowling, once a single parent herself, has been one of the organization's major supporters and ambassadors since 2000. <sup>40</sup>
- v. In 2019, Stephen Curry and his wife Ayesha [launched](#) the Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation to address nutrition, education and recreation needs for Oakland area youth
  - (a) The couple will make an annual seven-figure donation to the foundation to cover all administrative expenses, so that other money raised will go entirely into supporting the foundation's programs
- vi. Like many athlete and celebrity foundations, former Dallas Mavericks' star Dirk Nowitzki pledged his support during the pandemic when the [Dirk Nowitzki Foundation](#) donated more than \$100,000 to North Texas organizations to aid local organizations in their fight against the coronavirus
- e. A [study](#) from the Rutgers School of Business found that donors gave 1.4 percent more to charities associated with celebrities—to the tune of \$100,000 annually
  - i. Click [here](#) to see the ten most charitable celebrities in 2015, according to The Sydney Morning Herald



**\* ACTIVITY IDEA \***

*Have students select their favorite athlete or entertainer, then use the Internet to find out if they have a foundation or if they are affiliated with a cause. If not, have them keep researching until they find one. Ask them to bring a short essay to class and share as much information as they can about their research. Then ask them if the research has inspired them to become involved at any level with the cause.*

*Alternatively, divide the class into groups or pairs, and have each team select a favorite charity or cause and create a campaign to generate publicity and raise awareness for the cause. Encourage them to link their efforts to an athlete or celebrity foundation as a way to help amplify the message.*



## Lesson 11.3

### Functions of Sports and Entertainment Communications

- A. There are six primary functions of sports and entertainment communications <sup>41</sup>
1. Inform and communicate
    - a. Communicate information with consumers
    - b. Gather, present, and distribute information about the organization or product
    - c. Involves publishing programs, brochures, updating web sites etc.
  2. Shape and enhance organization image
    - a. Work with “cause” programs
    - b. Important to all facets of sports and entertainment marketing, including corporations, teams, leagues, and individuals
    - c. This function closely resembles marketing function
    - d. Generate goodwill
      - i. **Goodwill** is a general willingness to work with a person or organization based on a positive reputation or relationship <sup>42</sup>
      - ii. Companies can generate goodwill in a number of ways, often times through an affiliation with a particular sport, team, league or event
  3. Recruiting tool
    - a. Extremely important to colleges and Universities for recruiting student athletes
      - i. The University of Texas generated a lot of publicity with the installation of new, cutting edge lockers and other upgrades for their locker room
        - (a) Each locker featured a 43-inch flat screen (which [reportedly](#) showed each player’s highlights on a loop) with glowing locker doors at an estimated cost of \$10,500 per locker
        - (b) The Longhorns published player response to seeing the new locker room through various social media channels, no doubt taking advantage of their reaction for future leverage on the recruiting trail
    - b. Professional teams also must “recruit” potential draft choices and free agents
      - i. In today’s era, the recruiting effort can sometimes go beyond the front office
        - (a) LeBron James actively recruited former Pelicans’ star Anthony Davis last season in attempt to get him to join the Lakers, infuriating some league executives who felt the action was a violation of the NBA’s “tampering” rule <sup>43</sup>
    - c. Communities recruit franchises and events
      - i. The city of Los Angeles prepared a \$5.3 billion bid and created a branded website to position itself as the United States’ candidate to host the 2024 Olympic Games <sup>44</sup>
        - (a) Click [here](#) to watch the city’s “candidate” presentation on YouTube
        - (b) Ultimately, the city’s recruiting efforts paid off as the International Olympic Committee awarded the 2028 Summer Games to the city of Los Angeles (Paris, France won the rights to host the 2024 Summer Games)
      - ii. In 2016, Las Vegas managed to lure a new NHL team to the city (along with a \$500 million franchise fee price tag) with its recruiting efforts
        - (a) The organization was aggressive and persistent in their efforts to attract a franchise while demonstrating to the NHL that the city could support a hockey team by gathering 14,000 fan deposits for season tickets
        - (b) As part of their recruiting effort, the hopeful franchise owners launched a “Vegas Wants Hockey” website to help maintain momentum with fans and to stay on the NHL’s radar
      - iii. In 2018, Seattle ramped up its efforts to attract an NHL expansion franchise, launching a website ([nhlseattle.com](http://nhlseattle.com)) and selling deposits to (hopefully) future season ticket buyers



- (a) The group responsible for trying to bring a NHL team to Seattle [announced](#) they had sold 33,000 season tickets just four hours after putting them on sale, with a waiting list of more than 4,000
    - (b) The effort was rewarded in 2019 when the NHL [announced](#) Seattle would be awarded an expansion franchise, set to begin play in the 2021-22 season (the franchise fee was \$650 million)
    - (c) Shortly after the franchise introduce the team's new name, the Seattle Kraken, they saw a 35% [increase](#) in the season ticket-holder waiting list, propelling the number of fans waiting on the opportunity to purchase season tickets to 51,000
  - iv. The MLS has announced plans to [expand](#) to 30 teams by 2022, leaving 9 cities to compete for 2 expansion franchises
    - (a) How high is the demand for cities hoping to attract an MLS franchise?
      - (i) According to [sbnation.com](#), Toronto FC paid just \$10 million to join the league in 2007 while David Beckham paid an expansion fee of \$25 million for the rights to bring a MLS franchise to Miami in 2014
      - (ii) Today, the league's expansion fee is \$200 million per franchise
    - (b) Click [here](#) for a story from the MLS website describing how the expansion process works
  - v. Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred has expressed interest in expanding the league from 30 to 32 teams
    - (a) The league isn't expected to expand until 2021 at the earliest, but there are several cities identified by the [league](#) as potential cities that have the infrastructure to support a team already in place (Portland, Montreal, Austin, Vancouver, Mexico City, Charlotte and Nashville)
- 2. Introduce new products or innovations
  - a. Build new product awareness and interest
  - b. Position new product
- 3. Generate and collect feedback
  - a. Determine acceptance and effectiveness of organizational policies
  - b. Gather specific consumer data
    - i. Attitudes
    - ii. Preferences
    - iii. Behaviors
- 4. Crisis management <sup>45</sup>
  - a. A coordinated effort to handle the effects of unfavorable publicity or of an unfavorable event
  - b. Proactive crisis management strategies
    - i. Forecasting potential crises
    - ii. Planning how to handle potential crises such as how an organization will react if a player is associated with a situation that is certain to garner negative media attention
  - c. Crisis management often includes a strong focus on public relations to recover any damage to public image and assure consumers that recovery is underway
  - d. According to Joe Favorito, sports media expert and author of the book *Sports Publicity*, the key to effective crisis management is keeping everyone on track, following the flow of information, working with public authorities and media who may not be familiar with your situation or practices, and having the organization speak with one voice when problems arise <sup>46</sup>
  - e. Crisis management examples
    - i. In 2015, the University of Illinois paid several PR consulting agencies a reported \$70,000 to help with crisis management after both program's football and women's basketball coaches were investigated for mistreatment of players <sup>47</sup>

- ii. FIFA fired and banned three high ranking officials in 2016 after it was determined they illegally gave themselves lengthy contract extensions as well as raises and bonuses totaling more than \$80 million over five years
  - (a) New FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, has pledged reform and a changed culture in hopes of moving past the scandal to begin repairing the organization's tarnished image
- iii. In 2019, in a game watched by millions of sports fans around the country, Nike was forced to react to a crisis when Duke's Zion Williamson, the most recognizable athlete in college basketball, was injured wearing a Nike sneaker when it "malfunctioned" on national TV
  - (a) Within 24 hours, Nike executives met with Zion and his family and began working on a custom-designed shoe to better support his foot
  - (b) Duke's head coach Mike Krzyzewski released a statement supporting the brand soon after, [saying](#): *"(Nike designers) went to China to actually look at the making of a shoe that would be very supportive and then they came back within a week with different alternatives to make sure that it was done right. So their immediate, great response was appreciated, and it was something that we have grown to expect from our relationship with them."* <sup>48</sup>
- iv. In 2020, a [story](#) broke reporting a "toxic" culture on Ellen DeGeneres' incredibly popular and successful daytime television show, the brand built on the premise of positivity and kindness, was revealed to reportedly be not-so-kind behind-the-scenes
  - (a) In response, the network [launched](#) an investigation, fired several executives, issued multiple apologies, and promised to improve the culture for employees
  - (b) However, some were skeptical, wondering if the show and its "be kind" brand would ever recover

**\* DISCUSSION IDEA \***



*Crisis management presents one of the biggest challenges for sports and entertainment organizations from a PR perspective. Carefully crafted messages can, and often do, come across as too scripted. Kneejerk reactions can be perceived as tone deaf, or unsympathetic. An effective crisis management plan will strike an effective balance that resonates with a fan base in a positive way.*

*In 2020, several sports and entertainment organizations made headlines for transgressions that necessitated a crisis management strategy. Select one of the stories below and discuss the organization's response, and how students think they should have responded. Alternatively, you might assign each story to groups of students and have each group develop a crisis management strategy and present their plans in class.*

**The Washington Football Team** – The NFL franchise in Washington D.C., formerly the Washington Redskins, spent a lot of time in the news in 2020. In addition to the scrutiny surrounding the team's former nickname, the franchise was also investigated by the league for allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Houston Astros** – In response to a cheating scandal that rocked Major League Baseball, the Houston Astros organization held a press conference to issue public apologies. However, that plan backfired, creating even more animosity toward the franchise.

**The 'Ellen' Show** – A story broke reporting a "toxic" culture behind-the-scenes at 'Ellen', and the network launched an investigation, fired several executives, issued multiple apologies, and promised to improve the culture for employees in response.

## Lesson 11.4

### Integrating Publicity

- A. Importance of integration
  - 1. Many corporations (including those outside of the sports and entertainment industry view public relations as one all-encompassing arena that includes:
    - a. Promotion
    - b. Sponsorship and endorsement
    - c. Marketing
    - d. Sales
  - 2. Sports and entertainment organizations follow the same trend and integrate ticket sales to that mix
  - 3. Effectively integrating publicity within an organization's marketing strategy positions the rest of the organization for success
- B. Publicity affects many other critical components of the sports and entertainment business model
  - 1. Overall revenue
  - 2. Sales
    - a. The presence of negative publicity can have an adverse impact on sales
      - i. Statistically, consumers have shown a decline in willingness to support organizations who demonstrate an inability to effectively control or manage their image
      - ii. A combination of poor on-field performance and consistent negative publicity off the field resulted in an almost 8,000 fans per game drop in attendance for the 2011 Los Angeles Dodgers for the season <sup>49</sup>
        - i. Under new ownership and a resurgence on the field, the Dodgers attendance rebounded in 2012, increasing by nearly 5,000 fans per game by the all-star break and by 2013, the team was leading the league in attendance
        - ii. The franchise, who struggled mightily to fill seats just five seasons ago, have now led the league in [attendance](#) for the last five seasons in a row
          - (i) Click [here](#) to view current MLB attendance figures from espn.com.
      - iii. According to [NPR](#), all the negative publicity surrounding the host country (recession, political chaos, high crime, Zika virus) hurt ticket sales for the 2016 Summer Games in Rio
        - i. Only a few months prior to the games less than 50% of tickets had been purchased, figures that are significantly lower than previous Olympic games
        - ii. With just two weeks prior to the start of the Paralympic Games (hosted in Rio right after the Olympic Games), only [12%](#) of ticket inventory had been sold despite being priced at around \$3 each
          - (i) Compare that to the Summer Games in 2012 when the London Paralympics attracted a nearly sold-out crowd
      - iv. In 2017, Wells Fargo pulled their sponsorship of the Iditarod (the world's most famous sled dog race)
        - i. Event organizers [speculated](#) the decision was based on pressure created publicly by animal rights organizations
      - v. If a newly released film receives poor reviews from the *New York Times* or negative reviews through social platforms like Rotten Tomatoes, movie-goers are less likely to flock to the theatre to see it
        - i. Hoping to follow the formula that made Sony's '21 Jump Street' a box office success, Paramount enlisted Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Zac Efron to star in their 2017 adaptation of the popular television series, 'Baywatch' <sup>50</sup>

- ii. Unfortunately for the studio, sometimes negative publicity can trump even the best marketing and promotional efforts. The movie was crushed by critics and the film flopped.
  - (i) Hollywood Reporter explains: "The most striking difference between 21 'Jump Street' and 'Baywatch' was the critical reaction. The former, starring Channing Tatum and Jonah Hill, garnered an 85 percent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes, compared to a 19 percent rotten rating for 'Baywatch'." <sup>50</sup>
    - 1. *"The reviews really hurt the film, which scored great in test screenings. We were all surprised," says Paramount's Megan Colligan, president of worldwide marketing and distribution. "It is a brand that maybe relied on a positive critical reaction more than we recognized. The cast could not have done more work in aggressively promoting Baywatch. Dwayne gave this 150 percent."*
- iii. The negative publicity associated with 'Blackfish', a documentary drawing attention to SeaWorld's treatment of killer whales, was still eroding the theme park company's [revenues](#) four years after the film's release
  - (i) Despite a heavy investment in marketing and promotional efforts, the company has been unable to reverse the trend of declining attendance
  - (ii) Increases in marketing expenditures also contributed to declining profits
- b. On the flip side, positive publicity can result in a significant uptick in sales
  - i. Positive reviews from film critics and fans can provide a nice lift at the box office
    - i. Praised by both critics and fans (91% positive audience rating on Rotten Tomatoes), [ew.com](#) says 'Wonder Woman' was the best-reviewed superhero film of all time
      - (i) As a result, the film raced out to a \$103 million opening weekend at the box office, shattering several records along the way, ultimately surpassing \$820 million globally in ticket sales
  - ii. The buzz generated by performing at the annual Grammy Awards typically provides an increase in music sales for featured artists
    - (i) The 2020 Grammys had a major impact on sales for albums and artists, regardless of whether they won an award or not <sup>51</sup>
      - 1. According to data from Nielsen, collectively, GRAMMY performers experienced a 266% gain in song sales in the U.S. on the day of the show
    - (ii) DJ Khaled's "Higher," featuring Nipsey Hussle and John Legend, saw a huge boost in sales with an increase of 9,044% in the 24 hours following the Grammys performance, while sales of Billie Eilish's "When the Party's Over" shot up 787%
  - iii. The excitement surrounding the possibility of a horse winning the sport's most prestigious title, the Triple Crown, inevitably gives a big boost to sales of almost everything associated with the races
    - (i) In 2018, with Justify in position to capture the Triple Crown, ticket prices at the Belmont Stakes [cost](#) an average of 145 percent more than admission to the event the previous year with merchandise sales also getting a huge lift
- ii. Positive publicity can provide fans with a sense of optimism which often leads to increased sales
  - i. According to [WMCA Action News](#), The University of Memphis men's basketball team experienced a boost in ticket sales when they hired well-known and highly respected coach Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway in 2018
    - (i) The Tigers reported a \$4.5 million increase in athletic tickets sales and donations after the hire

- (ii) When a picture of the team's new coach was posted of him recruiting players at a camp in Dallas wearing a blue, flat-brimmed hat, the school bookstore immediately [sold](#) out of the product
    - (iii) Last season, attendance at Memphis Tiger's men's basketball games [doubled](#), thanks in large part to the enthusiasm generated by Hardaway's involvement with the program
  - ii. When the Philadelphia Phillies signed MLB star Bryce Harper to a record contract in 2019, fans responded to the news by flooding the team's website and team store to buy his jersey
    - (i) The day he was officially introduced and his jersey hit the team's store, Harper's jersey broke the 24-hour sales record for a jersey launch *in any sport*, according to [data](#) from Fanatics
    - (ii) Overall, the news of the Bryce Harper signing drove a 5,000 percent increase in sales of Phillies merchandise compared to the same day from the previous year
  - iii. Historic moments and "anniversary" events create positive publicity that helps to boost sales
    - i. In 2016, the 100<sup>th</sup> running of the Indy 500 drew a [record](#) crowd of 350,000 – roughly 100,000 more fans than attended the race in 2015
    - ii. In 2018, in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> PGA Championship, event organizers [expected](#) to sell over \$2 million in headwear merchandise at the tournament's merchandise shop alone
  - iv. While the idea is not always true, in some cases "any publicity *can be good* publicity"
    - i. While many were critical of LaVar Ball's approach to generating publicity leading up to the NBA Draft for his son Lonzo Ball, a standout basketball player at UCLA, the buzz surrounding their "Big Baller Brand" helped bring large crowds to the NBA's Summer League in 2017
      - (i) [Fast Company](#) reports the first two games of Lonzo's career as a Laker sold out the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, marking the first time in Summer League history that a game sold every general admission ticket available (priced at \$30)
- 3. Sponsorship and Endorsement
  - a. Corporations do not want an affiliation with an individual or organization with image problems
    - i. After fabricating a story about being robbed at gunpoint during the 2016 Summer Games in Rio, many sports business experts suggested that USA swimmer Ryan Lochte would not only lose over \$1 million in sponsorships but would be highly unlikely to find other brands to partner with ever again
      - i. Click [here](#) to see a list of 15 athletes who were dropped by sponsors because of image issues, costing the athletes millions
    - ii. In 2018, after Papa John's founder John Schnatter was heard uttering a racial slur, more than 20 sports teams and leagues either distanced themselves by suspending the relationship or [cut ties](#) with the brand altogether, even though Papa John's was a paying sponsor
      - i. Major League Baseball suspended its "Papa Slam" promotion while the University of Louisville changed the name of the football stadium from Papa John's Cardinal Stadium to Cardinal Stadium <sup>52</sup>
  - iii. The negative publicity surrounding the Washington Football Team's former nickname (Redskins) prompted the teams sponsors to pressure the team to change its nickname
    - i. According to a report in [AdWeek](#), investors worth over \$620 billion sent letters to Nike, Pepsi and FedEx calling for the end of their sponsorships of the team



4. Promotions
  - a. Some promotions can be offensive to some consumers
    - i. MiLB's Lexington Legends faced significant fan backlash when their 'Millennials Night' promotion offended a segment of their fan base
    - ii. The team promised that, upon entering the park, fans would receive a participation ribbon, stating in a news release: "We know it's a big feat to leave the safe confines of your home with Netflix beaconing you to stay on the couch, so the Legends are ready to congratulate fans on their accomplishment, even if they are still in sweatpants." <sup>53</sup>
  - b. Promotions may become too "gimmicky" or don't feel authentic and turn fans off to the product or backfire in a way that creates negative publicity
    - i. Woody Harrelson participated in one of Reddit's "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) threads, but the actor's answers infuriated the website's users as he attempted to promote his film, "Rampart." After Harrelson grew frustrated with fan questions and left the discussion, users called it "the worst AMA of all time" and an "epic fail by Woody Harrelson's PR machine." <sup>54</sup>
  - c. Publicity can help generate revenue in other ways through the implementation of creative promotions
    - i. The University of Notre Dame offers membership opportunities for kids 14 and younger to join "Clancy's Kids Club" for an annual fee of \$15. Members receive, among other things, free admission to more than 100 Notre Dame athletic events each year, a newsletter, t-shirts, coupons and invitations to special kid's club events. <sup>54</sup>
    - ii. Kid's clubs are an effective tool by generating additional revenue as well as enhancing the team's image
    - iii. Kid's clubs also enable the organization to begin building brand loyalty at a grass roots level
5. Game operations
  - a. Game entertainment can become a source of negative publicity for a sports franchise
    - i. Music can be too loud at games
    - ii. Particular entertainment acts may be offensive to some fans
  - b. Game entertainment can also be a valuable source of positive word-of-mouth advertising
    - i. A child may choose to wear the face paint to school the next day to show off to friends, sparking interest within the schools. Game entertainment examples like face painting are prevalent among minor league baseball franchises and collegiate athletic events.
6. Merchandise
  - a. Sales of team, player, or celebrity related merchandise tends to slump in the wake of negative publicity
  - b. Positive publicity or associations can help increase merchandise sales
    - i. When news broke that the New York Mets' would sign former Heisman trophy winning ex-NFL QB Tim Tebow to a minor league baseball contract, [sales](#) of jerseys bearing his name shot to #1 among Mets players on MLB's online store and #3 overall in just one day <sup>55</sup>
    - ii. When the Loyola University Chicago men's basketball team advanced to the Final Four in 2018, sales of Ramblers merchandise [skyrocketed](#) by 300%
      - i. The star of the tournament was not even a player, it was the Ramblers' Sister Jean, the 98-year-old nun and team chaplain, who [ESPN](#) noted had been mentioned in over 20,000 stories in the media—more than several high profile coaches in the tournament combined
      - ii. The publicity generated by the media attention surrounding the program during its March Madness run helped boost sales of everything from t-shirts to keychains (and Sister Jean bobbleheads, which set a sales [record](#))

- iii. With the buzz generated by a rebranding effort and a move to a new \$54 million downtown ballpark, the Charlotte Knights Minor League Baseball club saw merchandise sales increase sevenfold <sup>58</sup>
  - iv. When the Charlotte Bobcats rebranded (back to the franchise's original name) and became the Charlotte Hornets again, merchandise sales for the year jumped by 300% despite a subpar team performance <sup>59</sup>
- 7. Television Audience/Ratings
  - a. Major League Baseball's decision to change the format of its annual home run derby helped generate more buzz surrounding the Gillette Home Run Derby presented by Head & Shoulders, ultimately resulting in a 26% increase in ratings on ESPN <sup>57</sup>
    - i. The event got another boost in 2017 when the league saw a resurgence in home runs for the first half of the season including a record-setting performance from Yankees' breakout star, Aaron Judge
      - i. All the hype and excitement building up to the event led to record ratings, with nearly 9 million fans tuning in to ESPN to watch ([representing](#) a 55% increase from 2016)
  - b. The NCAA's decision to move football playoff games to Dec. 31 last season proved to be incredibly unpopular with fans
    - i. The negative publicity surrounding the decision had a major impact on viewership as ratings fell 40% from the previous season
    - ii. The ratings disaster prompted the NCAA playoff committee to reverse their decision to air games on New Year's Eve, instead broadcasting them on the Saturday before in hopes of creating higher ratings
      - i. The decision paid off as ratings for the Peach and Fiesta Bowls increased 14% over 2016 (although ratings were still down from two years prior)
- C. It is critical that an organization effectively communicate internally as well as communicating messages externally
  - 1. Employees in every department should be on the same page
  - 2. The workforce should be not only informed, but also involved
  - 3. Employees should be aware and contributing
  - 4. The organization must exercise the mentality that each employee is the face of the organization
  - 5. The staff must realize that they are representatives of the organization at all times

## Lesson 11.5

### The Publicity Plan

- A. Publicity plan development considerations <sup>58</sup>
  - 1. The goal of the plan is to monitor and gauge community response to each organizational effort
  - 2. Community relations efforts
    - a. Speaker's bureau
    - b. Clinics and player appearances
    - c. Mascot, cheerleaders, and band appearances
    - d. Correspondance (fan mail, photo requests, etc.)
  - 3. It is critical to recognize how consumers perceive the organization as a whole
    - a. The organization must have a current understanding of consumer perceptions
    - b. The organization must also have an accurate understanding of consumer perceptions
    - c. The organization must then manage their publicity plan based on that information
- B. Key strategies that should be included in any comprehensive publicity plan include:
  - 1. Identification of any specific information the organization intends to communicate
  - 2. A "hook" to make information newsworthy and grab the reader's immediate attention
- C. Other popular sports and entertainment publicity plan strategies
  - 1. Sneak previews to the press prior to your product release
    - a. Movie makers with "private screenings" for film critics and media
  - 2. Careful selection of a spokesperson
  - 3. Launching an organization scheduled media blitz
  - 4. Distribution of sequential press releases to encourage media publication of new information
  - 5. Getting creative
    - a. For example, an organization may establish a fun and interactive idea centered on an organization's ticket release or upgrade process
  - 6. Creating a sense of urgency
    - a. For example, the Dallas Mavericks may communicate that tickets for their home opener go on sale to the general public at 10:00 a.m. with a limit of only six tickets per customer
- D. Common components of a publicity plan
  - 1. Press (news) releases
  - 2. Press kits
  - 3. Interviews
  - 4. Photographs
  - 5. Speeches and appearances at seminars, conventions etc.
  - 6. Online chats and forums
  - 7. Community involvement
  - 8. Local, regional and national talk shows or similar programming
  - 9. Press conferences
    - a. Press conferences take place when an organization spokesperson or the athlete/entertainer addresses the media to answer questions or make announcements <sup>59</sup>
    - b. Press conferences generally imply that the organization has a newsworthy announcement featuring information of significant importance
- E. Utilizing resources
  - 1. Organizations make an effort to use all the resources they have available to them
    - a. Email, fax, Internet
    - b. Telephone follow up calls
    - c. Guest speaking opportunities for all staff when available

- d. Working with coaches, players and management to create a mutually acceptable expectation level for participation
- F. Publicity “stunts”
1. **Publicity stunts** refer to specific events or activities that are activated with the sole purpose of achieving a high level of media coverage and public awareness <sup>60</sup>
  2. Publicity stunts can serve as an effective vehicle in generating public “buzz” surrounding an organization or athlete/entertainer
    - a. The PR agency responsible for marketing the film “Kong: Skull Island”, staged a creative stunt when they placed giant ape “footprints” in five separate locations around Los Angeles
      - i. To enhance the imagery and make the footprints look even more realistic, fog machines, broken chairs, crushed vehicles and scenic props were added to the sites to create the illusion that Kong had been wreaking havoc around town <sup>61</sup>
    - b. To generate publicity for the start of their inaugural season, Ice Cube’s “Big 3” basketball league teamed up with the ad agency Wieden+Kennedy (representing Fox Sports, the official broadcaster of the upstart league) to take over an iconic basketball court in NYC and stage a four-point shooting contest <sup>62</sup>
      - i. Click [here](#) to see a video
    - c. Will Ferrell teamed up for a publicity stunt with Major League Baseball by playing for 10 different positions on 10 different teams in one day during Spring Training (in addition to generating tons of attention for the league and raising nearly \$1 million for charity) <sup>63</sup>
      - i. Click [here](#) to see why mediapost.com called the stunt a “Grand Slam” for MLB
    - d. In 2018, MiLB’s St. Paul Saints sent out a March Madness tweet promising \$10,000 for one lucky fan (via retweet) if a No. 16 seed could knock off a No. 1 – a feat that had never been done in the history of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament.
      - i. After Maryland-Baltimore County, a sixteen seed, made history and defeated number one seed Virginia, the team was on the hook
      - ii. The stunt generated more publicity than the team had imagined (the tweet generated more than 15,000 retweets), but cost the franchise \$10,000 (they selected one fan via Facebook Live as the lucky winner) <sup>64</sup>
    - e. In 2020, former “Jackass” star Steve-O literally taped himself to a Los Angeles area billboard outside a CVS to promote an upcoming comedy special, “Gnarly” (perhaps not coincidentally, a new Jackass movie is set to hit theaters in 2021)
  3. When spontaneous, publicity stunts pose a risk and could yield undesired results
    - a. From the *USA Today*: *When U.S. luge slider Kate Hansen posted a video online questioning whether there was a wolf walking down her hallway in the Olympic Village (where athletes stay) during the 2014 Sochi Winter Games, it was part of a hoax involving talk show host Jimmy Kimmel. Hansen, who finished competing Feb. 11 and is staying at the Olympic village, tweeted a video Thursday morning with the hashtag #sochiproblems and #sochifail. The #sochiproblems hashtag was commonly used by visitors to Sochi for complaints surrounding the Games. "I'm not sure about repercussions, but I can tell you that our organization is not happy with the incident," USA Luge spokesman Sandy Caligiore said in an email to USA TODAY Sports. "Sochi problems? Sochi fail? That's not USA Luge speaking."*
      - i. Click [here](#) to see Hansen discuss the incident on the Kimmel Show
    - b. Michael Phelps and the Discovery Channel were widely criticized by fans after they promoted a race between Phelps and a great white shark when the “race” turned out to be nothing more than a race simulated by a computer <sup>65</sup>
      - i. In 2020, Discovery Channel launched another stunt to promotion “Shark Week” when they [announced](#) that former heavyweight boxing champ Mike Tyson would “fight a shark” in the new season of the popular series

- c. Animal rights organization, PETA, lost credibility, support (and even members) after the organization sent scantily-clad models to Wimbledon to promote veganism by handing out strawberries and vegan cream in bikinis
  - i. [Outcry](#) on social media included comments like:
    - (a) “Exploitation of women’s bodies is never a good look. Another sexist campaign. You value animals over women.”
    - (b) “This is absolutely disgusting – you should be ashamed of yourselves for this utterly sexist and misogynistic objectification of women.”
- 4. In some instances, an event takes place where the public is not sure whether or not the activity was a publicity stunt
  - a. NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon released a [video](#) that showed him purportedly taking an unsuspecting car salesman for a wild test drive, sparking a wild debate online as to whether the video was fake
    - i. In 2014, Jeff Gordon and Pepsi released a second version of the “[test drive](#)” viral video to exact revenge on the blogger who originally called Gordon’s video out as “fake” the first time around, this time posing as a cab driver (the video reached over a million views in a few hours)
  - b. Pepsi’s “Uncle Drew” videos (starring Kyrie Irving playing pickup basketball as an old man) have generated millions of views over the past several years
    - i. When they were first posted, fans were not sure if the videos were staged
    - ii. Pepsi described the video on its YouTube page as such: “*Pepsi MAX went to a pick-up game in Bloomfield, NJ pretending to shoot a documentary on a basketball player named Kevin. When his Uncle Drew came into the game, some magical things happened.*”
    - iii. Another video, released just after Irving and the Cleveland Cavaliers won the NBA championship, racked up 1.5 million views despite the fact that most fans were aware the games were not real
      - (a) Click [here](#) to see the videos on Pepsi’s YouTube page
    - iv. The campaign was so successful that it spawned a box office [film](#), ‘Uncle Drew’, which was released in the summer of 2018 and beat box office projections
  - c. Several sports teams have engaged fans over the years with April Fool’s Day pranks to generate publicity
    - i. In 2016, the Oregon Ducks went “all in” on an April Fool’s prank, tweeting out an announcement that they would be replacing the Autzen Stadium playing surface with an LED field that would change colors and shoot fireworks whenever the Ducks scored
      - (a) The Ducks even posted an entire gallery of images featuring the “construction work” on their athletics website
    - ii. In 2018, the NHL’s Phoenix Coyotes issued a [press release](#) suggesting the franchise had just hired NBA legend and TNT analyst Charles Barkley as a “special advisor” with the bottom of the release reading, “Also, Happy April Fool’s Day!”
  - d. Despite denials from the Mets’ organization upon signing Tim Lincecum to a minor league contract, the team’s GM admitted nearly a year later that the decision was, in fact, partially a PR ploy
    - (a) Said Mr. Alderson in an interview, “*Look, we signed him because he is a good guy, partly because of his celebrity, partly because this is an entertainment business. My attitude is ‘why not?’*” <sup>66</sup>

- e. In 2019, Nike pulled its 'Betsy Ross' sneakers from the market after Colin Kaepernick, one of the brand's ambassadors, suggested the concept behind the design was offensive
  - i. The decision to side with Kaepernick drew some backlash, but ultimately the conversation would generate \$3 billion in free advertising (according to [Forbes](#)), leading some to [speculate](#) whether the whole product release was intended to be a publicity stunt from the start



## Lesson 11.6

### Press Releases



#### \* ACTIVITY IDEA \*

*Press releases have been an important tool for sports and entertainment communications professionals for a very long time. However, as the landscape continues to shift from traditional media to digital throughout the industry, the role of the press release has evolved. Much of the information that would be shared with fans in another era via news release is now posted on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. However, that does not mean that the press release is no longer relevant as organizations work to maximize exposure through as many communications channels as possible. For a quick activity, divide your classroom into groups or pairs. Task each team with developing a press release for a fictitious sports or entertainment event. Then ask them to create a strategy for which the information will be disseminated to the media AND shared with fans through broader, digital platforms.*

#### A. Press releases

1. A **press release** is a prewritten story about an organization or athlete/entertainer that is disseminated to various media <sup>67</sup>
2. Often referred to as news or media releases
3. Must be clear and to the point
4. Every press release must address several specific pieces of information
  - a. Date
  - b. Release statement
    - i. Typically states FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or TO BE RELEASED ON
  - c. Headline
  - d. Contact information
  - e. The Lead
    - i. Lead paragraph must grab reader's attention
  - f. Text (body of release)
    - i. Should answer the questions who, what, where, when, why and how
  - g. Pitch <sup>68</sup>
    - i. The release ends with identifying information, including a phone number and email address. This is where you pitch to the audience
    - ii. Example: "Call this number to find out more about the new Dallas Stars "Adopt-a-Family" program
  - h. End
    - i. Press releases typically end with "end" or "#####"
5. Must be creative and informative or the organization runs the risk of the media not reporting the information
6. An effective release will feature a catchy title
  - a. According to a [study](#) from SEO Agency suggests a properly crafted headline can increase web traffic by 500%
7. Press releases should be kept to one page if possible

#### B. Three categories of press releases define when information is disseminated <sup>69</sup>

1. Pre-release
  - a. Occurs before the event takes place

- b. If a team wanted to release the signing of a key free agent to the media, an advance story would alert the media to a press conference the following day
- 2. Live-release
  - a. Occurs during the event
  - b. A second story is released at the actual news release when the new player is formally introduced to the media at the press conference
- 3. Post-release
  - a. Occurs after the event has taken place
  - b. The next few days following the press conference, additional releases are sent out referencing details of the player's new contract, plans for success and past statistics
- C. Information an organization may distribute via a press release
  - 1. Announcement of a team's key free agent acquisition
  - 2. Release of game schedules
  - 3. Highlights of a new blockbuster film to be released
  - 4. Announcement of an upcoming promotion
  - 5. Description of an upcoming community relations event

**\* DISCUSSION IDEA \***



*Lesson 4.8 covers the concept of “upfront marketing” in advertising. ESPN pulled out all the stops for their upfront presentation in 2012 and issued a press release online to call attention to the event. Click [here](#) to review the press release and ask your students why they think ESPN put so much emphasis on the upfront presentation. Use the press release to illustrate the importance of communicating information like this to the media and consumers.*

## **Lesson 11.7**

### **Press Kits**

- A. Press kits are important as they provide much information regarding an organization or event to media in a variety of ways
  - 1. A press kit is a package of information distributed to the media to assist them in reporting <sup>70</sup>
  - 2. Press kits could include: <sup>71</sup>
    - a. Athlete, entertainer, organization or event background
    - b. Fact sheets
    - c. Biographies
    - d. Photographs
    - e. Statistical information
    - f. Contact information
    - g. Current press releases
    - h. Related press clippings
    - i. Historical chronologies
    - j. Organizational newsletters
    - k. Testimonials from key personnel
    - l. Recommendations for features
  - 3. Each piece included in the press kit should include contact information, as press kit material often becomes separated
  - 4. Many organizations now create an electronic version of the media kit
    - a. Ease of distribution
    - b. Distribution to more outlets
    - c. Allows for incorporation of audio, video and multimedia presentation materials
  - 5. Frequently, organizations will send annually updated press kits to keep media informed

## Lesson 11.8

### Social Issues in Sports & Entertainment

#### A. Social Issues

1. Social issues in sports and entertainment refer to everything from the ethical actions of athletes, entertainers and sport/entertainment organizations to the sports and entertainment industry's efforts to do their part to positively impact society
  - a. **Ethics** are the moral standards by which people judge behavior
  - b. Words often associated with ethical behavior could include honesty, integrity, respectfulness, confidentiality, non-discriminating, legal and socially responsible
  - c. Most sports and entertainment organizations feel they have an obligation to operate their business from an ethical standpoint
    - i. Last year, one of the biggest, most widespread scandals in history rocked the industry with revelations of corruption throughout one of the most powerful organizations in the sports world (FIFA)
      - (a) Dozens of FIFA officials were arrested on charges of allegedly pocketing well over \$150 million in bribes dating back 24 years
    - ii. The NBA moved the 2017 NBA All-Star game from Charlotte, North Carolina after the state passed legislation blocking cities and local governments from passing antidiscrimination measures that could protect gay and transgender people.
      - (a) The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority would later [report](#) that the city would lose out on a potential \$100 million in economic impact for the area
      - (b) After the state made a slight amendment to the bill, the NBA promised to bring the All-Star game back to the city in 2019
    - iii. The [Washington Post](#) reported that, in an effort to protect baseball's integrity, MLB partnered with Genius Sports to monitor and report gambling trends
      - (a) In 2019, the PGA Tour and LPGA Tour also [partnered](#) with Genius Sports to keep an eye on betting on golf tournaments as well as educating players and caddies on corruption

#### B. Examples of hot button social issues

1. The "greening" of sports and entertainment
  - a. Today's consumer is more aware of how their buying decisions affect society and the environment around them, and are willing to make choices in their product purchases to have an impact on the world around them
    - i. A recent market research study concluded that environmentally-friendly packaging plays a vital role in consumer purchase decisions and helps greener companies gain a competitive advantage over non eco-friendly competitors <sup>72</sup>
      - (a) Adidas partnered with [Parley](#) on an initiative that would take ocean waste and transform it into clothing and sneakers and recently launched a sneaker made entirely of yarns and filaments reclaimed and recycled from ocean waste and illegal deep-sea gillnets <sup>73</sup>
        - (i) Parley is described as "A collaboration space where creators, thinkers and leaders from art, film, music, fashion, technology and science partner up with major brands and environmentalists to raise awareness and to collaborate on projects that can end the destruction of the magic blue universe beneath us: Our Oceans.")
        - (ii) In 2018, adidas outfitted [every](#) Major League Soccer team with uniforms made from recycled ocean waste
        - (iii) In 2019, adidas executed a fantastic publicity stunt when they teamed up with Parley for the Oceans to turn the iconic Bondi Icebergs Pool in Sydney into a tennis court in the leadup to the Australian Open
          1. Click [here](#) for a behind-the-scenes look at the project

- (b) Puma announced plans to launch a greener packaging initiative by phasing out the traditional cardboard shoe box and replacing it with a new package that includes a bag, ultimately using 65% less cardboard <sup>74</sup>
- (c) Nike released a free app (called “[Making](#)”) to help designers make informed decisions about the environmental impacts of the materials they select, powered by data from the Nike Materials Sustainability Index (a database built on more than seven years of materials research and analysis)
- (d) The [Sports Business Journal](#) reported in 2016 that roughly 60% of teams are selling sponsorships that include 'green' assets
- ii. Other examples of the “greening” of sports and entertainment include:
  - (a) Brazil, the world’s largest biofuel producer (in order to be considered “biofuel” the product must contain over 80% renewable materials), transported athletes during the 2014 World Cup in bio-diesel buses containing fuel that is made from 20% recycled oil. <sup>75</sup>
    - (i) Click [here](#) and [here](#) for two interesting infographics illustrating Brazil’s plans for an even “greener” Olympic Games in 2016
    - (ii) Despite Brazil’s claims of efforts to minimize the carbon footprint of hosting the Olympic Games, the host country has been subject to much [criticism](#) for high levels of water pollution with the event just one year away
  - (b) Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia (home to the NFL’s Eagles) is [powered by solar panels and wind turbines](#) and plans are already in play to capture rain that falls from the stadium roof to potentially flush the toilets or even water the field <sup>76</sup>
  - (c) [NASCAR](#) has the largest recycling and environmental sustainability programs among all U.S. sports. NASCAR has the world’s largest solar-powered sports facility, a tree planting program capturing 100% of the emissions produced by on-track racing, and the largest recycling program in sports with Coca-Cola Recycling, Coors Light, Safety-Kleen and Creative Recycling. As NASCAR Green enters its fifth year, it continues to educate NASCAR fans and reduce the sport’s environmental impact through strategic partnerships with the teams, tracks, and Official Partners while validating green technologies.
    - (i) NASCAR’s program even features its own Twitter handle (@NASCARGreen)
  - (d) The Baltimore Orioles’ [website](#) features an entire page dedicated to informing fans about their commitment to sustainability, including the fact that the team recycles 600,000 pounds of materials annually, encourages bicycle transportation to games and recognizing that only green-friendly cleaning products are used to clean Oriole Park
  - (e) Nike announced its NBA uniforms would be partially made from recycled plastic bottles
    - (i) Click [here](#) to see the uniforms
  - (f) Nearly 400 sports teams and venues spanning 14 countries, including almost all NFL, NHL and MLB teams, are members of the Green Sports Alliance, an organization whose goal is to leverage “the cultural and market influence of sports to promote healthy, sustainable communities.”
    - (i) Click [here](#) to see how the Atlanta Falcons implemented “green” strategies when building their new home (Mercedes-Benz Stadium)
    - (ii) Click [here](#) to see how the Sacramento Kings focused on sustainability when building the Golden 1 Center (a venue the franchise proclaims as the “greenest arena in the U.S.”)
  - (g) Organizers of the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles has been hard at work trying to determine methods to create the most sustainable Olympics in

history, beginning with the [formation](#) of a 50-person Sustainability Committee to help lead the initiative

- (h) Amazon invested in the naming rights to Seattle's new NHL arena, but instead of calling it "Amazon Stadium", they opted for the name "Climate Pledge Arena"
- (i) According to a release, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos said "Instead of naming it after Amazon, we're calling it Climate Pledge Arena as a regular reminder of the importance of fighting climate change."
  - 1. Climate Pledge Arena will [use](#) recaptured rainwater to make the ice and will source a significant amount local food for concessions, while operating on "zero waste" and powering the arena with "100 percent renewable energy"
  - 2. [Estimates](#) suggest the investment was between \$300 million and \$400 million over the lifetime of the deal



**\* ACTIVITY IDEA \***

*Ask students to research their favorite teams online to see if they have any green initiatives (click [here](#) to visit [green.nba.com](http://green.nba.com) as an example). How about the stadiums or events they visit? Then ask them to create a list of five specific items that their team and the team's venue could do to become even greener.*

**\* INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE \***



*Now would be a good time to distribute the case study marked "Unit 11 – Case Study – Title IX" in the Lesson 11.8 folder and work through the questions in class.*

- 1. Gender equality in sports and entertainment
  - a. Title IX is a federal law enacted in the United States in 1972 that mandates equal educational and athletic opportunities for students of both genders
    - i. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, one in thirty-five high school girls played sports forty years ago; one in three do today. Before Title IX, fewer than 16,000 women participated in college sports; today that number exceeds 200,000.
    - ii. The summer of 2012 marked the 40th anniversary of Title IX and for the first time in history, American women outnumbered the number of men representing the United States at the Olympic Games



- iii. Eight women now hold the title of “[General Manager](#)” in minor league baseball, believed to be the most at any time <sup>77</sup>
- iv. In 2012, Shannon Eastin became the first woman to officiate an NFL game when she worked the opening game of the pre-season between the Green Bay Packers and San Diego Chargers
  - (a) In 2015, the Arizona Cardinals added Jen Welter to the team's coaching staff to work with the team's inside linebackers as a training camp/preseason intern
  - (b) In 2018, Katie Sowers became the second full-time female assistant coach in NFL history when she was hired by the San Francisco 49ers, joining Buffalo Bills quality control coach Kathryn Smith, who last year became the league's first female full-time assistant
- v. In 2014, [Becky Hammon](#) became the first woman to be hired as an assistant coach in the NBA when the San Antonio Spurs announced that she would be joining head coach Greg Popovich's staff
  - (a) In 2015, Hammon [led the Spurs](#) to a Summer League championship as the team's head coach
  - (b) In 2019, the Cleveland Cavaliers [hired](#) Lindsay Gottlieb, former University of California head coach who led the Golden Bears to seven NCAA Tournament appearances, making her the seventh female assistant in the NBA
- vi. Just prior to the 2019 NBA draft, the New Orleans Pelicans hired former WNBA and UConn star Swin Cash as VP of Basketball Operations and Team Development — making her the first high-ranking African-American woman in an executive position with the league, according to the [NY Post](#)
- vii. In 2020, Tori Miller was [promoted](#) to General Manager of the College Park Skyhawks, the NBA G League affiliate of the Atlanta Hawks. Miller's promotion makes her the first woman to hold the title of General Manager in the history of the NBA G League.
- viii. Today, according to the [Women's Sports Foundation](#), all four tennis Grand Slam events offer equal prize money to the male and female winners
- ix. When the Association of Surfing Professionals was acquired in 2012, now known as the World Surf League, the new ownership made it a policy that the men's and women's Championship Tour events would offer equal prize money
- b. Despite the progress that women's sports have made since the law was enacted, disparity remains
  - i. For example, in 1972, women coached 90 percent of women's college athletic teams. Today it's only 42.9 percent. <sup>78</sup>
    - (a) According to a [newsweek.com](#) report, there remains a large gap in compensation between men and women playing for the United States Soccer Federation
      - (i) In 2017, women earned \$99,000 only if their team won a minimum of 20 matches – men on the other hand earned \$263,320 for the same feat, and were guaranteed \$100,000 even if their team lost all 20 games
        - 1. The women also received no compensation for any matches played beyond 20, whereas the men were paid between \$5,000 and \$17,625 for each game played beyond 20
  - ii. The gender pay gap issue was perhaps the biggest storyline of the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup with the US Women's National Team bringing the conversation to the masses throughout their championship run
    - (a) According to statistics from [Time.com](#), prize money totaled to \$30 million in 2019 for the Women's World Cup, with the USWNT earning roughly \$4 million for winning the tournament. By contrast, the prize money pool for the

- 2018 Men's World Cup totaled about \$400 million, giving reigning champion France's men's team \$38 million—more than the total pool for the women.
- (b) In May of 2020, Federal Judge R. Gary Klausner [rejected](#) the women's team's argument over receiving lower pay than the U.S. men's team. He also dismissed a claim of unequal working conditions related to the number of turf and real grass fields.

**\* DISCUSSION IDEA \***



*For more on the U.S. Women's National Team and their championship run at the 2019 FIFA World Cup, access the "2019 World Cup by the Numbers" PowerPoint. Use the figures from the PPT to guide a discussion relating to the gender pay gap in women's sports.*

- iii. Male and female golfers and basketball players receive drastically different levels of compensation
- (a) In 2015, the LPGA offered \$61.6 million in total prize money, compared to the PGA which offered \$320 million
- (i) The top purse for an LPGA major was \$4.5 million (the winner received \$810,000), compared to \$10 million for each of the PGA majors (the winner received \$1.8 million)
- (b) In 2018, [High Post Hoops](#) reported that Diana Taurasi, one of the greatest WNBA players of all-time, earned \$115,233 last season. To put that into perspective, it would take an NBA rookie earning the NBA's minimum salary for players with zero experience just 7 games to earn that amount.
- iv. In Forbes' annual [ranking](#) of highest-paid athletes in 2020, just two women made the ranks (Naomi Osaka and Serena Williams) and no female athlete from any other sport besides tennis has ever made the list

**\* VIDEO SUGGESTION \***



*ESPN released a series of "shorts" (called Nine for IX). One of the films in particular, "[Branded](#)", really does a nice job on this particular social issue while also addressing a topic from a previous unit on branding.*

*Here is the summary from on ESNW.com: "Anna Kournikova was never the greatest tennis player in the world. In fact, she never rose higher than No. 8 on the WTA world singles rankings. But her looks and willingness to capitalize on them made her the most famous*

*tennis player on the planet and ultimately, a pioneer for fellow women athletes who understand that sometimes, sex sells. Sports is supposed to be the ultimate level playing field, but in the media and on Madison Avenue sometimes looks matter more than accomplishments. This film explores the double standard placed on women athletes to be the best players on the field and the sexiest off them. Branded explores the question: can women's sports ever gain an equal footing with their male counterparts or will sex always override achievement?" At the time this version of the text was published, ESPN was offering free copies to educators. Here is the link to sign up for your free copy (for those of you who might want to share in class): <http://espn.go.com/espnw/w-in-action/nine-for-ix/knowledge-center/sign-up>.*

## 2. Racial equality in sports and entertainment

- a. Hiring practices in the sports and entertainment industry have historically demonstrated a racial imbalance
  - i. In 2003, the National Football League established the Rooney Rule, requiring all NFL teams to interview minority candidates for head coaching and senior football operations positions
    - (a) In 2020, NFL owners approved changes to the Rooney Rule aimed at improving diversity in coach and front-office hiring, also discussing an addition to the rule that would have rewarded minority hiring with draft-pick compensation (a discussion regarding that proposal was ultimately pushed back for a later date)
      - (i) Click [here](#) to read more about the changes to the Rooney Rule from [espn.com](#)
    - (b) Bill Russell, the 11-time NBA champion with the Boston Celtics, endorsed a measure in 2020 that made the NCAA's West Coast Conference the first Division I league to require all schools to include a minority finalist for job openings in athletics
      - (i) According to the new "Russell Rule", finalists for any opening for an athletic director, senior administrator, head coach or full-time assistant coach within the West Coast Conference must include a member of a traditionally underrepresented community
  - ii. The NBA regularly scores high marks and sets the bar for other professional sports leagues in racial and gender diversity, according to a 2020 report released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport.<sup>79</sup>
    - (a) One week before the NBA would resume its season "in the bubble" at ESPN Wide World of Sports with a commitment to combating racism and social injustice during the pandemic, the league earned an A+ for racial hiring practices and a B for gender hiring practices in a [report](#) compiled by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport.
    - (b) Major League Baseball had one of the lowest scores among professional sports leagues, earning an overall "B/B+/C" in the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport's annual report<sup>80</sup>
  - iii. Click [here](#) for links to more racial and gender reports from the University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport
- b. Unfortunately, with regards to racism, the industry still has much room for improvement
  - i. The University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport [recorded](#) 52 acts of racism in sports in the United States in 2018, up from 41 in 2017. Internationally, there were 137 instances of racism in sports in 2018, a sharp increase from the 79 acts of racism in 2017.

- c. When the 2020 murder of George Floyd sparked protests around the country, the sports and entertainment world took the opportunity to use their position of influence as a platform to fight for racial injustice and police brutality
  - i. After Floyd's death, the [Minnesota Twins](#) made multiple statements in support of the racial and social justice movement and removed a statue of the team's former owner Calvin Griffith, who made explicitly racist comments in the past. The Twins also donated \$25 million to the racial justice movement in the Twin Cities.
  - ii. When NBA players resumed the 2019-20 season "in the bubble" during the COVID-19 health crisis, many players included messages of social justice on their jerseys instead of their names while the league unveiled a basketball court that prominently [displayed](#) the message "Black Lives Matter"
  - iii. The day after Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down, the Milwaukee Bucks boycotted their playoff game with the Orlando Magic, which led to the NBA and the NBPA agreeing to call off all the playoff games for the next two days. The WNBA quickly followed suit, followed by several MLB and NHL games being postponed, while several NFL teams had walkouts at practice.
- 3. Sportsmanship
  - a. Sportsmanship and the spirit of competition (competing in a moral and ethical manner and not with a "win at all costs" mentality)
    - i. A cheating scandal rocked the 2014 Little League World Series when the U.S. champion, Jackie Robinson West out of Chicago, allegedly used ineligible players
    - ii. Another scandal disrupted the 2015 Little League Softball World Series when one team allegedly intentionally tried to lose in an effort to force a three-way tie in the U.S. division that would eliminate an Iowa team that the Washington team wanted to avoid playing in the championship game
      - (a) Click [here](#) to read more about the 2015 scandal from foxsports.com.
    - iii. U.S. women's soccer star Hope Solo was criticized for being "unsportsmanlike" with her comments when she called the Swedish team "a bunch of cowards" following the team's loss to Sweden in the 2016 Summer Games in Rio
    - iv. In 2017, two of the world's most popular soccer players were hit with suspensions and fines for treatment of league officials
      - (a) Lionel Messi received a four-game ban and was fined \$10,000 by FIFA for verbally abusing a match official
      - (b) Cristiano Ronaldo Cristiano Ronaldo received a five-match suspension for pushing a referee in the back after being sent off with a red card
    - v. Also in 2017, an operations employee for the St. Louis Cardinals was given a 46-month prison sentence, fined and banned for life from Major League Baseball for hacking into the Houston Astros' computer system and gaining access to the team's classified information
    - vi. In 2020, the Houston Astros were [criticized](#) by many fans and media members when Major League Baseball confirmed they found evidence of the team orchestrating an elaborate "sign-stealing" scandal during the 2017 playoffs when the team went on to win the World Series
    - vii. Poor sportsmanship can trickle down to all levels of sport
      - (a) In 2019, a New Hampshire Little League coached accused a Rhode Island team of cheating (stealing signs) in a tournament game leading up to the Little League World Series
  - b. Professional sports teams are subject to public scorn and fan ridicule when the actions of the front office are perceived as "tanking" (intentionally losing games) in an effort to gain a higher draft pick the following season (typically positioned by the franchise as a "rebuilding year")

- i. In 2015, it was the NHL's Buffalo Sabres, which led one Buffalo area sports reporter to publish [this story](#) online: "At Every Level of Sport, Tanking Raises Moral Questions"
    - ii. Last year, it was NBA teams being accused of tanking for the opportunity to draft LSU's Ben Simmons, one of the most heralded basketball prospects to enter the NBA in recent history
    - iii. In 2017, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban came under scrutiny and received a call from league commissioner, Adam Silver, for his comment, "*once we were eliminated from the playoffs, we did everything we could to lose games.*"
    - iv. In 2020, after the front office completed a complete shake up of the franchise's roster, including trading and releasing several of the team's top players, many in the media suggested the team was "tanking" to end up with the worst record, and top draft pick next year, for the opportunity to select Clemson's QB Trevor Lawrence in 2021 (Lawrence is considered by many to be a "can't miss" NFL prospect)
      - (a) After the team traded Pro Bowl defensive standout Yannick Ngakoue and released star running back Leonard Fournette, many in the media accused the team of "Tanking for Trevor"
        - (i) [USA Today](#): "*The team waived running back Leonard Fournette on Monday, a stunning decision many outsiders view as the latest in a series of head scratchers that could help the franchise tank the season and get the No. 1 draft pick*" while a [Fan Sided](#) headline reported "*Jaguars going into complete Tank for Trevor Lawrence mode*" and a [Bleacher Report](#) headline read "*Jacksonville Jaguars in Driver's Seat for Trevor Lawrence After Ngakoue Trade*"
    - v. The concept of tanking has long been a conversation in the NFL with several teams in recent years all but admitting they were trying to lose games to secure higher draft picks
      - (a) Many experts think if the NFL adopted a draft lottery system they could eliminate teams from losing on purpose
  - c. In addition to athletes being caught using PEDs, teams will sometimes skirt the rules in effort to gain a competitive edge with the result typically being the organization being called out as "cheaters" by the media and fans
    - i. In 2015, the NFL punished the Atlanta Falcons for pumping fake crowd noise into the stadium during games to create more noise when the opposition had the football
    - ii. While doping has long been a problem in the sport of cycling, former U.S. champion Greg LeMond alleged in 2015 that riders in major races like the Tour de France could be trying to gain an unfair edge by installing tiny motors in their bikes (according to [washingtonpost.com](#))
4. Sexual Assault and Harassment
- a. 2018 saw the launch of the #metoo movement, as sexual assault and harassment allegations became rampant in the sports and entertainment industry, shining a light on how much work the industry has to do to create a safer environment for women
    - i. In Hollywood, several successful producers and popular actors were accused of harassment and assault
    - ii. Nearly a dozen high profile executives at Nike were exiled from the company based on claims of harassment in the workplace
    - iii. Tampa Bay Buccaneers Jameis Winston, already with a history of sexual misconduct allegations, was suspended three games by the NFL after a female uber driver accused the quarterback of groping her
    - iv. Ex-USA Gymnastics and Michigan State athletics doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison for sexually abusing more than 250 women and girls



- b. At least three female reporters at the 2018 World Cup were sexually harassed, *live and on air*, including Colombian reporter Julieth Gonzalez Tharan who was groped and kissed as she was reporting on the tournament
- 5. Compensation for college athletes
  - a. In 2020, the NCAA [announced](#) plans for a new rule change that would allow college players to profit off their name, image and likeness
    - i. While the rule change came before some high-profile collegiate athletes could be compensated for their contributions to their respective athletics programs, the new proposal paves the way for future generations to earn thousands of dollars

**\* DISCUSSION IDEA \***



*See if your students can come up with any other examples of “hot button” topics surrounding the sports and entertainment industry. Ask them how these issues impact their strategies for branding, marketing and selling their products and encourage them to find specific examples to support their opinions.*

## Unit 11 Key Terms Defined:

**Community Relations:** Focus on an individual or organization's commitment to bettering their community

**Ethics:** The moral standards by which people judge behavior

**Foundation:** An association established by an organization, athlete or celebrity to maintain, assist, or finance other institutions or programs that are of an educational, charitable, or social nature

**Goodwill:** A general willingness to work with a person or organization based on a positive reputation or relationship

**Media Relations:** The relationship between an organization and the media

**Press Release:** Prewritten story about an organization or athlete/entertainer that is disseminated to various media

**Public Relations:** Activities that promote the image and communications an organization has with its employees, customers and public

**Publicity:** Public information about a company/team, good, or service appearing in the mass media as a news item at no cost to the organization

**Publicity Stunt:** Specific events or activities that are activated with the sole purpose of achieving a high level of media coverage and public awareness



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## INSTRUCTOR NOTES

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