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The role of the print media in constructing controversies in sport

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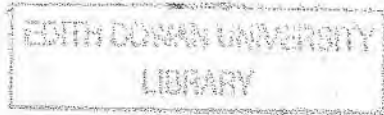
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The Role of the Print Media in Constructing Controversies in Sport

By

David Marsh

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of

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Media Studies

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Studies,
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Perth

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

Sport is important to Australians and, by extension, sports writing is also important. Print sports journalists now operate in a professional and social environment that has assumed a new complexion in recent years. The emergence of the print media provided a rapid means of informing the public about the happenings in sport, and thus, it can be argued, that sport flourished. This study proposes to examine the role of the print media in their coverage of sporting controversies by exploring the way the print media handled three recent sporting conflicts.

This critical inquiry of the media focuses on ethical issues of privacy and sensationalism, the influence and bias of the media, and the specific role of the media in sporting conflicts. The media's role in such cases is often difficult to define. However, the results suggest that there is room for improvement in various aspects of the print media in its coverage of sporting controversies.

A qualitative interview technique and content analysis was employed to explore the role of the print media in covering sporting controversies. Data was inductively analysed into categories which focused on the research questions. The 12 subjects interviewed for the study were divided into three categories — athletes, sporting administrators and sporting journalists. In addition to the interviews, research was undertaken in newspapers, periodicals, academic journals, texts and the electronic media to reach a common theme.

The major theme to emerge is that the print media has the potential to be extremely influential and has the potential to generate conflicts into issues which may not necessarily deserve the bold headlines which the press often affords the stories. However, there are many times when the print media may be unfairly criticised for their reporting of sporting conflicts. There is a strong argument that sports writing in Australia will need to improve. Given the enormous public interest in sport in this country, it is quite extraordinary that most have made no serious attempt to treat the subject on an intelligent basis in the media. A case can be made that greater accuracy, far more disclosure of sources, less appearance of conflict, a less predictable pattern of partisan bias and crisper writing should be expected of the sportswriter. Many stories in these case studies were reported in a similar vein, which could indicate that a large number of this country's journalists have a *pack mentality* and will follow each other in both topics and writing styles. This can lead to distortion and inaccuracies. This nation's newspapers play a major role in the culture of Australians, who are obsessed with sport and will no doubt continue their obsession. Given that this study used a small sample, further study about the role of the print media in the coverage of sporting controversies is recommended to clarify the veracity of the present study's findings.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgment, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature

Date

9th April 1999

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	x
1 Introduction	1
Background of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	8
Purpose of Study	10
Research Questions	12
Delimitations	12
Limitations	13
Definition of Terms	14
2 Review of Literature	19
Introduction	19
Theoretical Perspectives	20
Evolution of Sportswriting	27
Athletes and the Media	29
Attitudes towards the Media	30
Conceptual Framework	32

3	Methodology	34
	Introduction	34
	Research Design	34
	Sources of Data	35
	Participants	38
	Background Information on Participants	39
	Study	42
	Interviews	43
	Researcher as Mediator	45
	Supplementary Documentation	46
	Transcriptions	46
	Ethical Considerations	47
	Analysis of Data	47
	Trustworthiness of Data	48
4	Case Studies	50
	Overview of Newspaper Coverage	50
	Australian Cycling Conflict	51
	Row Over New Australian Athletics Coach	56
	Chinese Swimming Drugs Issue	65
	Summary	77
5	Findings and Discussion	79
	Research and Analysis	79
	Framing News Stories	80

	How were the Case Studies Reported?	83
	Was the Print Media Biased?	86
	Impact of the Print Media in Sporting Conflicts?	89
	Themes	91
	Discussion	93
6	Conclusion	94
	Focus of the Study	94
	Setting the Scene	96
	Influence of the Print Media	98
	Does the Media Generate Controversies?	99
	Bias or Impartiality in the Print Media	100
	Role of the Print Media in Times of Controversies	103
	Summary	104
	Recommendations for Further Research	105
	Personal Epilogue	106
	Bibliography	108
	Books	108
	Conference Paper	114
	Electronic	114
	Journals	114
	List	119
	Newspapers and Periodicals	119
	Reports	127

Appendices

A	Introduction Letter and Informed Consent	128
B	Form of Disclosure and Informed Consent	130
C	Introductory Information for Interview	131
D	Interview Questions	133
E	Interview Evaluation Sheet	137
F	Interview Record	139
G	Interview Transcription Record	140
H	Subject Progress Record	141
I	Sample Transcript of Interview	142
J	Circulation Figures for Australian Newspapers	150

List of Figures

Figure 1	The Australian Cycling Federation guaranteed Kathy Watt nomination in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the Atlanta Olympics — <i>The West Australian</i> (April 23, 1996).	Page 52
Figure 2	Australian coach Charlie Walsh refuses to guarantee any rider the ride in the pursuit — <i>The West Australian</i> (June 5, 1996).	Page 53
Figure 3	Australia's chef de mission, John Coates, supported Kathy Watt in her bid to compete in the pursuit at Atlanta — <i>The West Australian</i> (July 16, 1996).	Page 54
Figure 4	Kathy Watt finished ninth in the Olympic road race, with <i>The West Australian</i> indicating it was a failure (July 23, 1996).	Page 57
Figure 5	After winning the points race bronze medal at the Atlanta Olympics, Lucy Tyler-Sharman set herself on winning the pursuit gold medal at the world titles the following month — <i>The West Australian</i> (July 30, 1996).	Page 58
Figure 6	Athletics Australia officials expressed their desire to meet the nation's elite athletes in an effort to smooth the way for former East German coach Ekkart Arbeit to take up his appointment in Australia — <i>The Australian</i> (October 6, 1997).	Page 60
Figure 7	European Athletics Coaches Association president, Frank Dick, predicted Australia was risking its international sporting future if it rejected Arbeit's appointment — <i>The Australian</i> (October 8, 1997).	Page 62
Figure 8	Federal sports minister, Andrew Thomson, ordered an urgent review of Ekkart Arbeit's appointment as Australia's head track and field coach — <i>The West Australian</i> (October 8, 1997).	Page 64
Figure 9	<i>The West Australian</i> predicts that local coach Tudor Bidder was still in the running for the national track and field role (October 9, 1997).	Page 66

Figure 10	Chinese swimmer, Yuan Yuan, faces a four year ban after being caught with human growth hormones in her baggage at Sydney Airport on transit to Perth — <i>The Australian</i> (January 9, 1998).	Page 68
Figure 11	<i>The West Australian</i> reports that Yuan Yuan was sent home (January 10, 1998).	Page 70
Figure 12	Four Chinese swimmers tested positive to drugs during the world championships in Perth — <i>The Australian</i> (January 15, 1998).	Page 72
Figure 13	<i>The West Australian</i> lists the 28 Chinese swimmers who have tested positive for banned substances (January 16, 1998).	Page 74
Figure 14	In an editorial, <i>The West Australian</i> says the Chinese swimming team should immediately return home (January 16, 1998).	Page 75

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Sport is a subject about which many Australians feel deeply and has become perhaps this nation's richest and most user-friendly topic of conversation. A large part of a sportswriter's job, although it is seldom acknowledged, is to present, as clearly as possible, the central characters and issues in what amounts to an ongoing national conversation about sport. This country has a worldwide reputation for being passionate with success in sport of all kinds. It can be argued that Australia's economy may have ridden on the sheep's back, but our pride and nationhood ride on the glory of our sportsmen and women. Matthews (1998, p. 3) argues that in a country in which, from the beginning of white settlement, sport has been not merely a passion, but part of the social and political fabric. We may not all play sport, but millions of us watch weekend sport on television. Sport is different things to different people: an addiction to many participants, a method of relaxation to some, to others a job. But there are few Australians who remain untouched by sport, whether they play it or not. It offers an escape from the daily grind for the many who prefer either to watch or to read about what is happening in sport. Millions of people in Australia know more about the achievements, failures, embarrassments and private lives of athletes than they know about anyone else, except perhaps their family and friends. Even national politicians and celebrity entertainers are not covered on an intense daily basis, sometimes for decades. Athletes, coaches and their fans take it for granted.

For years, the mass media have given us the opportunity observe the essential behaviour of sports stars in a core area of their lives. If you cannot talk sports — international, national, local or even neighbourhood sports — you may feel like a social outsider in many communities in this country. In an age that is a political, religious, artistic and cultural kaleidoscope of relativist values, how can we feel united? What can we agree about? Or even discuss calmly, yet enthusiastically, with a sense of shared expertise and a glimpse of a shared ideal?

Coverage of sport in Australian newspapers, as we know it, has developed during the twentieth century (Phillips, 1996). Previously, there was sporadic coverage that announced sports and sometimes reported these events. There were no sporting pages, but coverage was spread irregularly throughout the pages. Sporting sections appeared in the twentieth century and have developed to prominence in the overall paper. In most North American papers, there is more coverage of sport than any other single topic of interest, including business or politics (Phillips, 1996). Phillips argues that there is a similar trend in the Australian press. He adds:

The sports section is the most widely read section of the paper, and according to some estimates, accounts for about 30 per cent of the total circulation. The conclusions are that: sport has increased in coverage; newspapers depend on sport as a topic of news; newspapers depend on sport as a basis of circulation; sports pages attract advertisers who might not advertise in other areas of the paper.

Matthews (1998) argues that it is remarkable how little really great sports writing Australians have produced. There is some, but it is disproportionately small when viewed in relation to the size, intensity and durability of the obsession. He believes this is because, obsession though it assuredly is, sport in Australia has never been seen as

intellectually or artistically respectable (pp 3-4). Flanagan (1990) comments that a sporting life may end with the final siren or bell, but it has another life in the imagination (p. 46). Sportsmen and women are players in the way that actors are players: they relate, through their actions, to an audience through the media.

Sport is serious, but it is play. It is real, but it is not, of itself, reality. It is the most accessible theatre in the world, yet many of those involved would otherwise dismiss the possibilities of theatre. The best sports writing reflects these ambiguities, usually through a richly comic undercurrent. Sport in this country is also a folklore, yet, until recently, there was precious little which could be classified as Australian sports literature. A few memoirs perhaps, but nothing that was the work of writers, people who think in print. (Flanagan, 1990, p. 46)

Goldlust (1987, p. 69) points out that the reporting of sports events in daily newspapers began to appear intermittently in early eighteenth century, with a predilection towards the sporting interests of the leisured class — notably horseracing, boxing, boat racing, fishing, hunting, golf and cricket. However, Cuneen (cited in Cashman and McKernan, 1986) argues that the founding of the Sydney sporting newspaper, the *Referee* in 1886, was a significant early sign of the role of newspapers, and especially sporting journals, were to play in the burgeoning interest in and devotion to sport in Australia (Cuneen, cited in Cashman & McKernan, 1986, p. 164). The stated aims of elevating and recording sporting achievements were basic elements in the role of the press towards sport. The broadcasting of individual and team sporting feats was an essential ingredient in the modern preoccupation with sport. Comparisons, records and all the publicity for sporting associations were to a large extent dependent upon press publicity.

Quite apart from the contribution to the creation of heroes achieved by journalistic recounting of their achievements, the bureaucratic scaffolding of small associations — announcements of meetings, records of events and so forth — required the newspaper press. At the same time, it became clear from the success of the *Referee* that sport sold papers. (Cuneen, cited in Cashman et al, 1986, p. 164)

Sport did not start to become established in Australia until the 1850s, when the gold rushes brought greater wealth, and a larger and more diverse population (Stanton, Barnard, Hurley, Imwold, O'Connor, Rudd, Sandall, & Williams, 1997, p. 14).

It was during the 1850s that Australian sport became more distinctive and was able to develop its own sporting traditions, adapting them to its unique outdoor environment. A key reason for the expansion of Australian sport was the spectacular growth of cities. Australia's first sporting newspaper, *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, which began in 1845, took its name from a London newspaper which started in 1822. (Stanton et al, 1997, p. 14)

Eitzen and Sage (1993) take the argument further by claiming that the relationship between the mass media and sport is one of financial independence, because the sports section helps sell newspapers (p. 289). They also claim that the media have no inherent interest in sport, but are merely a means for profit making. For newspapers and magazines, sports sell the publications (p. 123).

The first specialist sporting newspaper published in Western Australia was *The Sportsman*, with its earliest edition appearing in 1903 ("Current Western Australian", 1996). However, this publication lasted for only 15 months. *Sporting Life* followed in 1905, but had an even shorter lifespan, folding in less than 12 months. There was a lengthy period before the next sporting newspaper — *The Sporting Globe* — appeared on the newsagent shelves. But this lasted for only a year, disappearing in 1947. Other Western Australian specialist sporting newspapers were *Sports News* (a few issues in

1953), *Sports Review* (1964-1977), *Sports Action* (1970-1971) and *Westside Sport* (1996-1997).

The evolution of the sports-media symbiosis is described by Hoch (1972, p. 36) as:

One factor that makes a decisive difference was the tremendous coverage of sports by the press. About the same time, the press sports leagues began, there developed (one by coincidence) the sport of mass-audience-orientated newspapers needed to sell mass consumption products. A symbiosis between sports and the new media was quickly established in which sports became the decisive promotional device for selling popular newspapers, and newspapers were the decisive promotional device for selling sports spectacles. This symbiotic relationship between sports and the media, now including radio and television, is a central feature of the political economy of both sports and the media to this day.

The newspaper was the first significant mass communication medium. Despite the invention of writing millennia ago, Gutenberg's (1400-1468) development of the printing press, had to await certain technological advances. Even with the advent of the printing press, social conditions had to ripen before its effectiveness and utility could be realised. Prior to 1800, only isolated sport reports appeared in the press (Leonard II, 1988, p. 294).

Background to the Study

Times have changed greatly in sports writing over the last two decades. The expansion of television has meant that the sports writer can no longer rely simply on chronicling the facts. He or she must write with much greater flair and imagination to captivate the reader and provide an interesting alternative to what will appear on the evening news. This view is shared by Smith and Valeriotte (cited in Lapchick, 1996), Pascoe (1995, p.

159), Anderson (1994, p.5), Wenner (1989), Andrews (1987, p. 30), and Garrison and Sabjak (1985, p.6). Pascoe (1995) observed that in 1980 newspaper commentary of Australian Football began to be analytical rather than descriptive (pp. 159-160). This was because television took over the narrative function, with commentators inanely telling viewers what they were seeing. Wenner (1989, p. 66) supported the theory that newspapers are now required to provide more analysis, background information, and statistical data that the electronic media found it difficult to provide. Garrison (1985) points out that sports journalists of the 1980s and 1990s involve more in-depth reporting in their communities, focusing on serious topics, such as sports injuries, gambling, regulation and salaries (p. 6).

David Shaw, media critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, pointed out that television's increasingly comprehensive sports coverage has forced newspaper reporters to go beyond statistics and play-by-play reporting (Anderson, 1994, p. 8). Through these observations, it can be argued that sports have become one of the primary mediums through which Australians are able and willing to discuss the ethics of everyday life. Great athletes, without knowing it or wanting it, have been put in something akin to the position of mythic religious characters in other cultures in other times. For example, millions of Australian sports fans are aware of the feats of footballer Tony Lockett, marathon runner Steve Moneghetti, swimmer Susie O'Neill and track and field athlete Cathy Freeman. Yet many could not name their local Member of Parliament.

Tiffen (1994, p. 37) suggest that all mass media are linked to public issues, but the link is most obvious in daily newspapers. In their daily work the Press construct the very

public issues they write about and then report on and must allocate priorities between them.

They must decide whether X rather than Y qualifies as an "issue". Once it does they must decide whether to give it more or less play than some other "issue" and they cannot avoid decisions of that kind even if they have not discussed or planned beforehand, but initially emerge from practice. Media must constantly construct agendas to which people attend. Even if they set out to deliberately renounce all influence they could not do so: they take part and must take part in the major processes by which attention is allocated. Hence they must exert an important influence. (Tiffen, 1994, p. 27)

Vamplew and Stoddard (1994) argue that the rise of sports-specific press coverage made players into stars and readers into spectators (p. 280). Straw (cited in Lapchick, 1996) takes the argument further by saying that for decades media coverage of sports kept us either uninformed or misinformed about how sports interact with society (p. 311)

The sports media emphasised their functions as providers of entertainment rather than information. They mythologised heroes while giving the consumer a steady stream of statistics. Gradually, the field of sports journalism evolved into sports promotion. The media helped to make sport the world's broadest cultural common denominator. Men and women, blacks and whites, Soviets and Americans, barefoot villagers from the hills of Kenya and sophisticated urbanites from Boston all seem to "think sports." The proportion of column inches devoted to sport in our nation's newspapers exceeds that of virtually any other area — more than international politics, national affairs, education, or the arts. (Straw, cited in Lapchick, 1996, p. 311)

Coakley (1998, p. 382) points out that the media have been known to *hype* sports by exaggerating the spectacular, inventing rivalries that do not exist, and manufacturing reasons that events are important and should be read about, listened to, or viewed. In discussing this issue, Coakley notes that sports journalists do things that matter when it comes to ideas and ideology in the public consciousness (p. 393). He adds:

In addition to constructing the meanings that underlie people's experience of sports, journalists also help people enjoy and understand sports. Furthermore, the words of sports journalists often affects the sports they cover and the athletes they write and talk about. (p. 393)

Significance of the Study

It is important in this study to examine the print media's coverage of recent sporting controversies and major issues in the balance of coverage and its presentation to the public. Sports journalism is undergoing constant change. It is a change that was necessary to combat the arrival of television, and the subsequent intrusion of live sport in our lounge rooms meant the readers wanted more than just match reports. The Press was selected for this study because print journalism is a more permanent form of the media. Readers still rely on newspapers for analytical and statistical records of sports events, something that radio and television will never be able to match.

Many studies examining the role of the media have used questionnaires or personal interviews, asking subjects to rate their opinions about journalists and the media. The data gained from quantitative methods may be valid, but it is not always a true reflection of what the subject thinks and feels (Weiss & Petchlikoff, 1989). This study employed qualitative methods and content analysis to provide a clearer understanding of the role of the media in sporting controversies, thus contributing to the body of knowledge on sport and the media.

McKay (1991, p. 91) suggests that similar to sports, the media are part of reality and actively construct and represent realities in specific ways that are determined by, and

determinate of, relations of power. The case studies in this research are part of an examination about whether the relationship between the athlete and the media has changed with the introduction of more extensive reporting techniques. Gene Policinski (1994), sports editor of *USA Today*, argues that athletes and coaches had to view reporters today in a much different light than they once did. He said:

They're no longer friends. They don't take care with questions. They don't rephrase an answer to what someone meant to say. Instead, there are the probing questions. And not just on professional or on-the-field performances, but on personal matters, business matters. From the reporter's point of view, we have a job to do, that's why we're here. We sometimes have to ask those tough questions. With all those pressures, all those conflicting issues, is it any wonder there's a conflict?

The findings are important, because the information from this research could benefit a number of areas, including sporting administrations, institutions, coaches, athletes and the media. It is anticipated the availability of such information will be a significant step in understanding the role of the print media in sporting controversies. In addition, research into the media's involvement in sporting controversies may be of benefit to other individuals who have an interest in sport and the media. The exposure of these issues to the general population may lead to a better understanding of the media's involvement in sport.

According to Coakley (1998, pp. 381-382), the sports sections of newspapers give scores, statistics, descriptions of "big plays" and individual heroics, and behind-the-scenes stories about events and athletics; newspaper photos generally capture action or emotion (p. 343). He stresses that the media also emphasise *elite* sport competition.

The best sports reporting captures the atmosphere, as well as the facts of the event. Sometimes journalists are criticised for making too much of isolated incidents in sports, building them up into significant dramas when they were in fact minor and soon forgotten. This examination of recent controversies and major talking-points in Australian sport will explore whether they were isolated incidents, or did they go much deeper? Studies have revealed that exposure by the media has a strong influence on many readers (Fischle & Stenner-Day, 1992, p. 16). The way the media frame news stories has important implications for shifts in public opinion. Shifts in news content can alter the importance that audiences attach to particular events and issues. The implication is that the media can effectively alter viewers' assessments of objects and events by framing a situation in one way rather than another. This study sought to determine the way recent controversies were reported in the print media.

Coakley (1998) suggest that the commercialisation of sports and media are closely related topics in the sociology of sport (p. 333). In fact, the media intensify and extend the process and consequences of commercialisation. For this reason, much attention has been given to how sports have been influenced by the media, and little attention has been given to how the media have been influenced by sports.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the print media in its involvement in the reporting of controversies and conflicts in sport. There are few areas of modern society that are not influenced in some way by the presence of sport (Kennedy et al,

1991, p. 237) and by the media (Wenner, 1989, p. 41). This study explores whether the print media in Australia played a part in influencing the outcome of these controversies. Also, it investigated whether the print media presented an accurate picture of the situation, or if the community was misled by distorted claims as to the developments of the controversies and issues. It is then possible to determine whether the media presented the situation with accuracy or exaggeration.

The role of the media is discussed in its examination of how the news is presented, particularly events which become major talking points in Australia. In this study, an analysis is made of the coverage in *The West Australian*, the only daily metropolitan newspaper in this State. There is also a comparison with the coverage provided in *The Australian*, the national newspaper, which has a small circulation in Western Australia.

To complement the coverage in *The West Australian* and *The Australian*, research was carried out in books, texts, journals and reports. In addition, 12 subjects, men and women closely involved with elite sport or the sports media, were interviewed. The subjects were divided into three sections — athletes, administrators and the media. Four subjects were included in each section. All subjects were not involved in the sporting controversies, or even connected with the sport involved. But they were selected for this study because they are educated, intelligent and had the ability to thoroughly analyse issues. Also discussed is the extent to which the print media may have led the public opinion or whether it had a passive role.

Research Questions

In relation to the specific focus of the role of the print media in constructing controversy in sport, the major research question investigated was:

What role does the print media have in constructing controversies in sport?

Other sub questions addressed included:

1. What influence does the print media have in the outcome of sporting controversies?
2. What roles does the print media have in generating controversies in sport?
3. To what extent, if any, is the print media biased in its reporting of sporting controversies?
4. What is the role of the print media in times of controversies?

Delimitations

The delimitations of the study were:

1. The focus of this study is delimited to identifying and comparing the print media coverage of recent sporting controversies and issues. While theories of

the reporting is discussed, no attempt is made to validate any one theoretical framework.

2. Subjects selected have several years of experience at least national level in sport or in the sporting media.

3. The group of subjects were selected because of their knowledge and expertise, and they are capable of providing an intelligent analysis of the issues.

Limitations

The following factors were identified as limitations to the study:

- 1) Data was collected from only a small number of subjects for this study.
- 2) Results from this study cannot be easily generalised to the general sporting population, but rather is a reflection of the analysis of the selected group.
- 3) The sample was limited to subjects currently living in Western Australia.
- 4) Only athletes from three sports - cycling, track and field, and swimming - were included in this study.
- 5) Only two newspapers were analysed in the research.

Definition of Terms

A number of key terms used in this study, which requires further elaboration, are detailed below:

Angle is the approach taken in reporting the facts of a news event.

Article is the full text of a news story or feature.

Banner or banner headline is a large front page headline which sometimes spans the full width of the page.

Bias is a newspaper's or individual's prejudicial stance on an issue which colours the way in which facts are reported or considered.

Byline is a line of copy which identifies by name the writer of an article, usually placed at the beginning of the article.

Caption is the explanatory copy which accompanies a photograph or illustration.

Column is a vertical arrangement of copy on a news page; a regular newspaper feature.

Commentary is opinionated material which has been written by individuals other than the editors of a newspaper and which does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the newspaper.

Coverage is the frequency and amount of space allotted to a single news item.

Dateline is the first line of copy under a headline which tells the date and origin of the news report which follows.

Deadline is the time of the day fixed as the last possible time that news stories can arrive, in order to be put into the paper.

Editor is the individual responsible for the newspaper and content of a particular section of the newspaper, or the entire newspaper (in the latter instance, usually called the **editor-in-chief**).

Editorial is an article which express a newspaper's opinion on the news of the day.

Feature is a newspaper story which is not news-oriented and is generally a human-interest article.

Front page is the first sheet or section of a newspaper which is devoted to the most newsworthy stories of the day.

Headline is larger display type which serves as a title for the copy below.

Interview is a meeting between a reporter and a newsworthy individual in order for the reporter to obtain first-hand information. A question-and-answer format for reporting information obtained directly from sources, or a format which makes prolific use of quotes obtained in an interview with a newsworthy or interesting personality.

Journalist is a writer or editor for the news media.

Journalism is the acquisition, writing, and dissemination of news information.

Layout is the design of a page including textual material, or art that will later be published.

Lead or lead-in is the first sentence of a news story.

Lead story is the most important front page story found under the banner headline and usually allocated the most extensive coverage.

Mass media consists of printed communication such as newspapers, magazines, and books; and electronic communication such as radio and television.

Masthead is the top section of the front section of the front page where the newspaper's name is printed in large letters. The masthead may also give the price, date and number of pages. The design of the masthead provides an initial clue about the character of a newspaper.

News is current factual information which is of immediate relevance to readers and viewers of communications media.

News analysis is a form of commentary in which a writer scrutinises the facts of a news event, suggests various implications, raises issues, and assesses the significance of activity generated by that news event.

Opinion is that which cannot be verified as fact.

Pack journalism is the tendency of journalists to deliberately or accidentally write like each other.

Personality piece is a biography on a person in feature form.

Piece is slang for article.

Press conference is the collective meeting of representatives of the press with a newsworthy individual in order for that individual to disseminate information; the

individual will usually make an announcement and/or entertain questions from the assembled press persons.

Profile is a personality article.

Reporter is an individual who obtains information, then amasses and organises, and writes news articles based on facts.

Slant is to emphasise a particular aspect of a story.

Sub-editor is responsible for getting a reporter's story into its final form. They decide what to cut out and they write the headlines.

Title is the same as **headline**.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this review is to examine, identify and discuss previous and current research related to the study of the involvement of journalism in sporting controversies. The majority of the literature in the area of sports journalism has been written by North American researchers. To date, most research has been quantitative in nature, which results in minimal opportunity for the inclusion of personal responses from the athletes, administrators and the media.

There is now quite a substantial scholarly literature which has traced the development of the sports media, with particular attention being paid to the relationship between mass media coverage of sport and its growing commercialisation and commodification (Rowe & Stevenson, 1995; Whannel, 1992; Barnett, 1990; Wenner, 1989; Klatell & Marcus, 1988; Goldlust, 1987). However, there is little detailed knowledge and analysis of the institutional and professional concepts of sports journalism (Rowe & Stevenson, 1995). With a few exceptions (such as Garrison & Salwen, 1989; Ordman & Zillman, 1994), there has been little interest in the agency of sports journalists, with most critiques positioning them as being a servant to wider commercial and ideological forces.

While it is not argued here that sports journalists are in any way insulated from broader socio-historical forces, it is nonetheless asserted that it is necessary to appreciate more fully the specificity of sports journalism is a form of cultural production which requires a series of complex negotiations between sports journalists and media managements, journalists from other disciplines (including editors), the personnel of sports organisations, individual athletes, and, finally, their publics or readerships. (Rowe & Stevenson, 1995, p. 68)

However, research in the area of reporting sporting conflicts is minimal in relation to the application of theories and therefore provides an avenue for future research beyond the scope of this project. For this review, a sample of recent research has been selected to illustrate the background of sports journalism.

This review will be presented under the following headings: (a) Theoretical Perspectives; (b) Evolution of Sportswriting; (c) Athletes and the Media; (d) Attitudes towards the Media; and (e) Conceptual Framework.

Theoretical Perspectives

Secondary sources were used to provide theoretical underpinning to the study, as well as accounts of related research to allow a comparison to be made with similar sporting controversies and conflicts. It is through such comparisons that the validity of a study may be enhanced. For example, to gain an understanding of the role played by the print media in these conflicts and how it influenced the outcome, literature was examined which dealt with the role of the sports journalist. Such theories and empirical research also provided the basis for developing a framework from which this issue was explored.

According to McQuail (1987, p. 50), the position held by the media is unique in its universal influence on people, as it is accessible to all and serves multiple functions. He argues that the media intervene between objective social reality and personal experience, and are able to act as windows on the world exposing us to things we would not otherwise know about. The media also act as interpreters and explain things to the community, or as indicators of the way people should behave. The media also may act as filters when only selected items or viewpoints are revealed, or as mirrors reflecting society back on itself, though sometimes the images may be distorted. The media can also become a screen or barrier behind which truths may be concealed. In reporting recent sporting controversies the media have probably served all the above functions.

Windschuttle (1988, p. 270) suggests an ideological consensus model to explain the news. He argues that the news media is an interpretation of society through a mediating ideology. Through this, it is decided what is news and what is not. Norms are defined and the news is created by reproducing selected events which agree with the presumed consensus of opinion about how society should be. Windschuttle suggests that this *reality* is based on what the people in power wish the general public to believe.

Allen Neuharth (1994), the chairman of *The Freedom Forum* in the United States, believes that relations between professional athletes and the reporters who cover them have grown increasingly adversarial in recent years. Speaking to 300 sports journalists at a sports journalism seminar on January 29, 1994, Neuharth said the subject of whether sports and media mix is a very easy one to answer: "If they mix, both the media

and athletes win. If they don't mix, we both lose. It's really that simple."

Schultz (1990) claims that journalism in Australia is at the crossroads (p. 5). The 1990s began with unprecedented criticism of the quality of the nation's media, record defamation payments and public opinion polls which showed scepticism about the veracity of the press and the integrity of journalists. At the same time, today's journalists are better educated than they have ever been and plans are underway to extend the training options available to them. She argues that accuracy is at the heart of good journalism, and allegations of inaccuracy are at the core of the public concerns about the media. Claims of sensationalism, bias, intrusion, opinionated commentary and gloss in place of facts grow out of this generalised disquiet. Schultz (1990) continues:

If journalists are more skilled at obtaining information they are also less likely to write excessively sensationalised reports. It is much harder to sensationalise a set of facts if you have extensive and detailed background information. There is an important distinction to be made between writing a story in a way that draws out its significance and "beating it up" so that "the facts do not get in the way of a good story".
(p. 23)

According to McPherson, Curtis and Loy (1989), an outcome of more critical writing about sport in recent years has been increasing conflict between the press and the athletes and management (p. 162). Today, reporters write about the inadequacies of athletes, coaches, general managers, or owners. Reporters see themselves as representatives of the paying public, who have a right to demand that competent athletes perform to their potential.

Often these stories are written to hasten the departure (i.e. firing) of an athlete, coach, or general manager, and sometimes the strategy is successful. They may also be written to increase newspaper sales in cities or regions where the newspaper is competing with one or two other daily papers. (McPherson et al, 1989, p. 162)

This more critical approach to sport journalism has led to banning some reporters from the locker room, resulting in players, coaches, general managers refusing to communicate with the press (McPherson et al, 1989, p. 162). Some athletes will refuse to speak to some or all reporters because they do not trust them and do not understand the role and responsibilities of the press.

According to Snyder and Spreitzer (1989), the role of the sports page is seen more clearly when analysed in terms of the ratio of sports news to other general news stories (p. 254). For example, in 1900, sports news comprised about 15 per cent of all general news coverage. Sports coverage now constitutes almost 50 per cent of the coverage devoted to local, national, and international news stories. Research shows that the sports page has about five times as many readers as the average section of the newspaper (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1989, p. 255).

Over the last 20 years, there has been a steady stream of anecdotal writings on the issue relating to sports journalism. However, empirical investigation throughout this time has been minimal. According to Coakley (1998, p. 376), in most North American daily newspapers, more coverage is given to sports than to any other single topic of interest, including business or politics. The sports section is the most widely read section of the

paper, and according to some estimates, accounts for about 30 percent of the total circulation for *big-city* newspapers. Coakley (1998) continues:

In other words, if the sports section were eliminated, newspaper sales would go down 30 percent — along with the advertising revenue tied to circulation figures. Many newspapers depend on sport for advertising revenues, as well as for general subscriptions and sales. (p. 376)

John Hargreaves (1994, p. 169) suggests that the media "are, arguably, the most important institution reproducing national identity today". The media pervade human culture. Although society incorporates the media into our lives in different ways, the things we read, hear, and see in the media constitute important parts of our experience (Coakley, 1998, p. 368). They frame and influence how we think about the world, we use media images and messages as we evaluate social events and envision the future. He argues that sports and the media are interconnected parts of our lives. Sports programming is an important segment of media content, and many sports depend on the media for publicity and revenues.

Without media coverage, the popularity and revenue-gathering potential of commercial spectacular sports would be seriously limited. Information about events generate interest, and interest generates revenues from the sale of tickets, luxury boxes, club seats, concessions, parking, team logo merchandise, and licensing rights. (Coakley, 1998, p. 371)

Electronic and print media pervade everyday life in Australia and persuasive sources of information for many people (McKay, 1991, p. 123). McKay (1991) argues that conceiving the media as passive reflectors of society is a gross oversimplification of how they represent and construct hegemonic ideologies of capitalist rationality, masculinity, racism and liberalism (p. 123). Coakley (1998) claims that the mass media could not survive without sports (p. 399). But they too, especially newspapers and

television, would be different. Newspaper circulation probably would decrease, and television programming on weekends and holidays would be different and less profitable for television companies.

John Cameron, sports editor of the *Mobile Press Register* in the United States, said that sports writers live a challenging journalistic life (Cameron, 1996). He points out that respected sports journalism involves considerably more than simply covering the games people play. He argues that there is a desperate need in society for sportswriters to look beyond the games to the deals made by team officials, the demands of the players, the money involved and the processes that colleges and universities employ in convincing young student-athletes that their schools offer the greatest opportunities. He adds:

As the sports pages in America turn away from the cheerleading journalism of the past, readers will be better informed as to just what it takes in effort and financial resources to stage the games that people play and enjoy. (Cameron, 1996)

Loy and Kenyon (1969, p. 327) point out that sportswriters have a greater freedom of expression than most of his newspaperman colleagues. But Jay Rosen, a journalism professor and director of the Project on Public Life and the Press at New York University, is a press critic who often attracts criticism from reporters and editors by saying journalism needs to rethink its fundamental objectivity (Glaberson, 1994). He says that journalistic objectivity is the value of fairness, which is extremely important. He said:

It's the ethic of restraining your own biases, which is also important. It's the idea that journalism can't be the voice of any particular party or sect, which is also important. All those things are very honourable, very important. What is insidious and crippling about objectivity say: 'We just present you with facts. We don't make judgements. We don't have any values ourselves.' This is dangerous and wrongheaded. (Glaberson, 1994)

Smith and Valeriote (cited in Lapchick, 1996. p. 319) claim that sportswriters have traditionally been perceived as uncritical sports buffs. For this reason, they are even derogated by other journalists who claim they work in the *toy* department of the newspaper business. The credibility of sportswriters has also been questioned because they often have no special training for their jobs; they have sacrificed their objectivity by accepting gifts and other treats from the sports establishment; and they have been chided for the notable absence of social commentary in their writing. Despite these well-intentioned critiques, there has been little scholarly examination of the sportswriter role (p. 319). Smith and Valeriote add:

The sportswriter has a demanding role primarily because he must interact with a variety of groups on a daily basis, all of whom may have differing expectations of him. The writer must be responsive to his employer; his competitors, the athletes, the owners and sports promoters as well as the public. The resultant of these interlocking rules is often a confused sportswriter. The sports journalist has dichotomous responsibilities, if he performs up to expectations for one group automatically disappoints another group. On the one hand, he is supposed to be objectively reporting sports news to the public; on the other hand, he is expected to glorify a particular sport for the benefit of a promoter. Usually these two functions are in direct opposition to one another. (p. 319)

Smith and Valeriote (cited in Lapchick, 1996) take the argument further by saying that in recent years, the image and status of the sportswriter has diminished somewhat because of the immediacy of radio and television (p. 321). Through these media, the public hears and sees first-hand about the happenings and results of sporting contests.

The result is a double-edged sword for the sportswriter; the importance and significance of what he writes may now be as vital to the public as it once was, also the players and owners give the sportswriter less times because they gain greater exposure through other media, especially television (pp. 321-322).

Print sports journalists now operate in a professional and social milieu that has assumed a rare complexion in recent years (Rowe & Stevenson, 1995, p. 70). The views long held within newspaper journalism that sports reporting is less important and requires less skill than other forms of journalism are being challenged by a greater recognition that sport plays a pivotal role in determining the commercial success of many newspapers.

Evolution of Sportswriting

The introduction of television in the 1950s has dramatically changed sports journalism. Newspapers had to cover more than scores and descriptions of the action (Coakley, 1998, p. 394; Garrison & Sabljak, 1985, p. 5; Andrews, 1987, p. 26; Rowe & Stevenson, 1995, p. 68; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1989, p. 255; McKay & Kirk, 1992, p. 10; Goldlust, 1987, p. 80). Their stories became more insightful and interpretative, the emphasis less on the results of competition and more on *why* these results occurred. In tracing the contours of the television era of sports writing, Coakley (1998) highlighted the changes regarding the print media's coverage of sport: "Since people now could *see* sports at home, sportswriters had to have stories that went beyond the action" (p. 394). Ray Sons, the *Chicago Sun-Times* sports editor (cited in Telander, 1984) said the reporters "had

to tell the readers more about the players as personalities, delve more thoroughly into the reasons for strategies, be more critical of managers and coaches, and report more thoroughly the behind-scenes manoeuvring and conflict" (p. 6). Bourgeois (1995, p. 195) observed that this type of coverage created serious tension in player-press relationships in North American sports, and some of the tensions still exist today. Coakley (1998) argued that when the sportswriter needed to come up with stories going beyond the action in sports, players discovered they had no privacy (p. 394). No matter what they said or where they said it, their words could end up in print if there were a sportswriter around. Koppett (1994) points out that this kept most athletes from saying the spontaneous things that made good material for reporters. The reporters, on the other hand, were under constant pressure to get good stories — to dig into the lives of the athletes their readers were watching on television. Sportswriters who have taken a critical stance are often ridiculed by the sports establishment, barred from the locker room or even physically abused (Smith & Valeriote, cited in Lapchick, 1996, p. 321). The tension between players and sportswriters escalated in the 1960s, when journalism increased its emphasis on the personal and the spectacular (Coakley, 1998, p. 394).

Newspapers and magazines published sports stories written in the same style as paperback novels. The stories were full of intrigue, but they often offended athletes and invaded their personal lives. Tension between sportswriters and athletes still exist. In some cases, it has been so strong that players have threatened writers and writers have quit their jobs in search of less stressful occupations. (Coakley, 1998, p. 395)

In recent years there has been a very substantial increase in the level of sports coverage in the electronic and print media (Rowe & Stevenson, 1995, p. 68). The expansion of television (and, to a lesser extent, radio) sport has had a considerable impact on the practice and status of sports journalism. In the pre-television era, one of the primary

functions of sports journalism was straight reportage, which took the form of (usually third person) description of sports events for a readership which had not witnessed them. Whannel (1992, p. 16) contends that with the advent of television, whole sports events or their highlights became available to large audiences in a form that gave them a much stronger case of "having-been-there" than could be accomplished by radio, print photography and text. This greater "witness" to sports action put sharp pressure on print sports reporters to display greater care and accuracy in their accounts of games. Rowe and Stevenson (1995, p.69) argue that the greater prominence of broadcast sport has improved the quality of print sports journalism.

Athletes and the Media

The new media environment require reporters to write columns about the inadequacies of athletes, coaches, general managers, or owners (McPherson, Curtis & Loy, 1989, p. 162). Reporters see themselves as representatives of the paying public, who have a right to demand that competent athletes perform to their potential. Often these stories are written to hasten the sacking of an athlete, coach, or general manager. McPherson et al. (1989, p. 162) add that these stories may also be written to increase newspaper sales in cities or regions where the newspaper is competing with one or two other daily papers. An outcome of more critical writing about sport has been increasing conflict between the press and the athletes and management (McPherson, Curtis & Loy, 1989, p. 162; Smith & Valeriotte, cited in Lapchick, 1996, p. 321). The more critical approach to sport journalism has led to banning some reporters from the locker room and sport representatives (players, coaches, general managers) refusing to communicate with the

press. Some athletes will refuse to speak to some or all reporters because they do not trust them.

This picture of attitudes to sporting journalists is paralleled by Henry Freeman, managing editor/sports for *USA Today*, who blames many sports figures for hampering factual, balanced reporting by tactics such as renouncing words they spoke, avoiding phone calls and barring reporters from press conferences (Garneau, 1988, p. 16). He said many sports personalities feel their position "allows them to be above the rules of honesty and fairness that should be common courtesy".

Attitudes towards the Media

There seems to be a dearth of mutual respect between athletes and sports journalists in today's steadily deteriorating relationship between sports and the news media (Can we get along?, 1994). It can be argued that until recently, athletes and the press had a more symbiotic relationship. Sports salaries were lower and athletes needed good publicity to negotiate with sponsors. But these days, star athletes can sign multi-million dollar contracts at a young age. Even for average players, today's sports salaries can bring lifetime financial security. It can also be argued that professional athletes do not need the press anymore and many are choosing to cut themselves off from the press. Some sports figures are borrowing from the modern politicians' playbook, bypassing the news media and going straight to their fans. Many sports stars are starring in their own television shows and commercials. They control their own image. They ask and answer the questions they choose. At a time when athletes need the media less, the news media

need the athletes more. The hunger for sports news and information has spawned numerous specialty publications. Heavy competition and tight deadlines have cranked up the stakes and the pressures on reporters to get the great quotes or the exclusive.

It is appropriate at this point to consider that one of the most frequently circulated pejorative descriptions of sports journalism (coined by the distinguished American sportswriter Red Smith) holds that it is the *toy* department of the news media (Stevenson & Rowe, 1995, p. 70; Garrison & Salwen, 1989, p. 57; Traub, 1991, p. 34; Smith & Valeriotte, cited in Lapchick, 1996, p. 319; Garneau, 1988, p. 16). Stevenson and Rowe (1995) contend that this expression suggests, not only that the sports round is a playground for immature journalists, but also that other, more prestigious departments (presumably including politics, international news, business and courts) define the *true* mission of the newspaper (p. 70).

Rowe (1995, p. 3) suggests that it is now more difficult than ever before to conceive of sport without reference to manufactured image and text. The media in Australia and overseas, in seeking and servicing markets, have devoted an increasing amount of space to the subject of sport.

Sports discourse cannot be avoided, even by those most determined to do so. For what *serious* political or economic story is complete without resort to the language of *team player* and *level playing fields*? It is inadvisable, however, to limit our analysis to the *supply* side of the sports media. No text is simply reducible to the gaze or to the absorption of messages. If contemporary sport is primarily about looking, it is also about interpreting, disputing, rejecting, identifying and distancing. It is easy to forget, if we only listen to sports media hype machines, that the arena of sport is subject to deep social, cultural and political conflict. (Rowe, 1995, p. 3)

Los Angeles Times columnist Jim Murray, United States Sports Writer of the Year a record 14 times (Dwyre, 1996) is adamant that many sportswriters are too negative in their reporting (Astor, 1990, p. 45). Murray adds:

I'm not saying you have to be a Pollyanna, but you don't have to be a Scrooge either. For one thing, many reporters always look for wrongdoing. They shouldn't be totally sceptical. Not everyone is lying and cheating. Watergate is partly to blame, although in that case the tough reporting was justified. There should be a little joy in our sports. There are so many stories about drugs and money. (Astor, 1990)

Conceptual Framework

Although the literature tends to identify influences as independent variables, the conceptual framework developed here is only prescribed as a tentative attempt to simplify and describe the reporting of sporting conflicts. The research findings are expected to seek to identify the key factors influencing the print media's role in covering sporting controversies. Furthermore, the specific application of this general framework to the role of the print media in reporting conflicts may generate additional factors.

The ultimate goal of this research is to produce a substantive theory which can explain how factors influence the angle that the print media take in their coverage of sporting controversies. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996), defining the key concepts, issues and contexts of a research project should also assist in focussing the research, as well as being of great help later in the project (p. 36). They define the territory for the research, indicate the literature the researcher needs to consult and suggest the methods and theories which may need to be applied. Bouma (1993) takes

the situation further by stating an operational definition of a concept goes beyond a usual dictionary definition (p. 38). It defines a concept in terms that can be measured, that is, it defines a concept in empirical terms.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods employed to measure the role of the print media in constructing controversies in sport. Detail is provided about the sample; the design rationales are the dependent and independent variables integral to the study. The study involved the collection of qualitative data from interviewing 12 subjects. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The choice and structure of the instrument is explained and results from the interviews are discussed in this study. In addition, research was carried out in two newspapers — *The West Australian* and *The Australian*. Also, texts, the electronic media, media journals, periodicals, government reports, conference papers and the internet were examined.

Research Design

Qualitative interviewing allows the interviewees to respond in their own terminology, expressing their own individual perceptions and experiences. Patton (1990, p. 357) states that interviewing provides "a chance for a short period of time to get inside another person's world". Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996, p. 60) theorise that qualitative research tends to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples, which are seen as being interesting or illuminating, and aims to achieve "depth" rather than "breadth". Brenner, Brown and Cantor (1985) observed that qualitative research is "based on theories of motivation written for the

purpose of understanding the attitudes and behaviour of respondents" (p. 117). An objective in this research was to examine the views of athletes, sporting administrators and journalists in their own terms and not in terms of the interviewer's frame of reference.

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was conducted with the 12 subjects (four athletes, four sporting administrators and four journalists) to explore the range of reactions and experiences that they have had in sporting controversies and conflicts. Two of the chosen administrators and two of the media personnel have achieved sporting excellence at national or international level.

Sources of Data

There are 10 sources of data used for the research study. They are:

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by the researcher with 12 subjects. The subjects were separated into three categories — athletes, sports administrators and sporting journalists. However, the questions used at the interviews were almost identical. An audio-tape recording was taken at each interview and these were transcribed on an 'Interview Transcription Record' (see Appendix G).

Questions

The questions were used to assess the subjects' attitudes to the role of the print media in constructing controversies in sport (see Appendix D). Overall changes in answers to the questions were noted on a summary sheet after comparing the respective interviews.

Researcher Journal

A researcher journal was used to make notes of what happened during each interview. The procedure of the interview was noted, as were individual comments made by the subjects, the interview setting, and feelings of the interviewer.

Books

Considerable research was made in media texts, and biographies of media personnel which were published in Australia and overseas. Most of the literature originated from North America, where the majority of research into sports journalism is produced. However, a large number of publications on Australian and British media were also examined.

Journals and Periodicals

There are a large number of media journals and periodicals in Australia and the United States, which were analysed. These academic journals provided a good balance between research into journalism and other publications examined for this study.

Government Reports

There are minimal government reports in journalism. The researcher located one which applies to this study.

Conference Papers

There is also a limited number of conference papers examining journalism. The researcher found only one which applies to this research.

Newspapers

The two newspapers used for this study were *The West Australian* (circulation 226,096 Monday to Friday; 382,925 Saturday) and *The Australian* (circulation 121,627 Monday to Friday; 313,082 Saturday). All of the interviewees regularly read both newspapers. *The West Australian*, the fourth-highest circulating daily newspaper in Australia ("State/National Publications" 1997), is the only metropolitan daily in Western Australia, and *The Australian*, which has only a small circulation in Western Australia, is the country's national daily.

Electronic Media

The researcher conducted an examination of more than two years of weekly media programs on radio and television, namely *The Media Report* (ABC Radio National, Thursday, 8.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m.) and *Media Watch* (ABC Television, Monday, 9.15 p.m.). *Late Night Live*, presented by Phillip Adams on Radio National four times a week, was also included in the study. Though the program focussed on many issues of

society, infrequently Adams discussed journalism and the media.

Internet

An investigation of several media sites on the World Wide Web (WWW) was undertaken. This proved to be a good source of information, though the researcher is aware that its contents needs to be thoroughly scrutinised to ascertain its validity. Many of the world's respected media journals are published on the WWW, though a large number of unofficial media sites are also available.

Participants

The sample group of interviewees for this research was selected because of their experience and expertise in their field. Each of the 12 subjects have had experience at least at national level in their fields. It was an important consideration of this research to ensure confidentiality for athletes who agreed to participate. However, all interviewees willingly gave permission for their name to be used in this study. The following criteria were used for selection of subjects for the study:

- 1) Currently resident in Western Australia.
- 2) They have reached at least national level, either as a competitor, a sports administrator, or a sporting journalist.
- 3) A keen understanding of national and international sporting issues.
- 4) A willingness to participate in the study.

Each of the prospective subject identified for inclusion in the study was contacted by telephone by the researcher, who verbally outlined details of the purpose and significance of the study. Upon verbal agreement to participate, the subjects were sent a letter and an 'Introductory Information for Interview' explaining the research in detail (Refer to Appendices A and C). Each subject was asked to complete and return an 'informed consent' form if they were prepared to continue as a participant (Refer to Appendix B). All 12 subjects contacted by the researcher agreed to participate in the study.

Background Information on Participants

The subjects in this study were included in three areas — athletes, sporting administrators and the media. Four subjects in each section were included, with all interviewees agreeing to be identified. The subjects are:

Athletes

Terri Bent, who has been involved in sport from an early age, was a champion distance runner in the 1980s. She won four State cross-country titles and held the Western Australian women's record in the 2,000 metres steeplechase. After injuries restricted her track and field career, Bent continues as a coach.

Jim Krynen is the only Western Australian cyclist to represent Australia as an amateur and professional at the world championships. He competed in the amateur road race in Germany in 1981 and in the professional road race in France eight years later.

Jeff Leslie, who has won six national cycling championships, has represented Australia at two Olympic Games — at Montreal in 1976 and Los Angeles in 1984. The former Tasmanian, who has lived in Western Australia for the last decade, also raced professionally in Europe for several years.

Thomas Stachewicz is the only West Australian swimmer to have competed at three Olympic Games. After making his international debut at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, he also competed at Seoul (1988) and Barcelona (1992). He also competed at the 1986 and 1991 world championships, and two Commonwealth Games, which included winning two relay gold medals at Auckland in 1990.

Administrators

Ron Alexander is the executive director at Sport and Recreation of Western Australia. He was the inaugural coach of West Coast Eagles in the Australian Football League 1987. He also played 133 games with Fitzroy in the Victorian Football League (since renamed the AFL), including two years as captain, and 174 games with East Perth and East Fremantle in the Western Australian Football League. He also played in 14 interstate games — 12 for Western Australia and two for Victoria.

Brian Cook has spent most of his working life employed in sports administration. He is one of the Australian Football League's most respected administrators and has been the chief executive of West Coast Eagles since 1990. He played for Hawthorn and Melbourne in the Victorian Football League.

Dr Lynn Embrey, a senior academic at Edith Cowan University, for the last two decades has been involved with the establishment of the Women's Sport Foundation. She was president of the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation for two terms from July 1993 to January 1998. Dr Embrey is now vice-president of the organisation and is continually researching sporting issues.

Wally Foreman is one of Western Australia's leading sports administrator. In June 1984, he was appointed the inaugural director of the Western Australian Institute of Sport, a position he still holds. He has considerable experience as a television and radio sporting commentator and is married to former Australian track and field representative Lyn Foreman.

Media

Dennis Cometti started his media career in commercial radio in 1968, before joining the ABC in 1973 and Channel Seven 13 years later. He is one of Australia's most respected sporting commentators, having covered two Olympic Games for Channel Seven. He played 42 league games with West Perth in the Western Australian Football League, and coached the West Perth league team from 1982-1984.

Mel Moffat is one of the senior sporting journalists at *The West Australian*, Perth's daily newspaper. Before immigrating to Australia in the early 1980s, he worked for several major British newspapers and covered many international sporting events, mainly concentrating on soccer.

Tracey Searle covered several major events as a journalist with *Westside Sport*, a weekly sporting newspaper in Perth until it folded in November 1997. She was named the outstanding young journalist for 1997 at the Western Australian journalism awards.

Christine Stanton was one of the world's best women high jumpers for a decade, which included winning the high jump gold medal at the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. She also competed at the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games. Stanton has considerable experience in the electronic and print media and has managed her public relations company since 1991.

Study

The study will focus on three case studies:

1) One of the major Australian sports stories in 1996 was the controversy between women cyclists, American-born West Australian Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Victorian Kathy Watt, in the lead-up to the Atlanta Olympic Games. The argument was over which rider would represent Australia in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the Games. Watt, the pursuit silver medallist and road champion at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, was Australia's early nomination for the women's pursuit berth at Atlanta. But national head track coach Charlie Walsh selected Tyler-Sharman for the event, after she had clocked world-class times in training. Watt then took the case to the International Court for Arbitration in Sport (CAS), which ruled in her favour, allowing her to compete in the pursuit at the Olympic Games. How did the print media treat both

athletes? Did the media favour one rider over the other?

2) In October 1997, Athletics Australia appointed a German coach Dr Ekkart Arbeit as Australia's national head track and field coach. Then it was revealed he had been involved in systematic drug-taking as a track and field coach in the former East Germany. After considerable media coverage, Athletics Australia terminated Arbeit's contract to coach in Australia. This study will examine the print media's role in this case. Was it balanced, or otherwise? Or did the media have an impact on the outcome?

3) The world swimming championships, which were held in Perth in January 1998, was overshadowed by drugs controversies involving the Chinese team. The Chinese swimmers have been linked with drugs in recent years and a Chinese swimmer was found to have human growth hormones in her suitcase on arrival in Sydney, on her way to Perth. Then four Chinese swimmers tested positive to banned drugs on arrival in Perth. How did the print media cover these cases? Was it balanced or hysterical coverage?

Interviews

The researcher designed an interview process to explore the subject's impressions on the print media's coverage of the controversy between cyclists Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt in the lead-up to the 1996 Olympic Games. However, after four interviews, it became obvious that some of the subjects basically had only a limited understanding of the issue. They generally were able to speak more authoritatively on the print media's

coverage of the track and field coaching appointment of Ekkart Arbeit. It was then decided to incorporate that controversy into the study. Then the drugs issues at the world swimming championships in Perth in January 1998 resulted in newspaper headlines around the world. Because of the enormity of that controversy, the researcher decided to also include it in the study.

On receipt of the 'Form of Disclosure and Informed Consent' the researcher telephoned the participant to arrange an interview. Interview questions were prepared for the interview process, to ensure that the same basic information was obtained from each interviewee (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Questions were kept simple, easy to understand, and several were open-ended to encourage the interviewees to answer in their own terms and in a manner expressing their own views (Blaxter et al, 1996, p. 162). In addition to the initial question listed on the interview guides, the interviewer included several other probing questions to assist the interviewer in obtaining a detailed response from the interviewees. The interview questions were designed to assist the subjects in recalling details about the research issues. Questions were further designed to allow the interviewee to respond in descriptive terms (Patton, 1990, p. 357). De Vaus (1995) also stressed that considerable attention must be given to "developing clear, unambiguous and useful questions" (p. 83). The interviews commenced with general and non-threatening questions requiring minimal interpretation.

Researcher as Mediator

The researcher made a number of notes throughout the research process, to assist in monitoring the researcher's influence as the first instrument in observations (Evertson & Green, cited in Wittrock, 1986, p. 162). The researcher maintained a reflexive journal from the commencement of the research through to its completion. Entries included theoretical, methodological and interpretive notes in relation to the progress of the study. At the completion of each interview, the researcher documented circumstances of the interview and any issues that may have assisted during the later analysis of the transcripts. The researcher constructed an 'interview record' document, which contained space for comments relating to the interview situation, in regard to the environment, the subject and the interviewer (Refer to Appendices E and F).

According to Patton (1990, p. 347), irrespective of the style of interview used or the care taken in devising interview questions, the raw data from interviews, the actual words spoken by the interviewees, are the most important as "there is no substitute for these data". Each subject was audio-taped in full, with the interviewee's prior permission. This method of data collection increased the accuracy of the data and allowed the researcher to be more attentive to the reactions made by the interviewee during the interview process.

Supplementary Documentation

To assist in the management and recording of the research, three separate recording sheets were on similar documentation, as described by Douglas et al (1988, p. 138), were designed to record athlete and interview data. The researcher constructed a 'Subject Progress Record' to document basic interviewee information (Refer to Appendix H). A second interview record was designed to record details relating to the completion of the interview and cassette tape identification (Refer to Appendix F). Finally, an 'Interview Transcription Record' recorded transcribing details for interviews completed with each interviewee (Refer Appendix G).

Transcriptions

To assist in the analysis of data, an audio-tape recording was made of each interview. The most efficient method of accessing the data recorded in the manner is a verbatim transcription. The aim of the transcript is to reflect as accurately as possible what was said and how it was said (Douglas et al, 1988, p. 138). The researcher transcribed the interviews in full, though square brackets were occasionally used to indicate information not on the tape, but inserted for clarification. Each completed transcript was numbered sequentially by page to facilitate location of data. This enabled close examination of the transcript and identification of text. For an example of a interview transcript, refer to Appendix I.

Ethical Considerations

The need to carefully consider ethical issues in qualitative research is particularly relevant when interview techniques are to be utilised. Spradley (1979, p. 36) states that "interviewing represents a powerful tool for invading other people's way of life. It reveals information that can be used to *affirm* their rights, interests, and sensitivities or to *violate* them".

In further consideration of the ethical issues in qualitative research, the researcher provided all interviewees with information regarding the research, its aims and objectives and they could withdraw from the study at any stage with no obligations. All data relating to the study was stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be retained for five years, after which time it will be destroyed by incineration. Each interviewee was provided with the opportunity to review the transcripts before they were analysed. Ten of the interviewees did not need to review the transcripts, though several of the subjects invited the researcher to contact them for any necessary clarifications. The subjects that did want to review the transcript were provided with the interview shortly after it was transcribed.

Analysis of Data

The researcher read each transcript at least three times. The first reading was to highlight the main interview questions and to overview the interviewee's responses and a consultation was made of the journal entries in relation to the interviewee under analysis. Then another reading was undertaken to conduct a thorough review of content.

This provided the basis for the completed data analysis. During the process of data analysis, the researcher noted pertinent patterns or themes that were common among the interviewees. Various sections of the text that provided significant views expressed by the interviewee were also highlighted. The researcher also checked categories that had been assigned to the data and to accurately record the location of any highlighted text during the final reading.

All categories assigned by the researcher to the interviewee's transcript were summarised separately. The one page summary for each interview was an invaluable aid throughout the data analysis process. Using the summary page from each transcript, a complete list of assigned categories was compiled. This list identified the transcript which referred to each category. From this summary, assigned categories were prioritised according to the number of citations.

Trustworthiness of Data

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argues that trustworthiness of data in qualitative research incorporates four areas of concern (p. 218). These concerns include issues relating to the truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the research findings. These areas of concern relate respectively to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Ensuring trustworthiness is the way in which qualitative studies are able to make claims for validity. Several methodological issues, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba have been addressed in the research.

Credibility of the research was enhanced by investing time with each interviewee, building trust and getting to know the individual. The researcher knew each of the interviewees before approaching them to be involved in the study. Contact by the researcher, with each interviewee, following the completion of the interviews added to the credibility of the research. In considering the dependability of research findings, Lincoln and Guba (1985) states:

The naturalist seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change. It can be argued that this naturalist view is broader than the conventional, since it accounts for everything that is normally included in the concept of reliability plus some additional factors. (p. 299)

Such factors have been addressed by the researcher. Extensive documentation and a thorough description of the research process would allow for an independent audit to authenticate the research findings. These methods may also be applied in establishing confirmability of the research. One final technique that assisted in establishing the trustworthiness of data was the maintenance of a research journal by the researcher (Bouma, 1993, p. 147). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 109) takes the suggestion further by saying a journal records the "investigator's mind processes, philosophical position, and bases of decisions about the inquiry".

CHAPTER 4

Case Studies

Overview of Newspaper Coverage

Snyder and Spreitzer (1989, p. 256) note that since the 1980s, the sports page focused primarily on the players and the sports action in the contest. This has resulted in the critical sports journalist being a part of the minority. Snyder and Spreitzer contend that there is little opportunity for investigative journalism by the sportswriter, and increasingly, individuals have loyalties to a variety of geographical areas due to their own mobility or that of their families. There is evidence to suggest a lack of balanced critical reporting in the three sporting controversies in this study. Certainly, there was considerable critical reporting of the issues, but it appears that some journalists and sub-editors showed bias in some of the reporting and headlines during the media coverage of the conflicts.

The three case studies this research has examined are: (a) the conflict between Australian cyclists Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt in the leadup 1996 Olympic Games; (b) the appointment of German coach Dr Ekkart Arbeit to the position of Australian track and field coaching director, then the subsequent cancellation of his contract; and (c) the media coverage of the Chinese swimming team in Perth for the 1998 world championships.

Australian Cycling Conflict

On April 22, 1996, the Australian Cycling Federation (ACF) guaranteed Kathy Watt nomination in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit. This assurance was given after Watt had threatened to air her grievances in her testy relationship with national track coach Charlie Walsh ("Watt gets Games", 1996) (Figure 1). ACF president Ray Godkin said the decision was taken to allow Watt to prepare for three events at the Games. She was also training for the women's road race and the road time trial. However, in June, Walsh said that no rider had been guaranteed a ride in the pursuit at the Games (Stevens, 1996c) (Figure 2). Walsh made these comments after Lucy Tyler-Sharman had ridden close to the world record twice in training at Buttgen, Germany.

Nation-wide publicity then increased remarkably in July, after Walsh selected Tyler-Sharman for the pursuit berth at the Olympic Games. Watt then successfully challenged the decision in the International Court for Arbitration in Sport (CAS). *The Australian* covered the story on its front page, accompanied by a photograph of Watt resting after a training session (Yallop, 1996a). In the sports section of *The Australian* that day, Yallop (1996b) wrote an emotional feature article about Watt and her early life, which included the death of her marathon-runner father during a training run in 1969. *The Australian* balanced that reporting in the same issue, with a positive feature article of Lucy Tyler-Sharman, written by the paper's freelance cycling writer Rupert Guinness (Guinness, 1996). The following day, *The West Australian* reported that John Coates, Australia's chef de mission at the Olympic Games, supported Watt's nomination for the pursuit berth ("Games boss backs", 1996) (Figure 3).

Watt gets Games pursuit guarantee

MELBOURNE

23/4/1996

A LONG-RUNNING row which threatened to upset Australia's Olympic cycling team was settled yesterday when Olympic champion Kathy Watt was guaranteed nomination in the 3000m individual pursuit at the Atlanta Games.

The Australian Cycling Federation gave the assurance after Watt threatened to air her grievances in her testy relationship with national track coach Charlie Walsh at a media conference

"The West Australian"
this week if selection was not guaranteed in writing.

It means Watt is now almost certain to compete for three gold medals, as she is also strongly favoured to ride in the road race and the individual time trial on the road in Atlanta.

ACF president Ray Godkin said the decision was taken to remove any uncertainty for Watt, who wanted to prepare thoroughly for all three events.

It was taken in consultation with Walsh, in Europe for a pre-Olympic training camp in Germany, who was

opposed to Watt attempting all three events, believing it was too much.

Watt's manager and partner Carey Hall said they were delighted with the outcome. "That's fantastic: we couldn't be happier," he said. "That is all we have wanted since the national championships in February.

"She now has three months to get on with the job and do what she wants to achieve at the Olympics."

Watt, 31, won Olympic gold in the road race and silver in the pursuit at Barcelona in 1992.

She recorded the fifth fastest time a woman in the pursuit when competing at the national titles in Perth February.

Hall said he was disappointed to had to act to force the ACF's decision.

"It is a shame that it came to that," said. "But it's good that common sense prevailed."

Australian women's coach Andrew Logan and national road coach Heide Salzwedel supported her bid to ride the pursuit.

Figure 1: The Australian Cycling Federation guaranteed Kathy Watt nomination in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the Atlanta Olympics — *The West Australian* (April 23, 1996).

Olympic Games '96

Walsh holds back on pursuit berth

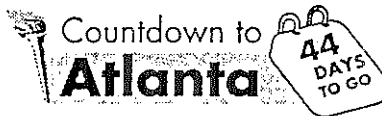
MELBOURNE
BY MICHAEL STEVENS

NATIONAL track coach Charlie Walsh last night ruled out a ride-off between cyclists Kathy Watt and Lucy Tyler-Sharman for a berth in the pursuit at the Atlanta Olympics.

But he said that with the Games still a long way off, no rider could be guaranteed a place in the event.

Walsh was speaking from the Buttgen training camp in Germany where Tyler-Sharman rode a sensational time of 3min. 33.46sec. in training last week.

Asked if this meant Tyler-Sharman would replace Watt, the national champion and silver medallist from the Barcelona Olympics in the event, Walsh said: "As we always should do, we must always keep our options open.



"But certainly this far out from the Games, in my position I wouldn't be giving any rider a carte blanche ride."

Walsh said there would be no trial between the two riders.

"At the moment we are looking at the situation and hope to make a decision on how we can give both riders an opportunity," he said.

Tyler-Sharman had an asthma attack when she finished second to Watt in the national championship in Perth this year.

It was always understood that she was targeted for the points race at Atlanta.

Walsh agreed but said she had ridden the pursuit trial to provide some competitive work in her training.

"She has been training exceedingly well, even though she has been sick," Walsh said.

"Her time was absolutely exceptional, considering it was on an indoor track at sea level at Buttgen, which is a track that does not have a reputation for super times."

Walsh said he was not concerned that Tyler-Sharman's possible selection for the pursuit would cause a furor.

"At the end of the day, the best rider must ride," he said.

"If that means someone's going to get upset that still has to be the case."

Walsh said Atlanta cycling manager Mike Turtur was considering when the decision would be made.

"With the males, we don't make a decision until fairly late in the piece," he said.

Watt, in a training camp in Mexico, was unavailable for comment.

But before she left Australia she sought written assurance from the Australian Cycling Federation that she would ride in the pursuit.

Though this was given, it was with the proviso that the situation could change if another rider produced world-class ride.

Tyler-Sharman's time was only two seconds outside the world record of 3:31.92 set by Italy's Antonella Beluffi during a World Cup meeting at Cali, Colombia, on April 6.

Watt will ride in the individual time-trial on the road in Atlanta as well as defending her title in the road race.

Games boss backs Watt in pursuit row

"The West Australian"

16/7/1996

Figure 3: Australia's chef de mission, John Coates, supported Kathy Watt in her bid to compete in the pursuit at Atlanta — *The West Australian* (July 16, 1996).

ATLANTA

PERTH cyclist Lucy Tyler-Sharman's participation in the Olympic 3000m individual pursuit next week remains in doubt — despite her selection for the event at the weekend and her conviction that she could win a gold medal.

Queen's Counsel David Grace, a lawyer representing rival Kathy Watt, yesterday appealed to the Court of Arbitration in Sport in Sydney against Watt's omission from the event.

And John Coates, Australia's chef de mission in Atlanta, appeared to align himself with Watts when he told reporters her appeal was "worthwhile".

Coates, who is also president of the Australian Olympic Committee, said the appeal had a good chance of success.

The appeal is unlikely to be heard until Friday, when the Australian Cycling Federation will respond.

Preliminaries for the pursuit begin tomorrow week, but final nominations do not have to be lodged until 24 hours before the event.

American-born Tyler-Sharman, who is prohibited from commenting on the selection furore, said her preparation had been unaffected.

"My legs feel good, my attitude is good and I've never had form like this in my life," she said.

"I've been riding for 11 years and I've taken 13 seconds off my best pursuit time since January. I think that's a pretty reasonable improvement."



Aussies in Atlanta

Marsh down and out,
page 73

Our cycling hopes,
page 72

Boomers blow,
page 71

Kowalski death threats, page 70

Archer aims high,
page 70

Tyler-Sharman, an Australian citizen since 1993, was selected for the pursuit after a string of near-world record times in practice.

Her 3min. 31.926sec. in Germany in June was only two hundredths of a second outside world record-holder Antonella Bellutti's high-altitude mark.

But Coates clearly felt Watt had been wronged.

"I have a feeling but I probably shouldn't try to pre-empt the court," he said. "I might be wrong. But I think it's worthwhile appealing, if only to know that she did everything possible. I think that's important."

The ACF announced in Sydney at the weekend that Tyler-Sharman would ride in the pursuit event because she had posted near-world record times in a pre-Olympic training camp which Watt had declined to attend.

Olympic cycling manager Michael Turtur has said Watt should have gone to Houston so that her form could be compared to Tyler-Sharman's.

Watt won the pursuit at the national titles in Perth in February and said she was given a guarantee she would be Australia's representative in that event in Atlanta despite bypassing the Houston training camp because she wanted to do her preparation elsewhere.

She has had a long-running feud with track cycling coach Charlie Walsh.

Coates said there was no personal rift between Watt and Tyler-Sharman, although he acknowledged the long-standing clash between Watt and Walsh.

Dr Graham Winter, head psychologist with the Australian Olympic team, who has worked with Watt, was spending more time with the cyclist after the ACF decision.

"My concerns come back to the lateness of this decision," Coates said.

"Kids should know what the objectives are that they have to achieve and when they achieve them they should know with some certainty that they can go to the next stage of preparation."

He said the AOC could not impose selection procedures on sporting federations. All it could do was encourage them to set up firm and clear standards.

Tyler-Sharman, ineligible to compete at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria because she had not met the qualifying period for permanent residency, will not know for certain that she can ride the pursuit until Watt's appeal is heard.

Tyler-Sharman moved to Perth to settle after marrying Western Australian champion cyclist Graham Sharman in early 1995. The United States-born rider was then acclaimed a local rider and it was evident in the leadup to the Games that she had the support of the local media. Under banner headlines on the back page on June 4, *The West Australian* reported that "Morley cyclist Lucy Tyler-Sharman has shattered Kathy Watt's Olympic plans after clocking the world's second-fastest 3,000 metres individual pursuit" (Marsh, 1996c). Four days later, readers of Perth's daily newspaper were informed that "A near world record by WA cyclist Lucy Tyler-Sharman has increased the pressure on Kathy Watt to represent Australia in the 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the Atlanta Olympics next month" (Marsh, 1996d). The following day, *The West Australian* ran a feature article examining the rivalry between Tyler-Sharman and Watt (Marsh, 1996e). However, the article was more favourable towards the local rider. Australian head coach Charlie Walsh said in the article that he did not believe Watt could adequately prepare for the road and the track. But what could be seen as hypocritical, he said that Tyler-Sharman was capable of racing the world's best women endurance cyclists in the 3,000 metres pursuit and the points race, though both finals were scheduled on the same day.

On the eve of the Olympic Games, the CAS ordered the ACF to enter Watt, instead of Tyler-Sharman, in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit. This decision ensured the public and the media would have an increased interest in the performances of the pair at the Games. The first cycling race on the Olympic program was the women's road

race, where Watt, the defending champion, was ninth. This resulted in bold headlines in *The West Australian*: "Watt in hot seat after loss" (Hughes, 1996a) (Figure 4).

Seven days later, *The West Australian* sports editor Bevan Eakins appeared to delight in declaring Tyler-Sharman was setting herself for the following month's world championships in Manchester, after winning the bronze medal in the points race at the Olympics (Eakins, 1996a) (Figure 5). Eakins pointed out that Watt was "badly out of form and finished without a medal in seventh place" in the 3,000 metres individual pursuit. It can be argued that it is an unfair comparison to make between the performances of Watt and Tyler-Sharman, because the pursuit and points races are vastly different events that have different athletic requirements. Eakins also quoted Australian head coach Charlie Walsh, who said: "It's an absolutely bloody disgrace that the people who pursued that and the way they did it [Watt's appeal] cost not only Australia a medal, but also Lucy Tyler-Sharman. She showed them today what she has in her." Walsh, who has not hidden the fact in recent years that he does not like Watt, was not likely to treat her performance with respect in the media.

Row Over New Australian Athletics Coach

The appointment of former East German coach Dr Ekkart Arbeit to Australia's top track and field coaching position in early October 1997 created considerable controversy among Australian athletes and coaches, and the media. Arbeit beat local candidate, Tudor Bidder, the Welsh-born head athletics coach at the Western Australian Institute of Sport (WAIS). Investigations by the media revealed that Arbeit had been involved

Watt in

"The West Australian"

23/7/1996

hot seat after loss

IT HAS not been an easy year for Kathy Watt to comprehend — and it is not going to get any easier.

Watt rode an uncharacteristically passive race yesterday to finish ninth and allow a characteristically aggressive Jeannie Longo, of France, to relieve her of the Olympic road title.

Longo, whose domination of the sport is such that she is to women's cycling what the legendary Eddie Merckx was to the men's, led a three-rider break for three laps before powering away on the last circuit to finally add an Olympic gold medal to her vast collection of honours.

Now Watt finds herself in the unusual position of having to prove to her colleagues on the track cycling team that she is worthy to compete in an event in which she won the silver medal in Barcelona four years ago.

It has been a long time since the diminutive Victorian with the shock of platinum blonde hair has had to justify herself to anyone in Australian cycling, but in going to the court of arbitration to overturn Lucy Tyler-Sharman's selection for the 3000m individual pursuit, she has placed herself under enormous pressure to repeat her achievement at the 1992 Games.

Watt sat at the back of the main bunch for all but the final few hundred metres of yesterday's race and missed every attack and breakaway.

Yet she refused to blame the selection furore for her strangely subdued performance.

"The last few months have been difficult for me but that wasn't the reason I didn't ride well," she said.

"My plan was to sit back and see what was going on. Every rider goes through a tough patch during a race and I was having mine when Longo went away, so I couldn't respond immediately."

But she did say the 3000m pursuit issue had been hard to cope with.

"I've been on an emotional rollercoaster



since the nationals in February," she said. "The indecision has been fairly hard to handle. When I heard I had got the ride in the pursuit, it felt like 10 bricks had been lifted off my shoulders."

Even so, she was so nervous before yesterday's race that she could not keep down her breakfast.

A mid-race downpour did not help Watt, who is not as good as the continentals in the wet.

"It was very slippery and we all had to be very careful in the corners, especially when crossing the markings on the road," she said.

Watt was quickly back on a track bike at the Stone Mountain velodrome to prepare herself for the pursuit.

She may have been content with a watching brief at the rear of the peloton, but not so Anna Wilson.

The 24-year-old Melbourne law graduate was always in the thick of things and actually got away with Longo and silver medallist Imelda Chiappa, of Italy.

But such was the pace set by the French veteran that Wilson's legs soon succumbed and she fell back.

"When Jeannie went I was in the perfect position to go with her," she said. "I was amazed at how hard she went."

"We were going up a long, steady climb at the time and she just kept accelerating. I knew it was the race-winning break and I desperately wanted to hang in but it was killing me."

The track cycling program starts on Thursday.

Figure 4: Kathy Watt finished ninth in the Olympic road race, with *The West Australian* indicating it was a failure (July 23, 1996).

Tyler-Sharman to chase world title

"The West Australian"

30/7/1996

ATLANTA
BY BEVAN EAKINS

REVENGE. That is the driving force behind Lucy Tyler-Sharman.

The Perth cyclist is convinced she is a victim of a grave injustice, wronged by the once golden girl of Australian cycling Kathy Watt.

Now Tyler-Sharman is out to prove at next month's world championships that she is the world's best woman of the individual pursuit.

That honour belongs to France's Nathalie Lancien who won the Olympic title earlier this week.

Tyler-Sharman never had a chance to challenge. The Australian Cycling Federation's decision to select her ahead of Watt sparked a bitter row between the two cyclists' camps and Watt successfully appealed to the Court of Arbitration in Sport for the right to ride the pursuit.


Badly out of form she finished without a medal in seventh place.

Not so Tyler-Sharman. At the Stone Mountain Velodrome yesterday she had a point to prove. And prove it she did, winning the bronze medal in the points score, missing the gold medal by centimetres.





It was one of five bronze medals on the day for Australia, lifting the medal tally to 29 (seven gold, seven silver, 15 bronze), two more than in Barcelona four years ago (7-9-11) and within striking distance of the best ever total of 33 (13-8-14) in Melbourne in 1956.

Another came on the cycling track, to Paul O'Grady in the men's points race, and the rest were won by rowers.

Sixty minutes after her race, bronze medal draped around her neck and



Aussies in Atlanta

-  **Vlahov ready for Croatian,**
page 64
-  **Freeman-Perec showdown,**
page 63
-  **Aussies held in awe,**
page 60
-  **Kookaburras win through,**
page 59

Tyler-Sharman said: "It is unsporting to comment on it too much, but her (Kathy Watt's) selfishness was my motivating factor.

"I completely focused on the pursuit and it broke my heart when it was taken off me."

Head Australian track coach Charlie Walsh was more outspoken: "I have no doubt in my mind that if Lucy had ridden the pursuit she would have been on the medal dais.

"It's an absolute bloody disgrace that the people who pursued that and the way they did it (Watt's appeal) cost not only Australia a medal but also Lucy Tyler-Sharman. She showed them today what she has in her."

What is even more remarkable is that Tyler-Sharman had not trained for the points score, focusing on the pursuit.

Absolutely shattered when told she would not be allowed to race, Tyler-Sharman nearly withdrew from the points score.

Figure 5: After winning the points race bronze medal at the Atlanta Olympics, Lucy Tyler-Sharman set herself on winning the pursuit gold medal at the world titles the following month — *The West Australian* (July 30, 1996).

in systematic doping of athletes in the former East Germany in the late 1980s (Johnson, 1997). *The West Australian* immediately took issue with the appointment by announcing on October 1 that Bidder had resigned from his WAIS post after he was overlooked for the national job (Hughes, 1997a). Bidder had decided to accept a senior coaching position with the British Athletics Federation. The next day, Athletics Australia officially announced Arbeit's appointment, with the lead of the main sport story in *The West Australian* on October 3 announcing: "East Germany's chief track and field coach during the era of government-sanctioned steroid abuse was named Australia's head athletics coach yesterday" ("Drug shadow over", 1997). The article also stated that Bidder would accept the Australian position if it was offered to him. The next day, again under banner headlines "Drug link outrage over Aussie coach" and with a Sydney dateline, readers are informed that: "Athletics Australia is standing by its decision to appoint a former East German coach to head the national track and field team, despite a storm of criticism over his past involvement with drugs" ("Drug link outrage", 1997).

The West Australian continued its negativity over Arbeit's appointment with its October 6 edition declaring in bold headlines: "Coach splits athletics" (Hurst, 1997a). On the same day, *The Australian* reported that Athletics Australia wanted to meet its elite athletes in an attempt to smooth the way for Arbeit to start in his new job in two weeks (Jeffery, 1997) (Figure 6). However, the following day, *The Australian* devoted three-quarters of its "opinion" page to the issue. Separate articles, written by Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) executive director John Boulton and veteran swimming coach

Athletes in talks to end row over coach

By NICOLE JEFFERY and AAP.

ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA wants to meet with its elite athletes in an attempt to smooth the way for former East German coach Dr Ekkart Arbelt, due to begin work as the new national head coach in two weeks.

But, undeterred, Dr Arbelt yesterday said a record three gold medals from a total of eight medals would be a realistic return for Australia's track and field squad at Sydney 2000.

Dr Arbelt's appointment last week, after revelations of institutionalised doping in East German sport in the 1970s and 1980s, created a furor locally and internationally.

A German investigator into systematic doping in the former East Germany, Professor Werner Franke, said Dr Arbelt clearly was responsible for doping athletes as a former head throws coach and head team coach in the 1980s.

Leading athletes have expressed mixed feelings about his appointment and some fear that the association with a former East German coach would taint the Australian team.

Reportedly some have signed a letter to Athletics Australia opposing his appointment.

AA executive director Martin Soust said yesterday he and AA president Terry Dwyer believed it would be "useful" to explain their support for Dr Arbelt directly to Australia's most influential athletes.

This group is likely to include world 400m champion Cathy Freeman, world javelin silver medalist Joanna Stone, bronze medalists Steve Monaghan and Tim Forsyth, sprinter Melinda Gainsford-Taylor and hurdler Kyle Vander Kuyp.

"They are the leaders of that group of elite athletes and I think we need to try to get together with them before Dr Arbelt arrives (October 29)," Soust said.

He said he envisioned a "frustrating discussion" to address the athletes' concerns.

When he announced Dr Arbelt's appointment last week, Soust said AA was aware that the choice would raise concerns and would require a public relations campaign to change public perception that an East German coach was automatically involved in doping.

"That's a perception out there — we will have to work to correct that," he said last week.

But AA did not foresee the depth of feeling Dr Arbelt's

appointment would engender, and now faces a mammoth task to gain him acceptance.

The willingness of leading athletes to give Dr Arbelt a chance to prove his worth will be a crucial factor.

Beyond the allegations hanging over Dr Arbelt — and the possibility that he could later be targeted by German prosecutors now investigating the role of former swimming coaches and officials in doping — he must gain the confidence of coaches and athletes if he is to succeed in his new position.

Dr Arbelt said yesterday that while Australia's athletes would not use drugs, performance-enhancing drugs were still a fact of international competition.

"The time is not over, that is one of the biggest problems," Arbelt said.

"In Australia, the government and the sports institute has the right idea, getting 70 junior athletes in Canberra is the right way but not everywhere is there the same fight."

"My way all the time is to try and organise a good team."

"Track and field is an individual sport, but we need a good team to achieve."

Dr Arbelt said the success of Australia's track and field squad at the Sydney Games would be measured in gold medals.

"We have to be sure when Australia hosts the Olympics it has big success in athletics. It's important we win two or three gold in the six, seven, eight medals," he said.

"When on the last day the marathon runner from Australia comes in first, he will be a hero forever. Winning a bronze medal in the hammer throw, they are not the same."

Dr Arbelt said Australia's obstacles to success at the Sydney Games included training methods, adequate funding and the isolation barrier.

"When we started discussions I was without great information on athletics in Australia... now I have studied a lot of material," he said.

"It is not easy. I do not have enough information, especially about training."

"The biggest problem is the way they are coached, the methodology, but from what I saw in Athens (at the world championships in August) there was a big progression."

"In the next years if we have enough funding and good, motivated people, that (the coaching) will not be a problem."

Figure 6: Athletics Australia officials expressed their desire to meet the nation's elite athletes in an effort to smooth the way for former East German coach Ekkart Arbeit to take up his appointment in Australia — The Australian (October 6, 1997).

Forbes Carlile, who presented their contrasting arguments over the appointment. Boulton (1997), a member of the board which appointed Arbeit (Johnson, 1997), argued that the German would provide strong leadership in its Olympic program. Boulton claimed the selection board and the AIS "undertook an extensive search here and internationally for a director of coaching to give this leadership and technical guidance to Australia's excellent coaches. The standout candidate is Dr Ekkart Arbeit" (Boulton, 1997). Carlile, who for many years has taken a strong stance against drugs in sport, argued against Arbeit's appointment. He asked why should "Athletics Australia appoint as new national coach someone who has been involved in a system notorious for doping its athletes? And all in a frantic effort to win medals at the Sydney 2000 Games" (Carlile, 1997).

On October 7, *The West Australian* quoted Australian Kevan Gosper, a vice-president on the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as saying he would use his influence to try to reverse the appointment (Hunter, 1997a). The following day, European Athletic Coaches Association, Frank Dick, claimed in *The Australian* that this nation risked its international sporting factors by "taking it hearsay and making it sound like gospel" in a bid to oust Arbeit (Green, Meikle & Spencer, 1997) (Figure 7). However, the following day, *The West Australian* reported that new Federal Sports Minister, Andrew Thompson, ordered an urgent review of Arbeit's appointment (Hunter, 1997b) (Figure 8). Then on October 9, the Perth paper predicted that Tudor Bidder may still be appointed as Australia's coaching director, because of the controversy over Arbeit (Hunter, 1997b) (Figure 9). *The Australian* ("Coach not right", 1997) and *The West*

Officials race to defend Arbeit

"The Australian" 8/10/1997

By PENELOPE GREEN,
KATE MEIKLE
and MATTHEW SPENCER

AUSTRALIA was risking its international sporting future by "taking hearsay and making it sound like gospel" in a bid to oust national track and field coach Ekkart Arbeit, the man who recommended him for the job said yesterday.

The comments from European Athletics Coaches Association president Frank Dick came as senior Australian athletes said they would find it difficult to co-operate with the newly appointed coach and flagged a possible competition boycott.

Mr Dick said Australia "would not have a sporting future" if it remained paranoid and shut out external influences that could benefit its athletes.

"Australia is in my view a place where people will give you a fair go — this whole episode smacks of hypocrisy," Mr Dick said from his home in London.

"Australia has a powerful vision of where it wants to go in 2000 (but) if you go on hearsay and start not having other people involved ... then ... you won't have a sporting future."

"It would certainly make any other top-quality coach say, 'Hold on a second, is it worth coming in?'"

But 400m sprinter Lee Naylor signalled some athletes might boycott competition in protest against Dr Arbeit's appointment.

"If he does come out here, I'm sure that athletes and coaches alike will try and distance themselves from him," she said.

"(Boycotting) is obviously almost a last resort ... but it gets almost to drastic stages where you've got to think of drastic measures."

Sprinter Jane Flemming said she did not know whether many elite athletes would co-operate but "if they do I think it will be against their will".

Atlanta Olympian Carolyn Schuwalow said Australian athletes could be branded as drug cheats because of the association with Dr Arbeit. But former Olympic gold-medal swimmer Shane Gould said Dr Arbeit deserved a chance.

Sprinter Cathy Freeman and Australia's chief coach at this year's world athletic championships, Craig Hilliard, declined to comment yesterday.

An East German coach and former head of rowing at the West Australian Institute of Sport, Stephan Muhlenberg, called on Australian officials to "stop the witch-hunt" on coaches previously from eastern Europe.

"Coming from East Germany ... I think there was a thorough process in place to filter people out who were at the time involved in the process of providing athletes with steroids," he said.

"If this man is qualified to do the job, and the best one, then give him the job."

Mr Muhlenberg said he faced similar pressures when he came to Australia. "You know, the drug-taking nation and all this. And all this supermonsters. It's all crap. It makes you sick."

NSW Olympics Minister and head of the Sydney Organising Committee for



Stephan Muhlenberg in Perth yesterday ... 'stop witch-hunt' — Picture: NEIL ELIOT

the Olympic Games Michael Knight told ABC radio that Athletics Australia should find another candidate.

"They need to either get their own people behind him or find a way to ease him out of the process," he said.

But Mr Dick, who was pitted against Dr Arbeit between 1979 and 1994 as head coach of Britain's track and field team, said there was no evidence that the former East German coach had ever condoned drug taking among athletes.

He believed Dr Arbeit's experience in track and field coaching was unparalleled and his knowledge of coaching methods impeccable.

"This man I know from experience is very much against the whole idea of doping," Mr Dick said.

"He's a good man who always puts athletes and coaches before everything — you're whacking the wrong man."

Mr Dick said it was an historical fact that there was a cloud surrounding the former East Germany over its approach to drugs in sport but that did not mean every coach should be condemned.

"If that was our view, it would mean when we found positive tests in any country we would expect all coaches to be involved, and that's not true," he said.

VERDICT ON ARBEIT

FOR

✓ Frank Dick: President European Athletics Coaches Association
Terry Dwyer: President Athletics Australia
Shane Gould: Triple Olympic gold medal swimmer
Stephan Muhlenberg: Former head rowing coach, WA Institute of Sport
Martin Soust: Executive director Athletics Australia

AGAINST

✗ Tudor Bidder: Head track and field coach, WA Institute of Sport
Raylene Boyle: Former Olympic athlete
Jane Flemming: Athlete
Tim Forsyth: Athlete
Kevan Gosper: IOC executive board member and SOCOG vice-president
Michael Knight: Olympics Minister and SOCOG head
Steve Moneghetti: Athlete
Lee Naylor: Athlete
Carolyn Schuwalow: Athlete
Susan O'Neill: Swimmer

Figure 7: European Athletics Coaches Association president, Frank Dick, predicted Australia was risking its international sporting future if it rejected Arbeit's appointment — *The Australian* (October 8, 1997).

Australian ("Decision on coach", 1997) both editorialised that Arbeit's appointment would damage sport in this country.

The Weekend Australian then switched its attention to several of Australia's top sporting officials, including Australian Olympic Committee president John Coates, in a scathing editorial ("Track chiefs discredit", 1997). In *The West Australian*, Prime Minister John Howard called for Athletics Australia to review Arbeit's appointment and Herb Elliott, Western Australia's most successful track and field athlete, predicted that Arbeit would resign (Hughes, 1997c). In banner headlines in its October 14 edition, *The West Australian* announced that about 50 Australian athletes and coaches had lobbied for Arbeit to be replaced ("Arbeit review a farce", 1997).

Though most of the articles in *The Australian* opposed Arbeit's appointment, the national daily paper did attempt to provide a balance, by presenting some views in favour of him heading Australia's track and field program. An example was on October 13, when one of the pioneers of sports medicine in Australia, Dr Tony Millar, supported Arbeit's appointment (MacDonald, 1997). However, *The West Australian* chose not to publish any articles in support of Arbeit and continued its negativity until Athletics Australia terminated his contract on November 20, 1997. The November 21 edition of *The West Australian* published three stories about Arbeit's sacking: (a) Athletics Australia terminated his contract after the Federal Government threatened to withhold part of its \$2.2 million funds (Hurst, 1997c); (b) A report that Athletics Australia wanted Arbeit to become its national coaching director so badly that it flew a top sports

Minister steps into Arbeit row

SYDNEY
BY TAMARA HUNTER

NEW Federal Sports Minister Andrew Thomson has ordered an urgent review of the controversial appointment of former East German coach Ekkart Arbeit as Australia's head athletics coach.

Arbeit, who has been accused of being a central figure in the routine doping of athletes under the old East German regime, is due to start with Athletics Australia on October 20.

A growing number of leading athletes and senior sports administrators have slammed the appointment, saying it will jeopardise Australia's reputation as a drug-free sporting nation and make it an international laughing stock.

Arbeit has admitted being part of the old East German system but has denied direct involvement in drugs.

But Mr Thomson said yesterday that given the coach's background in a country known to have extensively doped its athletes, Athletics Australia had some explaining to do.

"Having been a very strong advocate of drug-free sporting competitions, obviously it does seem on its face anomalous that Australia would hire someone from that background," Mr Thomson told ABC Radio.

"It needs more explanation."

The Minister has called for a detailed report by Friday on how Arbeit was recruited, and what checks were carried out into his background.

Athletics Australia refused yesterday to back down on the appointment, saying the claims against Arbeit were unsubstantiated and that he was the victim of a witch hunt.

The organisation's president, Professor Terry Dwyer, said the coach was the best man for the job. He pointed out there were already 10 coaches of similar background working in Australia, none of whom had been questioned.

An Athletics Australia spokesman said the Australian Sports Commission had made inquiries about Arbeit before his appointment, and had found no suggestion of wrongdoing.

Arbeit was East Germany's throwing coach from 1982-88 and head track and field coach in 1989-90. He has also been a senior coach with the International Amateur Athletics Federation.

Australian Olympic Committee president John Coates, who was on holiday when the Arbeit storm broke, voiced support for the decision at the start of a visit to China.

He said coaches from other drug-tainted regimes had been appointed in Australia before without such publicity.

China, with a poor but improving record on drugs in sport this decade, has been quick to return Australian fire in the past with attacks over the positive tests of sprinter Dean Capobianco and swimmer Samantha Riley, but resisted another chance over Arbeit.

"I don't think this is a backward step in fighting against drugs in sport in Australia," State Sports Commission spokesman Wei Hongquan said.

"Australia is firmly determined to fight against drugs. It is well known worldwide."

WA Institute of Sport coach Tudor Bidder has held off signing with the British Athletics Federation and said he was still prepared to consider Australia's top coaching job if Arbeit was dropped.

Welsh-born Bidder said Arbeit could not extricate himself from the scandal of systematic doping of East German athletes.

"It would be remiss of you if you weren't aware (of athletes taking drugs) and morally bereft if you knowingly participated in such a training regime," Bidder said.

"Whether Dr Arbeit is innocent or guilty, we don't need the publicity. The innuendo can cause immense damage."

Figure 8: Federal sports minister, Andrew Thomson, ordered an urgent review of Ekkart Arbeit's appointment as Australia's head track and field coach — *The West Australian* (October 8, 1997).

official to Europe to gauge his interest in the job ("AA's role in Arbeit", 1997); and (c) Tudor Bidder, accompanied by a photo of the WAIS coach, saying he was still interested in the national position ("I'm still interested", 1997).

Chinese Swimming Drugs Issue

The marriage between drugs and competition dates back millennia. Whenever winning has mattered, some athletes have sought an edge over their rivals. The first documented modern case of doping was in 1865, with Dutch swimmers using stimulants (Francis & Coplon, 1990, p. 87). By the time of the first modern Olympics in 1896, many substances were available. These ranged from Codeine to strychnine. The quality of drugs have developed during the past century to such an extent, many cannot be detected by the sophisticated testing equipment. In the biggest drug scandal in Olympic history, Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson tested positive to anabolic steroids after winning the final of the men's 100 metres at Seoul in 1988. However, the Chinese swimming team created headlines around the world because of its drug use before and during the world championships in Perth in January 1998.

Five days before the start of the world swimming championships at Challenge Stadium, 8km west of Perth, *The West Australian* published a five-page feature on the titles. This included a 32-paragraph article tracing the recent history of drugs involvement with Chinese swimmers (Marsh, 1998a). The article was accompanied by a large photograph of an extremely muscular Jingyi Le, the Chinese 50 metres and 100 metres freestyle world record holder. Several Chinese swimmers and officials arrived in Perth the

Bidder waits "The West Australian" for review

SYDNEY
BY TAMARA HUNTER

9/10/1997

PERTH coach Tudor Bidder could still be in the running for the top coaching job at Athletics Australia, after the sporting body was forced yesterday to agree to a review of former East German coach Ekkart Arbeit's appointment.

Arbeit's appointment — due to begin on October 20 — has been put on hold and AA says the position is still open.

Bidder, who was the position's only other short-listed applicant, said yesterday he was still keen to take the job if Arbeit was dropped.

— He has accepted, in principle, a job with the British Athletics Federation, but said last night he had not signed and would hold out as long as possible.

"I would be interested in talking to anybody at any time about the situation in Australia, but I can't really keep this offer hanging around for much longer," Bidder said.

AA executive director Martin Soust said any further offer to Bidder would depend on the outcome of the Arbeit review.

AA has previously refused to reconsider Arbeit's appointment, saying he was the best man for the job, despite claims he was involved in the routine doping of athletes under the old East German regime.

But Soust emerged yesterday afternoon from a crisis meeting with new Sports Minister Andrew Thomson, the Australian Sports Commission, and the Australian Institute of Sport to concede that the public outcry had forced a rethink.

● More, page 67

● From back page

Arbeit has denied direct involvement in doping but many Australian athletes and sports administrators are worried his association with the former regime will taint Australian sport.

ASC chief Jim Ferguson — who was involved in Arbeit's appointment — made it clear the backflip was due to public reaction and was not concerned at the way the matter had been handled.

Asked whether Arbeit would still come to Australia on October 20, as planned, Ferguson replied: "I can't say when the review will be completed, but I don't imagine that he will be coming until it's completed — if indeed he comes."

Ferguson, who contacted the German athletics federation on behalf of AA to inquire about Arbeit, said he had been given no specific information linking Arbeit to doping practices.

"Our belief was that unless there was specific information, we would be prepared to accept him as an appropriate person," he said.

The review, to be conducted by AA, the ASC, and an independent person yet to be named, will examine how Arbeit was recruited, what checks were made, and who is the best person for the job.

Asked what would have to happen for Arbeit's appointment to be cancelled, Ferguson replied: "I think that we would need to find categorical evidence that he had been clearly implicated in doping actions."

"After all, it's the Australian tradition that people are innocent until they are proven guilty, and I think we need to be careful to protect the integrity of this man."

But Sports Minister Andrew Thomson said the deciding factor would be whether Germany would be prepared to entrust Arbeit with its own athletes.

"I want to know ... whether or not this man would be, if he so applied, allowed to coach at the same level in Germany," Mr Thomson said. "That's really the litmus test for this."

ABC radio reported yesterday that Germany had banned all former East German coaches from employment in organised sport.

Figure 9: *The West Australian* predicts that local coach Tudor Bidder was still in the running for the national track and field role (October 9, 1997).

following day, with *The West Australian* presenting banner headlines on the back page on 7 January declaring: "Our swimmers are clean, says China" (Marsh, 1998c). The head of the Chinese swimming delegation, Shi Tianshu, in the article dismissed suggestions that China's swimming performances had been enhanced by drugs.

Then seemingly almost by design two days later, the Chinese swimmers and drugs dominated the front pages of *The West Australian* and *The Australian*. Readers of the local paper were informed that Australian customs officers had caught Chinese swimmer, Yuan Yuan, with illegal human growth hormones during a baggage examination at Sydney Airport when 29 members of the Chinese team were in transition before continuing to Perth (Martin, 1998). The article was accompanied by two photographs, both including Yuan. In one, she was being escorted by two policemen after arriving at Perth Airport and in the other, an animated Yuan was shown yelling at a photographer. The minor story on page one described how police and security staff were unable to shield Yuan from a surging crowd when the swimmers arrived at Perth Airport the previous night (Martin & Peace, 1998).

The incident also dominated the front page of *The Australian*. Under headlines which were the size of the paper's masthead, "Busted: a bagful of hormones", readers were told that "the Chinese swimming team's international credibility was in tatters last night after a champion swimmer was found to have a suspected illegal performance-enhancing drug in her possession at Sydney Airport" (Jeffery & Harris, 1998) (Figure 10). Yuan also featured in two photographs accompanying the article. She was shown leaving

Busted: A bagful of hormones

"The Australian"

9/1/1998



Medals ... Yuan and Riley in Rome in 1994

Swimmer faces four-year ban

By NICOLE JEFFERY and TRUDY HARRIS

THE Chinese swimming team's international credibility was in tatters last night after a champion swimmer was found to have a suspected illegal performance-enhancing drug in her possession at Sydney airport.

The seizure by Australian Customs officers of 13 vials clearly labelled as human growth hormones left a cloud over China's involvement in the world titles in Perth and lent strength to suspicions in the rest of the swimming world about the meteoric rise of Chinese swimmers in recent years.

Customs officials found the vials in a flask carried by 21-year-old breaststroker Yuan Yuan during a routine inspection yesterday afternoon of swimmers, coaches and divers en route to Perth.

The officers immediately locked up the vials and asked Yuan and two team-mates for a formal interview, which they initially refused.

Yuan, unlike other team members, elected to declare several items to quarantine officers.

Nearby Customs officers routinely decided to inspect her baggage and discovered the hormones soon afterwards.

Some members of the Chinese contingent were detained for about three hours, clashing several times with the media outside Sydney airport.

Angry team members refused to answer reporters and attacked a photographer

INSIDE

German director reinstated
The secret assistant

— Page 6

Officials step up testing

— Page 22

48 hours after Chinese officials had declared their team drug-free.

Yuan is ranked number 12 in the world in the 100m breaststroke and number 13 in the 200m, after finishing second in both events at the Chinese National Games in October.

She won silver at the 1994 world championships behind champion Australian 200m breaststroker Samantha Riley. She also won bronze in the 100m breaststroke.

Customs sources said the three claimed the hormones, called Somatropin, were for a doctor in Canberra.

When questioned by Customs officers, Yuan admitted she owned the luggage containing the vials, although another team member quickly said he had packed her bag.

It is understood officers were targeting another team member's luggage.

The drug's name was written on the vials with the brand name Norditropin written underneath. Another 13 vials of saline were found. (The hormones need to be diluted in the solution.)

One team member later told



Yuan and team-mates leave for Perth after yesterday's Sydney airport seizure — Picture: JEREMY PIPER

ice which was wrapped in a black plastic bag inside Yuan's luggage.

None of the Chinese team were arrested or charged, although Customs officials said last night they would continue to investigate the discovery of the hormones and analyse their composition.

The maximum penalty for carrying such prohibited

For years, the Chinese have dismissed as racist critics who claim they can only have achieved their meteoric rise on the world swimming scene by illegal drug assistance.

FINA executive director Cornel Marculescu was informed of the Australian Customs Service statement by journalists and took a photocopy of it for consideration by the body's

"FINA will not make any comments on allegations based on suspicions until the analysis of the substance seized is carried out and made known," it said.

It is not the first time that athletes have been caught by Australian Customs carrying illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

An informed source said

Figure 10: Chinese swimmer, Yuan Yuan, faces a four year ban after being caught with human growth hormones in her baggage at Sydney Airport on transit to Perth — *The Australian* (January 9, 1998).

Perth Airport with her teammates, and in a smaller photo, she was on the victory dais with Queenslander Samantha Riley, after finishing second to the Australian in the 100 metres breaststroke at the 1994 world championships in Rome.

Drugs and the Chinese swimmers were the dominant news during the world championships in Perth, which took place from January 8-18. *The West Australian* left no doubt its attitude to the Chinese team, with page one headlines, "Drug cheat sent home, faces ban" (Bowër, Hughes & Marsh, 1998) (Figure 11). The article and two photographs dominated the front page. One picture showed a joyous Le applying sunscreen to a teammate, and a smaller photo of Yuan at the Perth Airport two nights earlier. Inside the paper, a two-page spread featuring six articles examining drugs in sport, which included a story claiming that Yuan was one of several Chinese swimmers who were under suspicion at the Rome world championships four years earlier ("Yuan's rise in ranks", 1998). *The West Australian's* editorial that day argued that drug cheats must be eradicated because they could threaten the success of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games ("Drug cheats a threat", 1998). The editorial writer seemed to have a lack of understanding about present-day sport when it linked drug-taking with the eradication of amateurism from sport. The editorial concluded:

The Olympic movement yielded to cheating — perhaps unavoidably — when it stopped insisting that competitors should be amateurs. But if it makes any concession to drug cheats, it could signal the end of honour and integrity to international sport.

With controversy over Yuan and human growth hormones becoming only a memory, *The Western Australian* was not about to let the subject rest. Perth's morning paper decided to speculate on January 14 that a lack of success by the Chinese at these

Drug cheat sent home, faces ban

BY AMANDA BOWER, DAVID HUGHES AND DAVID MARSH

CHINESE swimmer Yuan Yuan has been ordered home after laboratory tests confirmed illegal growth hormones had been found in her luggage.

But Chinese officials have refused to accept responsibility for the hormones.

At a press conference late last night, Chinese Chef de Mission Shi Tianshu said the hormones were not for the use of any Chinese team member.

He said they were being delivered to an unnamed person in Australia.

The Chinese Embassy announced Yuan's recall after two sets of tests were performed on 13 vials discovered in a thermos by customs officers at Sydney Airport on Thursday.

Customs Minister Warren Truss confirmed the vials contained a growth hormone — a prohibited import.

In its statement, the embassy said Yuan would be recalled from the world swimming championships and further penalties would be considered.

The world swimming body FINA yesterday banned the 21-year-old Yuan and her coach, Zhou Zhewen, from this week's competition.

The Agence France Presse reported from Beijing that Zhewen would also be ordered home.

FINA secretary Gunnar Werner said a doping commission would convene overnight or this morning to discuss the positive test. Yuan and Zhewen will stay in Perth until the commission completes its inquiry.

Mr Werner said FINA regarded the case as a trafficking offence, which attracts a minimum four-year suspension. But he admitted FINA could not be sure if other swimmers at the championships had already used growth hormone.

FINA did not know a great deal about the substance or whether the quantity discovered was enough for one person or 10.

Earlier, officials from the Australian Sports Drug Agency went to the Chinese team's Perth hotel to carry out routine drug tests on a number of swimmers. Chinese swimmers were escorted by police to training at Challenge Stadium Pool.

The seizure continued to cause shock waves in world swimming.

Australian head coach Don Talbot said drug-taking was more widespread than was imagined.

He said the incident had caught FINA unawares, but its response could prove a turning point in its fight against drugs.

Crusading anti-doping coach Forbes Carlile and former world champion Tracey Wickham have called for the Chinese team to be expelled.

The championships, the biggest sporting event to be held in Australia



Burning issue: As the drug controversy rages, Chinese world record holder Jingyi Le, the focus of a drug scandal at the 1994 world swimming titles in Rome, laughs as she applies sunscreen to teammate Jiang Chengyi at training yesterday.

until the Sydney 2000 Olympics, have been characterised by more action out of the water than in.

German head coach Winfried Leopold had his accreditation withdrawn on January 4 after admitting he knew about the administration of performance-enhancing drugs in the former East Germany.

On Thursday, a Supreme Court judge blocked the ban and Leopold's accreditation was reinstated.

Hours later, the Australian Customs Service issued a statement that it had seized 13 vials of pink and purple-coloured powder from Yuan's baggage.

The vials were labelled in English as Norditropin, which contains the human growth hormone somatotropin.

The hormone helps increase muscle bulk and is a prohibited import under customs regulations. A spokesman for

Mr Truss said the specific type of human growth hormone contained in the vials would take some days to establish.

Customs was considering what further action should be taken.

The hormone's discovery was something of a fluke. Her bag was searched at Sydney Airport because she had placed it on the trolley of a supporter travelling with the team, who customs officials had assessed as being a "risk".

WA sports medicine expert Ken Fitch, a member of the International Olympic Committee's medical commission, said human growth hormones were diluted with a liquid, injected and had a half-life inside the body of only 20 minutes.



Yuan

Figure 11: *The West Australian* reports that Yuan Yuan was sent home (January 10, 1998).

championships was probably due to its drug abuse. Bold front page headlines with strong emotional connotations, "Chinese pool flop fans drug suspicion", the paper reported that because no Chinese had qualified for a final the previous night, coaches from other countries were questioning the drop in form (Eakins & Armstrong, 1998). *The Australian* was more circumspect and in an article headed "Chinese pool stars swim for their lives", predicted that Yuan was expected to receive a less attention from the media on her arrival home, than she had in Australia (McGregor, 1998a). This article was relegated to page two.

However, news broke overnight that four Chinese swimmers had tested positive to performance-enhancing drugs. In a surprising decision, especially after its treatment of drugs in recent days, *The West Australian* relegated these new revelations, which became the biggest story of the championships, to its least important story on the front page (Hughes, 1998c). It was overshadowed by an article headlined, "Our top schools: how they perform" (Ashworth, 1998). However, *The Australian* justifiably implemented banner headlines, "Drugs: China four test positive" (Price, Jeffery & Brook, 1998a) (Figure 12). Both articles pointed out that Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA) regulations permit the world body to penalise an entire nation when four of its swimmers tests positive within a 12 month period. *The West Australian* reserved most of its drugs coverage to the sports section with banner headlines, "China drug tests shake swim world" (Eakins, 1998b).

The Chinese drugs controversy completely disappeared from the front pages of the



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Sydney 2000
OFFICIAL PARTNER

Drugs: China four test positive

By MATT PRICE, NICOLE JEFFERY and STEPHEN BROOK

FOUR Chinese swimmers were barred from the world swimming championships in Perth last night after recording positive drug tests but the world swimming body will ignore calls for the entire team to be sent home.

Females Luna Wang, Cai Huijie and Zhang Yi, and male Wang Wei have been provisionally banned from competing at the championships after testing positive in a swoop by swimming's governing body, FINA, last Thursday, the day they arrived in Perth.

Traces of the banned substance Triamterene, a diuretic which is commonly used as a masking agent to prevent other drugs from being detected in urine samples, were found.

The find appears to confirm long-held suspicions surround-

IN SPORT

Popov pips Klim
Goodman disqualified

Reports — Page 16

ing the team's brilliant but erratic performance.

"It doesn't surprise me one little bit," Australian head coach Don Talbot said last night. "I've been saying it all along, I'm glad that they've been caught."

He called for the entire Chinese team to be sent home under FINA's four-strike rule which penalises an entire nation when four of its swimmers test positive for steroids within a 12-month period. (Diuretics are not steroids, but may be used to mask their presence.)

"It should be absolute, the

nation should not continue to compete," Talbot said. He described Shi Tianzhu, the senior Chinese official who this week declared the Chinese team drug-free, as a "bloody liar."

FINA honorary secretary Gunnar Werner said the Chinese must "learn the rules" but he ruled out any action against the team during the championships.

FINA decided to provisionally suspend the quartet without a hearing, pending a back up drug test of the tainted samples, which have been analysed at the internationally accredited Australian Government Analytical Laboratories in Sydney.

After six days of prevarication, FINA yesterday handed out strict bans to Chinese coach Zhou Zhewen and swimmer Yuan Yuan, whose luggage was discovered to contain 13 vials of



Yuan Yuan ... ban

a banned growth hormone.

Zhewen was suspended from national and international competition for 15 years, while Yuan cannot compete for four years.

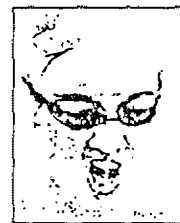
FINA deliberately withheld last night's bombshell announcement until after the evening finals program. Honorary secretary



Cai Huijie ... positive

Gunnar Werner has complained throughout the championships of the focus on drugs, which will now only increase after the positive drug tests.

The announcement followed China's Chen Yan winning the opening gold medal of the evening in the 400m women's free-



Zhang Yi ... positive

style event.

All of the four suspended competitors hold impressive world rankings, including Luna Wang, second in the 200m freestyle and Zhang Yi, fourth in the 100m breaststroke.

Chinese swimmers' use of banned drugs has been contro-



Wang Wei ... positive

versial since seven swimmers tested positive to banned steroids at the Asian Games in 1994. Positive testings have continued since but the continued abuse of swimming rules have drawn mounting anger.

FINA regulations prescribe a maximum two-year ban for pos-



Luna Wang ... positive

sitive testing to diuretics.

Earlier this week Chinese officials vehemently denied involvement with illegal drugs. Shan Ying, a bronze medalist in the women's 100m freestyle, reported the Yuan drug offence was unfair and had a team morale.

Poor performances by most of the Chinese in Perth provoked speculation among some national coaches that swimmers were slowing down deliberately.

FINA also announced Australian swimmer Scott would be suspended for months after testing positive in December to marijuana.

German swimmer Winfried Leopold, who caused international storm by admitting his involvement in the East German drug program, was tentatively cleared to stay on at the championships.

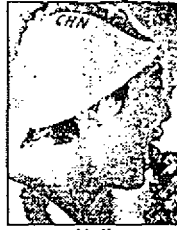
respective newspapers on January 16. That was caused by the feat of 15-year-old Brisbane schoolboy Ian Thorpe, who won the men's 400 metres freestyle gold medal the previous evening (Townsend, 1998, Price 1998). However, both daily papers continued their close examination and analysis of the drugs controversy inside. *The Australian* devoted page four to the issue. Seven stories and a graphic providing a profile of the suspended Chinese swimmers from these championships made certain very little about the drugs controversy was not covered (McGregor, 1998b; Price, Jeffery & Brook, 1998; Jeffery, 1998k; Price, 1998b; Price, 1998c; "Early alerts on Beijing", 1998; "Drugs in the pool", 1998; "Ripples in the pool", 1998). In addition, a documented history of incorrect dosage of performance-enhanced drugs was listed, starting in 1935 when testosterone derivatives synthesised in laboratories were allegedly given by Adolf Hitler to the German army to increase the aggressiveness of troops ("The Wrong Dose", 1998). *The West Australian* devoted pages four and five to "drugs in swimming". The local paper printed four stories, each with a photo, and also included a list of the 28 Chinese swimmers who have tested positive for banned substances since 1994 (Eakins, Martin & Marsh, 1998; Irving, 1998; "Diuretics may be link", 1998; Armstrong, 1998; "Roll of shame", 1998) (Figure 13). Editorial commentary called for the Chinese swimming team to immediately return home ("Discredited China should leave", 1998) (Figure 14). The attitude towards the Chinese swimmers was clear in *The West Australian*, when it editorialised:

Evidence is mounting — almost to an incontrovertible level — that banned drug use by Chinese swimmers is systematic and officially condoned. Although Chinese swimming officials continue to protest that there is no systematic doping in their team and that swimmers who have been sprung as drug cheats are acting as individuals, the facts tell a different story. . . . Chinese swimming teams of the 1990s have an

Roll of shame



Wang



Huijue



Wei



Yi

THIS is a list of 28 Chinese swimmers who have tested positive for banned substances. A coach also has been suspended.

Li Jie (f), April 1990, two years suspension.

Wang Xu (f), April 1990, two years.

Xu Jie (m), April 1990, two years.

Liu Dalin (f), April 1992, two years.

Lu Shinhang (m), April 1992, two years.

Zhou Xin (f), January 1993, two years.

Chen Xi (f), September 1993, two years.

Zhong Weiyue (f), January 1994, two years.

Bai Xiuyu (f), March 1994, one month.

Zhu Yi (m), June 1994, two years.

Zhen Ran (m), June 1994, two years.

Ren Xin (f), July 1994, two years.

Lu Bin (f), September 1994, two years.

Yang Aihua (f), September 1994, two years.

Xiong Guomin (m), October 1994, two years.

Hu Bin (m), October 1994, two years.

Fu Yong (m), October 1994, two years.

Zhang Bin (m), October 1994, two years.

Zhou Guanbin (f), October 1994, two years.

Yu Rhan (f), January 1996, two years.

Pu Shi (f), January 1996, two years.

Chen Jialin (f), January 1996, two years.

Lu Qiang (m), January 1996, two years.

Luna Wang (f), January 1998, to be heard.

Cai Huijue (f), January 1998, to be heard.

Zhang Yi (f), January 1998, to be heard.

Wang Wei (m), January 1998, to be heard.

Yuan Yuan (f), January 1998, four years for possession of human growth hormone.

Zhou Zhewen (coach), January 1998, 15 years.

OTHER COUNTRIES: USSR-Russia 7; Austria 4; US 3; Canada, Germany-East Germany, Australia 2; Britain, Tunisia, Egypt, Argentina, Poland, Indonesia, Brazil, Finland, France, New Zealand, Ukraine 1.

Figure 13: *The West Australian* lists the 28 Chinese swimmers who have tested positive for banned substances (January 16, 1998).

THE ISSUES

Discredited China should leave

EVIDENCE is mounting — almost to an incontrovertible level — that banned drug use by Chinese swimmers is systematic and officially condoned.

Although Chinese swimming officials continue to protest that there is no systematic doping in their team and that swimmers who have been sprung as drug cheats are acting as individuals, the facts tell a different story.

At the eighth world swimming championships in Perth so far, five Chinese swimmers and a coach have been banned or suspended. Almost a quarter of the swimming team of 23 is out of action because of offences associated with banned drugs and others have mysteriously scratched from heats.

Four swimmers at this meeting — Luna Wang, Cai Huijue, Zhang Yi and Wang Wei — have been suspended after testing positive to the banned substance Triamterene. The diuretic can be used to mask steroid use.

Earlier, Chinese swimmer Yuan Yuan was caught with 13 vials of banned human growth hormone in her luggage at Sydney Airport. Her coach, Zhou Zhewen, said he had put the vials in her luggage. The swimmer has been banned for four years and the coach for 15.

Some scientists have estimated that

The West Australian

PERTH FRIDAY JANUARY 16 1998

the contents of the vials could have sustained the whole Chinese swimming team for the championships. Zhou's explanation that he was given the vials by an unnamed person in China to deliver to an unnamed person in Australia is so far beyond belief that it is laughable.

Chinese swimming teams of the 1990s have had an outrageous record of involvement with banned substances, particularly women competitors. Twenty-three Chinese swimmers have tested positive to drugs since 1990, including seven at the 1994 Asian Games.

Chinese women's swimming in this decade has been notable for wild fluctuations in form and the overnight emergence of previously unknown swimmers recording times at or near world records. There are parallels with the performances of the drug-propelled East German swimming teams of the 1970s and 1980s under the officially-sanctioned doping regimes of the former communist state.

Based on the astounding results achieved at the Chinese national championships in October, the Chinese

women should have been overwhelmingly dominant in their events in Perth. When they arrived here, Chinese swimmers were ranked first in the world in 10 of 16 women's events on the basis of their October performances.

These women swimmers have fallen dismally short of expectations in Perth.

There has been no explanation for the dramatic plunge in the form of some of China's leading women swimmers. But there has been widespread speculation that the unavailability of their accustomed drugs could have something to do with it.

Some have also argued that — because of the intense focus on doping at the championships — Chinese authorities have decided that Chinese swimmers should not draw attention to themselves by recording unbelievable times.

Whatever the case might be, swimming's international governing body FINA should be taking a much closer interest in Chinese swimming's inconsistencies. Much more testing is needed and teams should be banned when there is evidence of drug use that goes beyond a misguided individual.

China has brought discredit to this meeting and to swimming. Its team should be asked to leave.

Figure 14: In an editorial, *The West Australian* says the Chinese swimming team should immediately return home (January 16, 1998).

outrageous record of involvement with banned substances, particularly women competitors. . . . China has brought discredit to this meeting and to swimming. Its team should be asked to leave. ("Discredited China should leave", 1998)

However, the editorial appears to be a "knee-jerk" reaction, especially considering in the same edition, *The West Australian* ran an article stating that FINA regulations did not permit the world swimming governing body to ban China from international competition. This was because the four Chinese swimmers tested positive to a diuretic triamterene. FINA had decided at its 1995 congress that penalties for those offences would apply only to individuals (Eakins, Martin & Marsh, 1998).

Victorian Michael Klim's success in the men's 100 metres butterfly on January 16 ensured there was no mention of drugs on the front page of *The Australian* the next morning. Readers of the national daily were met with a page-width photograph showing Klim winning the gold medal ("Gold, gold, gold", 1998). *The Weekend Australian's* coverage of the drugs situation on January 17 was confined to a full page article in the features section, where Nicole Jeffery (1998) expressed concern for the flow-on effect the Chinese drugs scandals could have on the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. In another two-page coverage of drugs in swimming, *The West Australian* reported that the cost of the drug testing at these championships would cost Western Australian taxpayers \$270,000 (Reardon, 1998).

It can be argued that the most balanced and analysed assessment of the Chinese drugs situation in the print media were the two articles written by former Western Australian senator, Noel Crichton-Browne, who was the deputy chairman of the Senate select

committee into drugs in sport in the mid-1980s. Crichton-Browne critically examined Australia's involvement with drugs in sport. In *The West Australian*, he claimed the Australian sports establishment was hypocritical in its stance against drugs (Crichton-Browne, 1998a; Crichton-Browne, 1998b), and he provided several examples of drug taking by Australian athletes and the refusal of some of the nation's leading sporting officials to take appropriate action. He also claimed that some of America's national sporting organisations, such as the American Amateur Athletic Federation, were more corrupt than almost any other national bodies. Crichton-Browne stated the reason that Chinese swimmers had returned so many positive tests was because of their inexperience and lack of sophistication in the pharmacology of drug use.

Summary

This chapter covered three case studies which were different in nature, but linked with common themes. The athletics and swimming controversies involved performance-enhanced drugs. In the athletics case, a coach who was involved in the administration of drugs in the former East German sports system decade earlier, was appointed to Australia's head coach. The print media forcefully pointed out that the decision of Athletics Australia to appoint Ekkart Arbeit would be viewed as hypocritical by other nations in the leadup to the 2000 Olympic Games, which will be held in Sydney. On the other hand, the swimming issue involved the current usage of drugs in sport. The Chinese swimming team, which has had a large number of its competitors testing positive during the previous four years, became involved in the biggest stories during the 1998 world swimming championships. In contrast, the conflict between Kathy Watt

and Lucy Tyler-Sharman was a less complicated issue. However, it did have a link with the track and field case, because both included a West Australian. Tyler-Sharman is a local rider who was trying to gain selection in the 3,000 metres individual pursuit ahead of the Watt, a Victorian. WAIS track and field coach, Tudor Bidder, was an applicant for the national coaching position. Because a local person was one of the key players in both controversies, there was a significant shift in the local print media, compared to the position adopted by the national press.

CHAPTER 5

Findings and Discussion

Research and Analysis

The results of this content analysis and qualitative research are presented and the procedures for analysis are detailed in this chapter. The major research question of this study is to investigate the role of the Australian print media in constructing controversies in sport. Four sub questions are addressed in consideration of the major question. These are: (a) what influence does the print media have in sporting controversies? (b) what role does the print media have in generating controversies? (c) to what extent, if any, is the print media biased in the reporting of sporting controversies? (d) what is the role of the print media in times of sporting controversies? Throughout this chapter, the results and discussion have been integrated for each research question to maintain unity with an emphasis on the findings, because as shown in Chapter 2, very little of the literature addresses the role of the print media in sporting controversies. Prior to addressing the research questions, it is necessary to review contextual information regarding the role of the media in reporting sporting conflicts. Chapter 4 focused on the newspaper reporting of the three case studies. Within the frames of this study, an analysis was conducted, involving the responses of the different groups of interviewees.

Framing News Stories

Studies have revealed that exposure by the media has a strong influence on many readers (Fischle & Stenner-Day, 1992, p. 163). The way the media frame news stories has important implications for shifts in public opinion. Shifts in news content can alter the importance that audiences attach to particular events and issues. The implication is that the media can effectively alter viewers' assessments of objects and events by framing a situation in one way rather than another.

Ron Alexander identified a new perspective on influence by the media (personal communication, December 8, 1997). The notion advanced by Alexander is that the media are selective when it chooses its major stories. He questioned why the media attacked Ekkart Arbeit's appointment as head track and field coach in Australia, and did not investigate several other German coaches who are working with other sports in this country. Alexander contends the media had a major influence on the Arbeit case, because journalists did a lot of investigative work. Alexander said:

They [the media] didn't investigate whether he was a good coach, or was there any other German coaches in Australia. There's reputedly to be nine or ten other German coaches that had also been had been involved in drugs, currently operating in Australia. But they've been left alone. No-one's done a big investigation into them. No-one seems to be saying that Arbeit's done his time. They investigate what he's done in the meantime. The media had it in for Arbeit.

Wally Foreman contrasted the print media's influence on the Arbeit case with the cycling controversy by Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt: "I think the coverage of the controversy regarding Arbeit had a far greater influence on the eventual decision, than the media's influence on the Watt-Tyler-Sharman court case" (personal

communication, December 9, 1997). Foreman is adamant that the reporting of Arbeit's appointment by a wide variety of media outlets created an avalanche of public opinion that made it impossible for Athletics Australia to proceed with the appointment. Foreman also believes that by interviewing local athletes, coaches and sports officials, and through investigations by the media in Germany, which uncovered considerable information about Arbeit's involvement in drugs, it had a profound influence on the termination of his contract. In contrast, Foreman argues that the media did not have any impact on the cycling conflict, because the ruling that Watt be given the ride in the pursuit was ordered by the CAS. Foreman said:

For the judge to come down and give a decision that flew in the face of public opinion and award the ride to Kathy Watt, I think you would say the media probably didn't influence the outcome of the case.

Brian Cook supports the theory that the media was extremely influential in Arbeit's contract being terminated (personal communication, December 18, 1997). He believes the print media used current values in Western society to present a case against Arbeit. Christine Stanton (personal communication, April 26, 1998) took that theory further, by saying that media influence on issues is significant. She contends that the media make the public aware of the issue, then the media places their interpretation on the situation, often creating controversy. Stanton adds:

Then with growing community response to the issue, the media then creates a path for the issue to take, which leaves no other direction. In other words, the media control the outcome of the issue.

Many athletes and sporting administrators realise how influential the media are by using the medium in an effort to influence public opinion in times of controversy, according to Tracey Searle (personal communication, December 8, 1997) and Jim Krynen

(personal communication, December 7, 1997). Brian Cook (personal communication, December 18, 1997) took the argument further, by saying:

People don't admit it, but I think there are even people at high levels who are influenced by the media. I mean, the law of the land stipulates that when people are going to be tried, you can't have media stories about them. In some respects you could carry that principle over to the sports arena, but it's not carried over.

In an examination of the cycling controversy, Lynn Embrey (personal communication, May 1, 1998) is adamant that the media did not influence the outcome, because the case was taken to court (CAS). Ron Alexander also argues that most people do not admit that they are influenced by the media (personal communication, December 8, 1997). He claims to having seen many occasions when the media influences greatly what happens in sport. For example, in the Australian Football League, many players and their managers use the press in an effort to attract improved deals in their clubs. Alexander argues that the press is "almost the third negotiator, because they provide the medium for the pressure to go on."

Dennis Cometti argues that the intensive examination by all facets of the media had a major impact on Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA), the world swimming governing body, taking a tough stance against the Chinese swimmers who tested positive at the world swimming championships (personal communication, April 6, 1998). Cometti added: "We're talking about front page day after day, and it jumped out of the sporting area on television and higher in the bulletin. It became a stronger story than just sport. It was certainly a big story in its way."

How were the Case Studies Reported?

There is too much irresponsible reporting of sporting controversies, according to Wally Foreman (personal communication, December 9, 1997). He believes this is caused by too much "knee-jerk" reporting in Australia. There are many times, he contends, that reporting is based on the headline and many instances the material should be presented in a more responsible manner. Foreman is adamant that Tyler-Sharman and Watt were attempting to sway the media, and certain members of the media were opportunistic in that regard and were willing to write one headline one day and search for the response the next day, as opposed to writing a balanced article from the outset. Foreman also points out that the incident involved Kathy Watt, an Olympic champion, and therefore deserved media attention. But some of the reporting could have been tempered with a more responsible approach. Foreman claims the print media seized on the opportunity to develop a very big story leading to the 1996 Olympic Games, adding:

All sections of the media, including the print media, seized on the opportunity to develop that feud further. I suspect that it was probably given a degree of coverage that could have been tempered. I don't like to see individuals clashing with officials, whether they're coaches, national bodies, state bodies, to the extent that this was allowed to develop. I don't think this was in the best interests of sport and I don't have any doubt whatsoever that the media helped to fuel the feud that existed. Having said that, I have always accepted the media's right to report events accurately, and if they continue to do that, I wouldn't have a problem.

In contrast to Foreman's assessment, Lynn Embrey believes the print media reported the cycling controversy responsibly (personal communication, May 1, 1998). She said:

The issue was there, and they had to cover it, simply because questions would have been asked. We thought that one person would be competing and suddenly someone else was. I think that's a natural curiosity. I didn't have a sense of the media creating the issue, I had a sense of the media trying to untangle it, to keep up to date with a fairly rapidly changing situation.

Olympic cyclist Jeff Leslie supports Embrey's assessment that the print media reported the cycling issue responsibly (personal communication, December 9, 1997). He is adamant that the media also highlighted an anomaly in the Australian Cycling Federation's selection system, bringing it to the public's attention. He adds:

Obviously the media want to get good stories and create interest, and in some ways make the public aware of certain things. I think that it was time that this [cycling conflict] came to a head, because an athlete should know what events he or she is going to ride at the Olympics, and not be changed, or mixed up in the last few minutes, unless it's injury. I would hate to think that going into an Olympic Games I didn't know if I was going to ride until the last few days.

Brian Cook believes the media are after controversy, by saying that "controversy sells" (personal communication, December 18, 1997). He draws attention to the conflict by arguing that the strong emotional feelings between Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt, and Australian head coach Charlie Walsh, was excellent for the media. But the emotions overshadowed what the controversy was about. He said:

It was sure to get great ratings, great readership and great sales. This was a very controversial issue. The unfortunate thing about the situation, it was very confusing. What people forgot at the end of the day was they got emotionally involved with the people without trying to see through and think rationally about what the selection criteria actually were. I think people will remember the controversy, but not the actual issue.

Christine Stanton, who has experienced many aspects of top-class sport — as an international athlete, a print, radio and television journalist, and a sporting administrator — is adamant that the print media generated the controversy between Tyler-Sharman

and Watt (personal communication, April 26, 1998). She said: "Once the two combatants had been detected, it was easy for the print media to keep the issue hot for several days."

Intensive, glorified coverage of the drugs controversies involving the Chinese swimming team at the world championships in Perth raises important questions for the press, according to Terri Bent (personal communication, March 12, 1998). She believes the issue had to be reported, but says it became "hysterical reporting", with headlines too bold for the issue. "I thought, 'oh God, I'd hate to be a Chinese swimmer that was clean'. Because they were all tarred with the same brush, which is a shame," Bent said. However, she supports the print media's coverage of the Ekkart Arbeit case, noting that the press was mainly questioning the credibility of Arbeit. But Bent accuses the print media of helping to generate the cycling issue into a major story.

However, Lyn Embrey believes the coverage of the Arbeit controversy was reported fairly, because it was a sporting issue of national concern (personal communication, May 1, 1998). She added: "I didn't have a sense of the media having information that they suddenly released at a time when they thought that it would generate a few more sales. I don't think it was that sort of issue." But Embrey asserts the media should take a more educational role in its coverage of major controversies, such as the Chinese and drugs issue:

It [the media] should change to actually present some of the facts about substances and about procedures. The media tend to be a bit light on in that element. I think there's probably a bit of assumption that the readers are not interested, or not capable of understanding some of the details. They [the media] tend to opt for a fairly superficial cover. It probably doesn't clarify the situation, but rather confuses it a little bit more.

Was the Print Media Biased?

Wick Temple, former Associated Press general sports editor, feels a change in the role of the sports journalist will be a movement away from the writer serving as a cheerleader for the home team (Garrison & Sabjak, 1985, p. 5). He told an Associated Press sports editors convention:

Sportswriters were cheerleaders for so long that coaches and players have come to expect newspapers to be a source of scrapbook material for them and a litany by which hero worshipers can stoke the fires of the hot stove leagues. It is going to take another decade for sport reporters to gain acceptance as journalists and put an end to the conception that they are publicity men and women. (1985, p. 5)

Temple (1975, p. 15) says that the question of bias is for the reader to decide. He contends that newspapers have points of view and are entitled to express them openly. However, Koppett (cited in Coakley, 1998, p. 396) notes that journalists must strive to be fair and thorough in their reporting. But this does not mean writing without personal opinion. He adds:

In fact, personal opinion will always influence what a person writes. Fairness simply depends on not letting opinions 'distort the accuracy of your account, to whatever extent you can be aware of distortion'. In other words, being a sportswriter is similar in some respects to being a sport sociologist: both must be aware of the perspectives they use to look at sports, and both must try to use systematic methods and critical thinking to explore the questions they raise. (p. 396)

In an examination of the track and field controversy involving the appointment of Ekkart Arbeit to the position of Australian head track and field coach, the interviewees in this study generally agree that the print media were biased in their reporting. Tracey Searle claims that because Perth coach Tudor Bidder was an applicant for the national coaching position, the local media consistently personally attacked Arbeit (personal communication, December 8, 1997). She adds:

Basically, the print media said he was a bad role model for athletes and kids alike, and they [the media] were demanding his resignation. It was very personal. My thoughts were that the print media should look further into their own back yards, and not just attack one person. The press should give both sides. The local press made him out to be a Nazi.

Though Jeff Leslie is convinced the print media was biased in its reporting of the Arbeit case, he believes it had the desired outcome (personal communication, December 9, 1997). He said: "The media was telling our government, 'listen, we don't want drugs anymore. We don't want our athletes to take drugs.'" The assumption in Leslie's argument is though the print media reported the issue in an unbalanced manner, the media highlighted its genuine concern about how Australian sport would be viewed internationally if an overseas coach who has been involved in drugs was appointed to an important role in the leadup to the 2000 Olympic Games.

At the 1998 world swimming championships in Perth, Christine Stanton believes that the print media was intent on concentrating its attention on the Chinese team for the duration of the titles (personal communication, April 26, 1998). She argues that the print media gave the controversy considerably more depth than the electronic media, saying this was because the print media were more informed about the Chinese team,

swimming as a sport, and drugs in sport.

However, the interviewees are divided in their assessment of the print media's coverage of the cycling controversy. Three-times Olympic swimmer Thomas Stachewicz (personal communication, April 9, 1998) and sports journalist Tracey Searle (personal communication, December 8, 1997) strongly believe that the local press was "going after" Kathy Watt, because Tyler-Sharman is a West Australian. They believe the media should have respected the guarantee to Watt from the ACF that she was selected for the pursuit. But senior academic Lynn Embrey expressed some sympathy for the media (personal communication, May 1, 1998):

I think, like all of us, they [the media] had some trouble coming to grips with actually what the problem was initially. I don't think everything was acted quite as quickly as it should have, though I don't think that was necessarily the fault of the press, but the way that the cycling federation handled it. The other element that became interesting was Tyler-Sharman being a West Australian. That angle was put fairly strongly in the press here. But I thought it was balanced to some extent by the fact that as a gold medallist, Kathy Watt got equal, or even more coverage. Though it didn't necessarily paint her in a good light.

Print media sporting journalist Mel Moffat is satisfied the print media gave the issue a balanced coverage (personal communication, December 5, 1997). He added: "It was a very emotional time. I think the print media represented it very well and gave a balanced point of view from both sides." Moffat said the print media was successful in highlighting inadequacies in the ACF selection process.

However, Dennis Cometti has no doubt that all media in Western Australia supported Tyler-Sharman (personal communication, April 6, 1998). "This was because Lucy is a West Australian," Cometti said. "The media tends to take one side of the argument. Sometimes, because the people doing the story, believe that to be the right case." Cometti commented that Watt also was an easy target for the media, because of her unpopularity.

Impact of the Media in Sporting Conflicts

Coakley (1998) stresses that print journalists must be especially sensitive to the impact of the media on the people they cover (p. 396). Journalists are called on to be fair, but they must also take care not to jeopardise people's reputations simply for the sake of entertainment. But Coakley (1998, pp. 396-397) explains that this does not mean that a journalist should avoid criticism that might hurt someone. However, Koppett (cited in Coakley, 1998) adds:

A journalist should never hurt someone unintentionally; the writer should do so only intentionally and with good reason. Otherwise, the sportswriter is simply engaging in a destructive, self-serving form of sensationalism that raises ethical concerns about the invasion of privacy. (p. 397)

Subsequently, Withnall has moved to support this view (1996, p. 108). She believes that quality journalism requires and values systematic thinking, openness and 'truth' seeking. These values are exhibited through skills in analysing, evaluating and applying information. Critical thinking encompasses such values and incorporates such skills. Abilities and predispositions linked to critical thinking include a sceptical questioning of evidence, authority and interpretation. She adds:

Only after consideration of these factors, can we construct a justifiable response to life's ill structured issues. As journalists and educators we would equate this construction with the publication or broadcast of a piece of which we are justifiably proud.

Dennis Cometti's view on the role of the press is that the media has a watchdog role to play (personal communication, April 6, 1998). For example, if a sporting organisation appointed someone such as Ekkart Arbeit to an important role, which could have serious implications for Australian sport, Cometti believes the media should question the motives and ethics of the decision. He said:

You're almost morally obligated to come out and say, 'hang on a second, if you're dinkum and we've been an agent for you in the past to say that you are dinkum and we've supported you on that, how can you make this appointment?' So, in many respects they [the media] had a reason to make the noise they did. I'm not sure they fuelled the controversy, but they certainly highlighted problems with the selection.

Cometti also points out that journalists must act honestly and treat all sides fairly in times of controversy. However, he concedes sometimes it is difficult if the journalist has inside knowledge that cannot be related to the public. He explains: "That sometimes makes it difficult. You've got knowledge that puts you on one side of the fence. But if you can't pass that knowledge on, at least initially, you appear to be on one side for no good reason, and you hope in the passing of time that comes out." Cometti contends that there are some people inside the media who are "rogue elements", who do not honestly report the issues.

In Ron Alexander's opinion, the co-operation between athletes and the media in times of controversy is essential (personal communication, December 8, 1997). However, he realises that sometimes one group is trying to hide something from the media. For

example, sometimes one of the athletes involved in the controversy may not have confidence in the press, or they feel the press has a particular angle or bias. Alexander predicts that media coverage of sport will become more intimate, because of the greater professionalism of many sporting organisations. This will result in more controversies, with the print media becoming involved more regularly. Alexander adds:

One wonders what the media's role is, in terms of saying when is stronger, faster, higher not the best, because it's encouraging people to cheat. Do we want full-time athletes in sport? I know when I did my physical education degree, that the Olympic ideals were that people were amateur. Because they didn't want people fighting for big prizes, or cheating in events, or doing things that weren't sportsmanlike conduct. And now with the big prizes and publicity, and the value of a gold medal at the Olympics, people are prepared to go to great lengths to get that. That includes cheating and being a full-time athlete. I'm not sure that full-time athletes training for Olympic Games is what we want.

In times of controversy, it is the responsibility of the media to report the facts, report both sides of the story in a balanced manner and let the public then decide the situation, according to Wally Foreman (personal communication, December 9, 1997). He believes that occasionally it may be necessary for an editorial about a sporting controversy, but Foreman believes too frequently, the actual daily report of a controversy has almost turned into an editorial or comment piece from a particular journalist. "Representing the facts accurately and presenting a balanced piece is what I think is the primarily responsibility," Foreman concludes.

Themes

Three groups of people were interviewed in this qualitative examination administrators, athletes and sports journalists. The 12 interviewees are intelligent

people, who acted in good faith in their efforts to arrive at a conclusion to the questions. However, it became evident during the interview process that the groups had different perspectives in the field of sport. The administrators possess a very strong knowledge and understanding of major issues over a wide range of sports. The journalists generally have a good understanding of major sporting topics, while the athletes are more focused in their own area of endeavour and struggled to fully comprehend some major sporting issues in other sports. However, despite these differences, the subjects provided a significant balance of views and analytical assessment of the performances of the print media in sporting controversies.

Evaluation of news media performances are subject to many points of view, as well as disagreements about appropriate criteria. But one useful way of forming conclusions about quality is to examine the analysis of selected participants in a cross section of sport, which is the case with the 12 interviewees chosen for this study. On the assumption that journalists, as insiders and participants, have a particular insight into questions of quality reporting, several themes emerged from this research. All subjects support the notion that the print media can be extremely influential in sporting controversies. Media bias is an important subject in relation to news reporting, though it can be argued that bias is hard to identify. However, accusations of bias are frequently made against newspapers. The interviewees generally conceded that the print media were biased in their reporting of the three case studies. They assert that in times of controversy, the print media has a watchdog role to play, endeavour to investigate all aspects of the conflict, and to report all facts as balanced as possible to the public.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the print media in constructing controversies in sport. The findings of this study are suggestive, but not conclusive. Given the size of the sample and data groupings, further research with a larger sample is required. Response from athletes, administrators and journalists was encouraging. The range of observations and suggestions from the interviewees was also encouraging. The major findings and conclusions of the research are presented in Chapter 6. A number of recommendations for further study are also discussed.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Focus of the Study

The print media is the focus of this study. Sport has been associated with the dominant forms of media for some time, with the marriage of sport and the media having contributed greatly to the economic growth of the sport industry (McPherson et al., 1989, p. 146). The media increasingly regulate sport to varying degrees, largely because of the economic dependence of sport on the media. Sport is also needed by the media to help sell advertising and to maintain or increase their ratings (McPherson et al., 1989, p. 160).

Ostensibly, sports journalists are expected to report information about the results of sports events; to provide inside information to particular players, teams, and sports events, and to give opinions that help the public interpret sports news. But while accuracy and objectivity in reporting are valued norms in journalism, the image of the sports journalist is one of obsequious appeasement. More than one critic of sportswriters has observed that their work all too often reflects "jock worship press-agentry and awe", rather than solid in-depth reporting (Eitzen & Sage, 1993, p. 291). In relation to bias in the media, an American journalist once likened the media to a camera flashing away in a dark room: "The integrity of the media is not only measured by the quality of the shots. There is also the issue of why the camera was pointed in one direction and not any of the others" (Flanagan, 1990, p. 81). Tiffen (1994) takes the

argument further by claiming accuracy and reliability of news and information are at the core of the self-image of the press (p. 71).

The purpose of this research is to explore, in-depth, the role of the Australian print media in constructing controversies in sport. The research is guided by four sub questions, examining the extent of the influence and bias of the print media, and other aspects of the role of the press in reporting sporting controversies. The researcher interviewed 12 subjects who have made significant contributions in their field, whether it was as an administrator, athlete or journalist.

The researcher has included a large number of texts in this examination, some governmental, but mostly journalistic, academic and commercial. This is to make the point that negotiation occurs at multiple sites, discourses are information flows, rather than bounded texts. While these texts have different levels of legitimacy in the context of academic writing such as this thesis, their inclusion challenges the position of the researcher, and the history of his or her discipline, as the powerful onlooker against the powerless looked at subject. Discourses on the sports print media cut across the political, social, cultural, economic, national and international. To speak of the relationship between the sports print media, the athletes and the public is also to speak of the political, social, cultural and economic contexts of this relationship. This research is interrogating both the practices of criticism and subject of criticism to problematise the neat separation of each element.

This research provided athletes, administrators and journalists with the opportunity to express their feelings about the role of the print media in sporting controversies. This is an area in sports involving the media which frequently becomes extremely emotional. Results indicated that all groups, though having mixed reactions to certain areas of the operations of the press, generally are very positive towards the print media's coverage of sporting controversies.

Setting the Scene

Chapter 1 set the scene for this thesis. It identifies that sport is a great passion for many Australians and the media give the public the opportunity to observe sport and its characters. Coverage of sport in newspapers has developed during the twentieth century, with the sports section now being one of the most widely read in the press. It is argued that the relationship between the media and sport is one of financial independence, because the sport section helps sell newspapers. The newspaper was the first significant mass communication medium and it still has an important role in today's television era of major technological developments. The introduction of television has dramatically changed sports writing. A sports writer can no longer rely simply on chronicling the facts. He or she now must write with greater flair and imagination to captivate the reader.

Chapter 2 recognises that theory dominates all research. Critical and non-critical analysis provided the theoretical framework for this thesis. The literature used for this study includes texts, newspapers, periodicals, professional journals, and the electronic

media. It can be argued here that there is a dearth of mutual respect between athletes and sports journalists in today's steadily deteriorating relationship between sports and the news media.

Chapter 3 details the method adopted by the researcher in conducting this study. The researcher selected the 12 subjects because he believes they have something significant to contribute to this study. Because of the limited scope of this study, only two newspapers were used in the research — *The West Australian* and *The Australian*. The subjects read *The West Australian*, Perth's daily newspaper, every day, and regularly perused *The Australian*, which is the national daily. All interviewees had reached at least national level in their field and most had experience in the international sporting arena, either as an athlete, administrator or journalist.

Chapter 4 focuses on the critical question: "What Role does the Print Media have in Constructing Controversies in Sport?" The study outlines its investigations into the three case studies which were examined in this research: (a) The conflict between cyclists Kathy Watt and Lucy Tyler-Sharman in the four months leading to the 1996 Olympic Games; (b) The controversial appointment of German track and field coach, Dr Ekkart Arbeit, to Australia's head athletics coach in 1997; and (c) The drugs controversies involving the Chinese swimming team during the world championships in Perth early in 1998.

Chapter 5 examines the findings of the research and introduces various aspects which required discussion. A close analysis is made of the interviewees' responses to the case studies, with its themes being explored.

Influence of the Print Media

The influence of the media penetrates every aspect of social, political and cultural life (Daniel, cited in Henningham, 1990, p. 102). However, attempts to measure or explain that influence are varied (Mayer, cited in Mayer & Nelson, 1979, p. 535-546). Henningham's (1990, p. 102) argument that the media's reputation for pervasive and persuasive influence is too well heralded to dispute is supported by the subjects involved in this study. All interviewees are adamant that the print media wields a strong influence over the outcome of many sporting controversies. The intensive media coverage can be seen as being responsible for Athletics Australia to reverse its original decision and cancel German athletic coach Ekkart Arbeit's contract as Australia's head track and field coach. Athletics Australia delayed terminating Arbeit's appointment for six weeks. In the meantime, the appointment was being continually attacked by the mass media. Even Prime Minister John Howard and Australian Olympic Committee president, John Coates, were quoted in the media as being critical of the appointment.

However, the print media had significantly less influence in the cycling controversy. *The Australian* treated the issue in a reasonably balanced way, but *The West Australian*, which can be seen to have a vested interest in the outcome, was significantly on the side of its local rider, Lucy Tyler-Sharman. Though Tyler-Sharman had been riding the

faster times, Watt had a written guarantee from the Australian Cycling Federation (ACF) that she would be selected for the 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the 1996 Olympic Games. The over-riding factor was the International Court for Arbitration in Sport, which was not influenced by the print media's coverage, and it ordered the ACF to select Watt for the pursuit.

The media had even less influence in the Chinese drugs scandals. Despite intense examination by the print media of the Chinese swimming team, there is no evidence that the media had an influencing outcome. During the championships, after positive tests by four Chinese swimmers, *The West Australian* and *The Australian* both editorialised that the Chinese team be sent home immediately. However, the world swimming governing body, FINA, refused to take this action, because the rules did not allow a nation to be disqualified from a competition in such circumstances.

Does the Media Generate Controversies?

It can be argued that it is not easy to report and interpret the news in times when emotion is involved such as the cycling controversy. There is little evidence in the newspaper coverage of the conflict that the print media generated the controversy between Kathy Watt and Lucy Tyler-Sharman. There was considerably more large headlines and significant space given to the dispute between the pair in *The West Australian*. This was because a local rider (Tyler-Sharman) was involved. But though the Perth newspaper can be accused of bias towards Tyler-Sharman, it is difficult to sustain a charge that *The West Australian* actually generated the conflict.

The four kinds of editorial coverage an issue can be given in a newspaper are through news reporting, through articles of comment and analysis, through editorials and through letters to the editor. It is the contention of this study that the Australian print media took a stance that was firmly opposed to the Chinese swimming team and Ekkart Arbeit. The similarities between the two cases are that both involved performance-enhancing drugs. Similar to the cycling controversy, it is unfair to accuse the press of generating the drugs controversies. Athletics Australia appointed Arbeit as its head coach without fully investigating his background, and the Chinese swimming team had four of its competitors test positive, and another swimmer was caught with an illegal substance. The incidents were clearly newsworthy and warranted extensive news coverage.

Bias or Impartiality in the Media?

There was a strong suggestion from the interviewees and news analysis that reporting of the three case studies contained some bias. This can be attributed that in two of the areas — the cycling conflict and athletics coaching controversy — a local person was in the centre of the issue. There was a distinct difference between the reporting styles of the track and field controversy. *The West Australian* and *The Australian* both did not want German coach, Ekkart Arbeit, taking charge of training this country's athletes for the 2000 Olympic Games. During the six weeks from Arbeit's appointment by Athletics Australia, to his dismissal, the media launched a personal attack on him, for his involvement with drugs while head track and field coach with the former East Germany during the late 1980s. The national newspapers constantly implied that Arbeit was not

a good role for this nation's young athletes and would not be viewed in a good light internationally. However, *The West Australian* had another reason for not wanting Arbeit in the head coaching role — a Perth coach, Tudor Bidder, was an applicant for the position. *The West Australian* continually mentioned that Bidder was overlooked for the position, in favour of a coach who had administered drugs to his former East German athletes. However, *The Australian*, though just as insistent that Arbeit's Australian contract should be cancelled, preferred to conduct an exhaustive investigation into his background.

While some would see the difference between *The West Australian* and *The Australian* in the track and field case study as considerable, it pales in comparison with the contrast between the papers in the cycling conflict. *The West Australian* and *The Australian* have characteristic differences in their news priorities and styles. *The Australian* is a broadsheet and it is not always useful to evaluate *The West Australian* as if it were a failed broadsheet without considering the distinctive appeals to its readership. Conversely, they were both covering the same set of events in the cycling conflict. The contrast between the two styles was evident in the priorities of the newspapers. One of the riders involved, Lucy Tyler-Sharman, is a West Australian, so from the early stages of the controversy, the Perth paper pledged its support to the American-born rider. Even after the International Court for Arbitration in Sport (CAS) ruled that Watt should be Australia's representative in the women's 3,000 metres individual pursuit at the Atlanta Olympics, the Perth paper unfairly declared her unplaced performances in the event as a failure. There is evidence to suggest that Lucy Tyler-Sharman was given emotive

support in *The West Australian*. This is despite the Australian Cycling Federation having guaranteed her rival, Kathy Watt, the ride in the event. *The West Australian* continually slanted its articles to the local angle. On the other hand, *The Australian* tempered its coverage and provided a more balanced coverage.

The sheer intensity of the Chinese swimming team's coverage added to the feelings of victimisation, especially when the coverage of the drugs issues at the 1998 world swimming championships was compared with other stories during the titles. Each story involving the Chinese had a clear message and most had a strong emotional impact. But the complexities of swimming politics and international diplomacy were merely a subdued backdrop to the personal drama of the swimmers involved. The global events were presented with an over-riding stress on personalisation. Similarly, the emphasis on the emotional basis of the Chinese swimmers takes precedence over considering their effectiveness, whether or not all of the Chinese were taking banned performance-enhanced substances.

If there is a link to be made between the emphasis of news reporting and the direction of any comment or analysis writing, such a link could be expected to extend to the editorials in the newspaper. During the Chinese swimming drugs scandals this was the case in *The West Australian*. However, its editorials constantly followed, instead of lead the way in analysing the situation. Despite its reputation for objectivity, an analysis of the world swimming championship coverage reveals *The Australian* also to be guilty of serious biases. This absence of objectivity is not principally due to error, negligence,

or the myopia of particular journalists and editors. These exist, but if they were the root sources of bias and misrepresentation, the gap between objective and reported reality would be a random one. Saturation coverage of the Chinese swimming team and drugs in sport dominated, not only the sports sections of the press, but also front page, general news pages inside, and feature sections. It can be argued that the Chinese team had warranted the intensified coverage, because of its involvement with drugs, which had resulted in 28 Chinese swimmers testing positive in the previous four years.

Role of the Print Media in Times of Controversies

The media is often accused of hounding people involved in controversies and conflicts. The media's role in such cases is difficult to define. The depiction was accomplished through common conventions of news coverage: quotations and background from officials, editorial commentary and analyses and investigation from journalists. As the stories in these case studies developed, the portrayal was complemented through exhaustive details of the background of the people at the centre of the conflict — Kathy Watt, Lucy Tyler-Sharman, Ekkart Arbeit or the Chinese swimmers.

The print media are captive to the uncertainties and changing expectations which attend all sporting conflicts. The extensive coverage of these controversies doubtless increased the public's emotional involvement, but to some extent the extra attention produced more noise than increased public understanding. Sometimes perspectives and reliability were casualties of the quest for instantaneity. The intensity of media coverage produced a range of discontents. Each sporting controversy and conflict is unique, and the print

media's achievements and failings will vary with its nature and their capacities. But the three sporting controversies in this study demonstrated in full measure the inevitability that the media will be subjected to contrasting criticisms in any contemporary sporting conflict, caught between conflicting sport and passions, and contradictory expectations about their roles.

Summary

Sport is important to Australians and, by extension, sports writing is also important. Print sports journalists now operate in a professional and social environment that has assumed a new complexion in recent years. There is a strong argument that sports writing in Australia will need to improve. Given the enormous public interest in sport in this country, it is quite extraordinary that most have made no serious attempt to treat the subject on an intelligent basis in the media. Australian sports writing, with a few honourable exceptions, is confined to cliché-ridden descriptions of specific events and performances. Journalists must be aware of creating attitudes and unexpected realisations. A case can be made that greater accuracy, far more disclosure of sources, less appearance of conflict of interest, a less predictable pattern of partisan bias and crisper writing should be expected of the sportswriter. Many articles in the case studies of this research were reported in a similar vein. This could indicate that a large number of this country's journalists have a *pack mentality* and will follow each other in the writing of major issues. This can lead to distortion and inaccuracies. Turner (1994) argues that print journalists routinely follow up stories to corroborate information received from official sources, or even to pursue an alternative opinion (p. 151). In this

study, there is evidence that the print media provided selected versions of the controversies.

This study provides support for previous research findings examining the role of the print media in constructing sporting controversies. Of the areas of sportswriting investigated, the influence and bias of the media emerged as the most important aspect identified by the interviewees. An important finding, which adds to the body of knowledge in this area, is the role of the media in representing the facts accurately and presenting a balanced view. The athletes and administrators identified this domain as a problem area. However, the relationship between athletes and the media requires further research. By employing qualitative methods, the study provided information from the participant's perspectives, a perspective that has been largely neglected by previous research.

Recommendations for Further Research

Sports journalism is undergoing constant change. It is a change that was necessary to combat the arrival of television and the subsequent intrusion of live sport in our lounge rooms meant the readers wanted more than just match reports. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the role of the media in constructing controversies in sport. It has identified several reasons for the way the media acts in the way they do during sporting controversies and conflicts. Although this is a case study limited in scope, the analysis can at least suggest further areas of inquiry. Research in the area of the print media's involvement in sporting controversies is limited in Australia. However, a

number of different sets of future research questions arise from the thesis. The researcher asked his subjects a large number of questions. However, because the limitations of this study, some of the information could not be implemented into this research. It could form the basis for future studies. A pressing study relating to the role of the print media in reporting sporting controversies is: should the news media hire and train reporters and editors knowledgeable about the sports they are assigned?

Another area that should be examined is the value that is served by the cooperation between the athletes and the news media in times of controversies in sporting events. Also, a study could be conducted into the extent that sporting organisations teach their members how to handle themselves in news interviews. Is there sufficient need for more sporting organisations to train their athletes how to handle media questioning? Another aspect that could be examined, are there times when journalists and sports editors treat athletes as super-human, instead of just human? Finally, a worthwhile investigation could be to examine the gender differences of sporting departments at major newspapers. Should there be a greater diversity in sports departments?

Personal Epilogue

The author of this study has been a full-time newspaper journalist for 20 years. After spending several years as a reporter on country newspapers in Goldsworthy, Port Hedland, Esperance, Wongan Hills, Moora, Northam and Kalgoorlie, he moved to Perth in March 1984 to accept a position as a sports journalist at *The West Australian*. He is still employed as a sports writer at the State's morning daily newspaper.

After covering the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and several world championships in a variety of sports, the researcher viewed first-hand the activities and writings of a large number of Australian and overseas sports journalists. In the opinion of the author, the quality of sports reporting in Australia has ranged from outstanding to sub-standard. Further examination revealed a lack of research into sports journalism in Australia. This, plus an involvement in journalism for much of his working life, and a lifetime love of sport, were the motivating factors for the author to commence undergraduate studies at Edith Cowan University, and subsequent post graduate research into sports journalism.

This research has also been a learning curve for the author. Apart from having to change his writing style from journalese to academic writing, the author also changed from the criticised to the critic. The author was directly involved in the reporting of two of the three case studies in this research — the cycling conflict in the lead-up to the 1996 Olympic Games and the Chinese drug controversies during the 1998 world swimming championships in Perth.

Completing this study was another phase of the author's education. It has provided him with the stimulus and enthusiasm to continue research in the area of sports journalism.

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APPENDIX A

Introduction Letter

<Date>

<Subject's Name>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address> <Post Code>

Dear <Subject>

As previously discussed with you, I am seeking your assistance in a research project entitled, 'The role of the print media in constructing controversies around athletes', which I am undertaking for my Honours degree in a Bachelor of Arts (Media Studies) at Edith Cowan University. My interest is broadly in the area of sports journalism. As a case study, I will use the controversy between cyclists Kathy Watt, of Victoria, and Lucy Tyler-Sharman, of Western Australia, in the leadup to the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

As a working journalist for the last 23 years, with 14 years specialising in sport, I am keen to further my knowledge by research into sports journalism. During my career, I have covered a countless number of sporting events from small local competitions, to Commonwealth Games, world championships and Olympic Games. Resulting from this experience and knowledge of the pressures faced by athletes, administrators, officials and journalists, this study will examine ways of improving the relationship between athletes and the media.

For me to obtain such information, it is necessary to interview athletes, administrators or sporting organisations and sports journalists who have experienced elite sport in their career. From my knowledge of your sporting <journalistic/sporting/administrative> experiences, I believe that you may be a suitable subject, and would be pleased if you would agree to participate in the research.

Your participation in this research would involve the completion of a maximum of two interviews which, with your permission, would be tape recorded and transcribed in full.

The initial interview is expected to take approximately one hour. If I require any clarifications on any points, the second interview, again at your convenience, will take considerably shorter time.

The information gained from this research will be reported in a thesis and selections from the thesis may be published to provide assistance for athletes, coaches, administrators, sporting associations, journalists and significant others, in an attempt to provide the best possible outcomes for athletes and the media.

You will be asked if you would like to be identified in the thesis. The identity of the subjects within the study who do not want to be named will be masked by pseudonyms or codes and they will not be identifiable. Reports from the research may include excerpts of comments made by subjects, but confidentiality and anonymity will be assured at all times.

If you agree to participate in this study, could you please sign the 'Form of Disclosure and Informed Consent' and return in the envelop provided. I will contact you in the near future and make further arrangements regarding the interview process. At any stage throughout the research you would be free to withdraw with no further obligation.

If you have any immediate questions, or require further clarification regarding any of the above details, please do not hesitate to contact me at home or my place of employment at any time, or my supervisor for this research project, Mr Douglas White, during working hours at Edith Cowan University on 9400 5555.

Thank you for your consideration of assisting with this research.

Yours sincerely

David Marsh

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX B

THE ROLE OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN CONSTRUCTING CONTROVERSIES IN SPORT

by

**David Marsh
Bachelor of Arts (Media Studies) Honours
Edith Cowan University**

'FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT'

I _____ (Participant's name) have read
the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered
to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published
providing I am/am not (please circle the requirement) identifiable.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Participate)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Researcher)

APPENDIX C

Introductory Information for Interview

The Role of the Print Media in Constructing Controversies in Sport

Purpose and procedures of the research

Is to gain an understanding of the experiences and reactions that athletes, coaches, administrators and officials go through in relation to their association with the media. Completed by an interview that will be taped in full.

Reasons for doing the research

To provide formal information about the topic for athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, sporting associations and journalists.

Phases of the research

The research I am conducting deals with only a small area of sports reporting. There is scope for continued research in the future, particularly as very little investigation has been conducted on this topic within the Australian sporting environment.

How the information will be used

I will analyse the completed transcripts and look for repeated themes and issues that are common among subjects and also examine the differences between subjects' experiences. I anticipate that my results may be published in Australian sporting magazines and in relevant journal publications.

Confidentiality and subject rights

You may give your permission for yourself to be identified in this study. However, if you remain anonymous, you will be identified by codes or a pseudonym and all information will be treated with strictest confidence.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage with no further obligation.

You may stop the interview at any time or pause if you want to say something off the record.

I may make notes while you are speaking and I will also be watching the tape at times and will pause the interview after thirty minutes to turn the tape over.

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. Do I have your permission to record this interview on cassette tape?
2. Could you tell me something about yourself?
 - Schooling
 - Employment
 - Sporting involvement

Let's move onto your involvement in sport/journalism.

3. Could you describe to me your involvement in sport from the time you started to where you are now?
4. Could you describe the highlights during your career?
5. Could you describe the disappointments of your career?

Let's now focus on the controversy between Australian cyclists Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt in the leadup to the 1996 Olympic Games.

6. Were you directly or indirectly involved in the controversy?
7. If you were involved, could you describe to me the effect it had on you in relation to the two cyclists, cycling administrators or journalists?
8. What do you remember about the controversy?

9. How do you believe the media represented the issue? Was it balanced, or otherwise?
10. Do you believe the print media helped to generate the issue?
11. In hindsight, do you think the media's involvement had an impact on the outcome?
12. Should the issue have been reported differently? If so, how?
13. Do you have any thoughts on how the Australian Cycling Federation handled the issue?
14. If you think that the ACF could have handled it better, what could the ACF administration done to improve its dealings with the issue?
15. Do you think that the controversy will have a long term affect on the sport of cycling in Australia?
16. Do you think this other sporting organisations in Australia will learn from the controversy?
17. More recently, Dr Ekkart Arbeit, the former East German head track and field coach, was appointed as head track and field coach in Australia. His contract was then terminated. What do you remember about the controversy?
18. Were you involved directly or indirectly in this issue?
19. How do you believe the print media handled the case?
20. Do you believe the print media helped to fuel the controversy?

21. Do you believe the media influenced the eventual outcome?
22. Should the issue have been reported differently. If so, how?
23. How do you believe Athletics Australia handled the issue?
24. Do you think the controversy will affect track and field in this country or how Australian sport is viewed internationally?

In January 1998, before and during the world swimming championships in Perth, two issues involving drugs received considerable coverage by all news media. The respective controversies involved German head swimming coach Winfried Leopold, and the Chinese Chinese swimming team.

28. What do you remember about the controversies?
29. Were you involved directly or indirectly in the case?
30. How do you believe the print media reported both issues?
31. Did the print media provide a balanced coverage, or was it hysterical reporting?
32. Should the controversies have been reported differently?

Now, we will move away from specific incidents.

33. Should the news media hire and train reporters and editors knowledgeable about the sports they are assigned?
34. Are there times when reporters and sport editors appear to treat athletes as super-human, instead of human.

35. Does the media tend to overstate the influence they have on the outcome of sporting controversies?
36. What do you believe is the role of the media in times of controversy?
37. Should sporting organisations teach all members how to handle themselves in news interviews?
38. In times of controversy, do you believe that cooperation between the athletes and the news media serves the best interests of the sport?
39. We have covered considerable detail about the print media's involvement in sports controversy and issues. Are there any other thoughts or issues involving the print media's coverage of sport you would like to discuss about anything we have already spoken about?
40. Do you have any questions about either of the discussions we have had or anything to do with the study that I am doing?
41. Are there any questions about the role of the print media in reporting sport you thought I would ask, but I haven't?
42. Do you feel that you have been influenced by myself or my views throughout the interview in any way?
43. Would you like to review the transcripts prior to them being analysed?
44. Do you give permission for your name to be used?

APPENDIX E

Interview Evaluation Sheet

Subject Name: _____

Interview Number: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interview Setting: _____

Subject's Reaction to Interview: _____

Subject's Ability/Willingness to Answer Questions: _____

Interviewer's Reaction to Subject: _____

Suitability of Questions: _____

Other Comments _____

APPENDIX F

Interview Record

Subject Name: _____ Subject Code: _____

Day and Date: _____

Location: _____
(Address)

Interview Number: _____

Interview Start Time: _____

Interview Completion Time: _____

Tapes used: _____ Tape Identification Label: _____

Comments relating to interview situation:

The Environment _____

The Subject: _____

Self: _____

APPENDIX G

Interview Transcription Record

Subject Name: _____ Subject Code: _____

Total number of tapes used for interviews: _____

Tape 1

Length of Interview: _____

Transcription completed: Side A: _____ Page Numbers: _____

Side B: _____ Page Numbers: _____

Tape 2

Length of Interview: _____

Transcription completed: Side A - _____ Page Numbers: _____

Side B - _____ Page Numbers: _____

APPENDIX H

Subject Progress Record

Initial Source: _____

Initial contact made: Letter / Phone Date: _____

Follow up letter sent: _____

Participation: Yes / No Indemnity form completed: _____

Subject's Name: _____

Subject's Code: _____

Address: _____

_____ P/Code: _____

Telephone contact: Home: _____

Day / Hours available: _____

Work: _____

Day / Hours available: _____

Int. number one proposed: _____ Completed: _____ (Date)

Int. number two proposed: _____ Completed: _____ (Date)

Thank you letter sent: _____ (Date)

Follow up call made: _____ (Date)

APPENDIX I

Interview of Dr Lynn Embrey

Position: Senior Lecturer

Venue: Dr Embrey's Office, School of Biomedical and Sports Science, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus

Date: 1 May 1997

Time: 1.30 p.m.

Length of Interview: 35 minutes

DM: Do I have your permission to record this interview on cassette tape?

LE: Certainly, yes.

DM: Could you tell me something about yourself?

LE: My secondary education was at a small country school in Victoria. It had very limited opportunities in way of physical education and sport. What you don't get is what you become most interested in. I then went to the University of Melbourne and completed a Diploma of Physical Education, followed up by a secondary teaching certificate, and quite a few other post graduate qualifications in that area. After seven or eight years of teaching at secondary school, I then moved on to the tertiary sector [1973] and I have been there ever since. Currently, I am based in the sports science program at Edith Cowan University. I teach in sports science, applications, leisure science and sports management program, sports development, in the physical and health education, and history of physical and comparative education. Plus supervising post graduate students.

DM: Let's move onto your involvement in sport.
Could you describe to me your involvement in sport from the time you started to where you are now?

LE: My first love was swimming. But growing up in a country town without a swimming pool put restrictions on what you could accomplish in the river. When they finally opened a swimming pool, I was 15 or 16, so it was a bit late to start a swimming career, but it was one of the elements that motivated me to go on into physical education.
Netball — I played regularly, but not at a particularly high level.
I attended softball clinics, through that I met the great Marj Dwyer, so I played reasonable level softball with Marj's team in Melbourne. I played there for four or five seasons in the winter and in the summer I played country competition in

the Shepparton Association.

Since then, I have had some sort of connection with that sport. My main interest now is its history. It has taken me in the full cycle.

DM: You're writing the history of softball?

LE: I've done the Australian one (history) and am now working on the WA history. I guess the other aspect that has continued all the way through that is a particular interest in women's sport. I was involved with the establishment of the Women's Sport Foundation here in the West.

In the professional organisations, for example, with ACHPER, the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (president for two terms from July 1993 to January 1998; now the Vice-President), I was involved in that when it had a special interest group. That was back in 1979, at a stage when Wendy Ey was active in getting it going. Then we moved outside ACHPER to become our own organisation, and became involved at State, national and international levels.

DM: Let's now focus on the controversy between Australian cyclists Lucy Tyler-Sharman and Kathy Watt in the leadup to the 1996 Olympic Games. Were you directly or indirectly involved in the controversy?

LE: No involvement whatsoever.

DM: What do you remember about the controversy?

LE: Fairly extensive media coverage, in the print and electronic. Because it seems that people were coming from different angles, and the goal posts kept shifting. It seemed that the cycling federation had established a set of criteria, and on that basis had selected one person, then made a change and selected someone else, and expected the first person to simply walk away from it. I don't know how that organisation actually functions, but it seems to me at this stage that it was dysfunctional.

DM: How do you believe the media represented the issue? Was it balanced, or otherwise?

LE: I think, like all of us, they had some trouble coming to grips with actually what the problem was initially. I don't think everything was acted on quite as quickly as it should have, but I don't think that was necessarily the fault of the press, but I think the way that the cycling federation handled it.
The other element that became interesting was Tyler-Sharman being a West

Australian. That angle was put in fairly strongly in the press here. But I thought it was balanced to some extent by the fact that as a gold medallist, Kathy Watt got equal, or even more coverage. It didn't necessarily paint her in a good light.

DM: Do you believe the print media helped to generate the issue?

LE: No, I think the issue was there, and they had to cover it. Simply because questions would have been asked. We thought that one person would be competing and suddenly someone else was. I think that's a natural curiosity. I didn't have a sense of the media creating the issue, I had a sense of the media trying to untangle it, to keep up to date with fairly rapidly changing situation.

DM: In hindsight, do you think the media's involvement had an impact on the outcome?

LE: I don't think so, simply because it was taken to court.

DM: Should the issue have been reported differently? If so, how?

LE: It's hard to say, in hindsight.

DM: Do you have any thoughts on how the Australian Cycling Federation handled the issue?

LE: I had the overall impression that it was probably dysfunctional. Although I was never sure, and never will be, whether it was actually the cycling federation or the national coach. There seems that there were a couple of strongly-willed people.

DM: Do you think that the controversy will have a long term affect on the sport of cycling in Australia?

LE: No. I think it was probable eclipsed by Shane Kelly [foot slipped off the pedal at the start of the 1000 metres time trial at the 1996 Olympic Games, so he had no chance of a medal], because that was a more emotional circumstance.

DM: Do you think this other sporting organisations in Australia will learn from the controversy?

LE: No. I wish they would, but I think the reality is no, given that we have so many

organisations, there is 150 plus. Some of them are well trained to handle the media and others, right from the outset, are anti-media, and make life difficult for themselves.

DM: More recently, Dr Ekkart Arbeit, the former East German head track and field coach, was appointed as head track and field coach in Australia. His contract was then terminated. What do you remember about the controversy?

LE: Again, it was one of those situations that we were tantalised with a little bit by bit coming to light. I don't think the media generated, or went beyond their bounds in simply an unfolding story that they reported. Again, I think there was a WA slant put on some of the stories, because another contender, Tudor Bidder, had missed out and WA parochialism was that Tudor Bidder was a good guy with a clean record, and it was a bit sad that we, WA, missed out in that sense. I guess what staggered me was how poorly the whole selection process was. For all intent and purposes, Arbeit was accepted on face value, without any investigation, or follow-up with his referees.

DM: Do you believe the print media helped to fuel the controversy?

LE: No, I don't think so. To the sense of where it was located in the paper, it was front page on *The Australian*. In that sense, it was eye-catching and people do take more notice of it. It was a pretty significant event.

DM: Should the issue have been reported differently. If so, how?

LE: No, I don't think so, because it was an issue of national concern. Again, because it unfolded bit by bit, I didn't have a sense of the media having information that they suddenly released at a time when they thought that it would generate a few more sales. I don't think it was that sort of issue.

DM: How do you believe Athletics Australia handled the issue?

LE: Woefully. Athletics in Australia has been in such a mess for so long that I don't think they've got their feet on the ground to deal with those sorts of things. Perhaps their intent was pure that they were trying to get the best possible [appointment]. They didn't have the chance to do their homework. They got caught with egg on their face.

DM: Do you think the controversy will affect track and field in this country or how Australian sport is viewed internationally?

LE: I think there will be a certain degree of scepticism now, about how thoroughly those sorts of processes are being investigated. Given that sport must now play the same game as all future employees, that you have to abide by all sorts of rules and regulations. When people from countries do have documented records in areas like drugs and other forms of athlete abuse, then we must do something about it.

DM: In January 1998, before and during the world swimming championships in Perth, there was an issue involving drugs regarding the Chinese swimming team.
What do you remember about the controversies?

LE: I'm still not sure if it was serious, or a comedy. Because one of the Chinese swimmers was actually caught at the quarantine section at customs with stuff that wasn't legit. You're left wondering whether the athlete had actually been framed, or whether the Chinese were taking it through as medicine.

DM: How do you believe the print media reported the issues?

LE: Because it is more recent, I think the print media was pretty well okay. I was a bit annoyed with some of the TV coverage. Some of the scenes of the athletes coming out of the airport, the athletes rushing at the cameras, there was probably some provocation there. Sometimes they get a bit too close with the cameras.

DM: Did the print media provide a balanced coverage, or was it hysterical reporting?

LE: There is an area that I find worrying, for a number of reasons. It concerns me that we are adopting a holier-than-thou approach, when in actual fact there have been some instances suggesting some of our own people — swimmers and other athletes — have used performance-enhancing substances.

DM: Now, we will move away from specific incidents.
Should the news media hire and train reporters and editors knowledgeable about the sports they are assigned?

LE: Yes. Particularly in this day and age, where sports are very technical, and particularly sports have become an industry.

DM: Are there times when reporters and sport editors appear to treat athletes as super-human, instead of human.

LE: Yes. I think that's what we all look for, in the break from the daily grind. We still like to pride ourselves as a nation on sporting ability.

DM: Does the media tend to overstate the influence they have on the outcome of sporting controversies?

LE: I don't recollect the media actually taking a pat on the back because of what they've done. Mostly, they've reported simply reporting what's out there.

DM: What do you believe is the role of the media in times of controversy?

LE: To present both sides of the story.

DM: Should sporting organisations teach all members how to handle themselves in news interviews?

LE: Certainly. I guess it's a high new element and intimidates some people. How much you can ask them to do is the other side of the coin, especially when they are volunteers.

DM: In times of controversy, do you believe that cooperation between the athletes and the news media serves the best interests of the sport?

LE: Yes.

DM: We have covered considerable detail about the print media's involvement in sports controversy and issues. Are there any other thoughts of issues involving the print media's coverage of sport you would like to discuss about anything we have already spoken about?

LE: I think, probably, taking a more educative role. It [the media] should change to actually present some of the facts about substances and about procedures. The media tend to be a bit light on in that element. I think there's probably a bit of assumption that the readers are not interested, or not capable of understanding some of the details. They tend to opt for a fairly superficial cover. It probably doesn't clarify the situation, but rather confuses it a little bit more.

DM: Do you have any questions about either of the discussions we have had or anything to do with the study that I am doing?

LE: No.

DM: Overall, do you have thoughts on the media's coverage of controversies?

LE: Obviously, I think they've got to report. Basically, that's what the media is about. The public has the right to know. It may not initially be in the interests of respective individuals or groups. There's always going to be a fine balance in that.

DM: Are there any questions about the role of the print media in reporting sporting controversies you thought I would ask, but I haven't?

LE: Yes, there have to be, David, because the amount of coverage about women's sport. Obviously, it would be good to see more coverage. I think I understand the area in which the media are coming. The arguments they use don't necessarily convince me. They say they are catering to the public's interest. I've never actually had them define to who the public might be. But that's a standard answer.

DM: So, there's still room for improvement?

LE: There's an enormous room for improvement. I think the *West* does a reasonable job. Most days, they seem to attempt to report some women's sport. That's not necessarily the case with *The Australian*. I'd like to see an increase in women's sports coverage, but because we have so many, it's very difficult, and must be newsworthy. The community newspapers now are doing quite a good job.

DM: Do you see the day will come when there will be equal coverage?

LE: With me being the optimist, I would like to see it happen. But I think there are huge traditional barriers.

DM: Do you feel that you have been influenced by myself or my views throughout the interview in any way?

LE: That question about sporting organisations, could have been, "what do you know about how sports organisations are training their people", rather than having a closed question, with a "yes" or "no" answer.

DM: Would you like to expand on the media training by sports organisations?

LE: The facilities are there now for journalists to have a good grounding, formal qualifications in journalism, and formal qualifications in sport. In the Eastern States, you will find that combination together. The University of Canberra has courses in sports journalism. In all occupations now you need to have specialist training. The other issue is here we have so many sports. How realistic are your bosses in how many sports they ask you to cover, and do they actually understand incredible technical detail now that goes into each sport. Once upon a time you could probably cover two or three summer or winter sports. Each of those now is an all-round sport and are much more technical than they used to be.

DM: Would you like to review the transcripts prior to them being analysed?

LE: Yes, I would, please.

DM: Do you give permission for your name to be used?

LE: Yes, provided it is clear that the comments are mine as an individual and do not in any way represent those of any organisations with which I am associated.

APPENDIX J

Circulation Figures of Australian Metropolitan Daily Newspapers

(Provided from the Australian Bureau of Statistics — December 27, 1997)

<u>State and Newspaper</u>	<u>Monday—Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
New South Wales		
Daily Telegraph Mirror	441,000	358,397
Sydney Morning Telegraph	232,000	402,000
Victoria		
The Age	203,000	353,000
Herald Sun	560,000	511,000
Queensland		
Courier Mail	217,200	330,000
South Australia		
The Advertiser	200,002	262,690
Western Australia		
The West Australian	226,096	382,925
Tasmania		
Mercury	48,136	61,804
Northern Territory		
Northern Territory News	23,098	31,443
A.C.T.		
Canberra Times	42,259	71,066
National		
The Australian	121,627	313,082
Australian Financial Review	91,000	—