

Changing the Playing Field:  
Dissecting Television's Impact  
on Baseball Broadcasting

Neil Stover

Spring 2012

Linda Kittell

English Department

Honors College

## Précis

For any aspiring sports broadcasters to have a successful career in the industry, he/she must first understand its history. As a graduating senior from Washington State University with career ambitions of working in baseball broadcasting, my Honors thesis provided me a tremendous opportunity to research, analyze and comprehend just how far baseball broadcasting has come since the early days. Therefore, I took up a two-pronged question as the subject of my thesis: (1) how did the advent of television alter the field of baseball broadcasting? And, (2) using this knowledge, by targeting certain demographics specifically through radio and/or television, can broadcasters increase revenue and interest in the sport?

As a means of finding results to these questions, I set about my research in a couple of different manners. First, I initiated my research by reading several book excerpts and academic articles on the subject of baseball broadcasting. By doing so, I successfully gained a solid basis of understanding beyond what I already knew about the industry. The next step was to send out a fairly detailed questionnaire to a number of professionals in the sports broadcasting industry to gather their opinions on where baseball broadcasting came from, where it currently stands and where it is headed in the future. It is my belief that such professionals have the best grasp on the pulse of the broadcasting field. Books and articles are great for general information, but talking to industry professionals gives one a more realistic look at issues and trends. Upon receiving responses from many of the professionals to whom I sent questionnaires, I compiled and analyzed the responses to look for common themes amongst the answers. By comparing and contrasting these responses, I put together an expansive and fairly thorough discussion about how the advent of television has changed baseball broadcasts on both television and radio, and how sponsors target baseball's demographics to best increase revenue.

The results from the countless hours of research were fascinating and informative. From the early days of re-created radio broadcasts to the likely future of Internet televised broadcasts and everything in between, there has almost certainly never been a more significant advancement in baseball broadcasting than the advent of television. For one, television completely altered how games were broadcast. Whereas on radio a play-by-play announcer must describe every detail of the game in the purest and most descriptive sense, television allows the audience to see most details for themselves. This then allows broadcasters to go in-depth about other nuances of the game, its history and the ever-increasing statistics and graphics that complement the action. Additionally, the internationally televised broadcasts helped baseball become a much more global game, with a significant percentage of players now coming from outside the United States. The limitless facets in which television changed the course of baseball broadcasting are crucial knowledge to any aspiring broadcaster, while the demographical expertise learned (baseball targets males ages 25-54) are vital to any and all advertisers and sponsors.

But while the implications of this study are fairly widespread, they are by no means all-inclusive. The research performed to complete this thesis sets the groundwork for future, more wide-ranging research options that can further assist broadcasting students determine a proper career path. Whether future research measures the differences amongst television's impact across regions or across generational lines, either would make an enthralling expansion to this thesis.

In all, no matter if one prefers the television or radio medium, no one can deny the drastic alterations television forced on the traditional broadcasts of Major League Baseball games. Nor can one consider television's influence to be a one-time phenomenon. Rather, with every new technological advance in baseball broadcasting—and those seem to occur at a rapid pace nowadays—television's influence continues to expand.

## Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THESIS ACTIVITY	3
III. METHODOLOGY	3
IV. RESULTS	5
V. DISCUSSION	26
VI. CONCLUSIONS	31
VII. REFERENCES CITED	33
VIII. APPENDIX	36

## I. INTRODUCTION

Right now, the Mariners looking for the tie. They would take a fly ball, they would love a base hit into the gap, and they could win it with Junior's speed. The stretch, and the 0-1 pitch on the way to Edgar Martinez, swung on and lined down the left field line for a base hit!

Here comes Joey. Here is Junior to third base, they're going to wave him in, the throw to the plate will be late, the Mariners are going to play for the American League championship! I don't believe it! It just continues! My oh my! (My Oh My)

Seattle Mariners announcer Dave Niehaus's radio call of the final play in the 1995 American League Division Series is one that no Mariners fan will ever forget. The incredible excitement and detail with which Niehaus delivered the call has helped position the play amongst the greatest plays in Mariners folklore. In fact, many of baseball's greatest moments are made memorable primarily because of the unforgettable calls of the game's broadcasters. In order to truly be unforgettable, however, the call of the play must create an image as vivid in the audience's mind as if he/she was watching the game in person. The ability of a broadcaster to provide the audience with a clear, concise depiction of every situation during the game is one of the most critical aspects of a successful baseball broadcast. However, it is also one of the fastest deteriorating aspects of baseball broadcasting.

With the advent of television and the incorporation of television into baseball, broadcasts have undergone an unparalleled transformation. What once was intended as a mere form of reporting the game to the audience has grown increasingly into a more subjective form of entertainment and has become a profit-driven endeavor. The way in which sportscasters broadcast the game varies tremendously depending on which media platform they are using.

Whereas on television broadcasters allow the action to dictate their talking, radio requires a vivid play-by-play detailing even the minutest idiosyncrasies.

To delve into this issue deeper, it is important to fully immerse oneself in the literature available regarding the topic. Jean Hastings Ardell and Anna Newton elucidate the importance on specific details of broadcasting in their study “Taking the Measure of Baseball Broadcasters: What It Takes to Be a Five-Tool Announcer.” The study quotes F. Scott Regan as saying, ““in the radio booth you have a blank canvas. You’ve got a bucket and some brushes”” (8). In Ardell and Newton’s study, Regan goes on to say,

The baseball announcer must recognize that baseball is a cultural metaphor . . . [and that] the baseball announcer has a significantly different responsibility. . . . The game must be reported accurately, but reported through the eyes of an historian and described by a poet who has an ear for the romance of the game” (p. 3).

The “blank canvas” image Regan enlists is widely used in depicting the role of radio broadcasters. It is not, however, nearly as common on the television side. Curt Smith, one of the premiere historians of baseball broadcasting, describes the differences between television and radio broadcasts as such: “on television- which, like a centerfold, left little to the imagination- and radio, leaving all, like Sally Rand enticing the glands- [broadcasters] drew baseball not in black and white, even when the picture was, but with muted tints and bold pastels- a panoply of color” (Smith X). Such ideas are highlighted often throughout literature on the topic. Radio has historically been, and continues to be, where storytellers poetically paint the visuals and atmosphere of the sport. Television, the “new” sports broadcasting medium, instead provides the images, leaving announcers to fill “dead air” with narratives on historical testimonies and the usage of fancy graphics. Television removes the superfluity of reporting the action in favor of

dialogue and teaching lessons on baseball history. Clearly, the advantages and disadvantages of television's impact on baseball broadcasting are held in the eye of the beholder. What is definite, though, is that the advent of television has had a tremendous impact on such broadcasts.

While a subject such as the broadcasting of a sport may seem insignificant to some, in reality, the impact of television drastically altered the entertainment methods of millions and the careers of thousands of others. It is true sports can often be "just a game." That is oversimplifying their importance though. Sports can be one's lifeblood. As I talk about later, knowing the impact television had on baseball broadcasting and how it completely altered the way games are broadcast now can serve as important background information for college students choosing the medium in which they hope to work. While on the surface it seems to be a simplistic and relatively inconsequential decision, the choices one makes towards deciding on a medium can influence his/her chances of landing a job in the future. By enrolling in courses designed to augment one's strength in the area he/she strives to work, one can gain invaluable experience, internships and, ultimately, a career. But that all starts with understanding the complexities and intricacies of the field, and there is likely no more influential moment in baseball broadcasting history than the advent of television in the game.

## II. THESIS ACTIVITY

How did the advent of television alter the field of baseball broadcasting? Using this knowledge, by targeting certain demographics specifically through radio and/or television, can broadcasters increase revenue and interest in the sport?

## III. METHODOLOGY

To get a base knowledge of the complexity of the issue, I initially focused on the use of scholarly journal articles and books on the subject of radio and television baseball broadcasting.

Many of the works one can find on this topic seek to reinforce the idea that television significantly changes broadcast style. Books such as The Joy of Sports, The Storytellers and other insightful articles, studies and audio/video sources allowed me vast background knowledge on the topic. This research, along with other such journal articles, proved to be a significant basis for my preliminary discussion about the intricacies of baseball broadcasting both on radio and on television.

In addition, one of the most effective forms of research is to talk directly to those in the field of study. As such, I sent out questionnaires to baseball broadcasting experts as a significant portion of my research. Through the connections I made at Root Sports Northwest during a 2011 summer internship, I had access to several well-known and widely respected professionals throughout the northwest. Interviews with these professionals proved invaluable to my research. I attempted to cast a wide net with my interviews; broadcasters, producers, reporters and others offered their own unique insight into how they, personally, view the differences between radio and television broadcasting and the monetary values of each. Written interview questions were distributed predominantly via e-mail with the assistance of 710 ESPN Radio personality Matt Pitman, who also hosts the pre- and post-game shows for the Seattle Mariners radio broadcasts. Through his more than a decade in the Seattle radio market, Pitman is well connected with broadcasters around the league. Unfortunately, my response was not quite as widespread as I hoped. Many recipients of the questionnaire chose not to respond. Still, I strove to enlist the knowledge of as many of these broadcasters (both radio and television) as possible, so as to expand my knowledge base. Several of the ROOT Sports Northwest employees e-mailed took time to answer the questions. The responses they gave elucidated many of the intricacies of the industry and how they felt the industry was trending. I then compiled the information provided

and attempted to find congruencies and trends in their responses. Analyzing the data gave me a vital look into the differences between the radio and television industries.

Yet, talking to professionals in the industry does not come without the risk of bias. It was assumed, barring disillusionment from years in the field, these professionals would be more likely to hyperbolize the positive attributes of their medium than the alternative. To counterbalance such bias, it was important to attain interviews with a wide variety of professionals. Furthermore, it was necessary to understand this partiality was, to a certain extent, unavoidable, and thus compile the claims accordingly. Still, a number of high-profile broadcasters have worked in both media platforms. It was very beneficial to attain multiple responses. While even multi-platform professionals are likely to hold some degree of bias- based on which they prefer- their knowledge on the differences, advantages and disadvantages of each form provided instrumental feedback.

All in all, between the wide array of literature and interviews in the field, I was able to cultivate a detailed argument on how important the advent of television was in creating the modern-day realities of baseball broadcasting. Additionally, by studying the statistics and synthesizing the opinions of field experts, I gained insight into strategies for how Major League Baseball can increase revenue by targeting specific demographics with certain media—though the results were often surprising. I combined those responses with literary findings to gain a conclusive look into the wide world of baseball broadcasting.

#### IV. RESULTS

But before one can jump into the influence of television on baseball broadcasting, he/she must first understand the historical nature of calling a game. In the early days of baseball broadcasting, today's technological intricacies of calling the game were not even within the

realm of possibility. Absent were the luxurious press boxes, high-tech microphones, “cough buttons” and all of the computer-savvy researchers and graphics artists in the production truck. Instead, a broadcaster had a ticket to the game, a scorebook and a makeshift microphone, and channeled all of those tools together towards announcing the action. Yet, that was, for the most part, just at home games. When the teams were on the road, broadcasters generally did not travel. Whereas in the modern era of baseball the teams typically employ announcers and bring them along to all away games, in the early- to mid-1900s that was not the case. In those times, it was the radio stations that employed the broadcasters, and, as such, there were often several stations broadcasting the same game. But even though the broadcasters did not travel to games, they still called the majority of the games. This was accomplished through a process known as re-creation (Smith 25).

Re-creation was a simple concept with a complex and wildly unreliable execution. Rather than send their announcers out on road trips, radio stations would instead receive Morse Code wire information giving brief and comparatively non-descriptive play-by-play of the game. The station’s announcer would then take that play-by-play and aggrandize the action from the studio as if he was in the stadium himself, often using various bells and whistles to replicate the sounds of the game. As former broadcaster Ronald Reagan, the eventual 40th President of the United States, explained,

The paper would come through to me saying something like, ‘S1C.’ That means strike one on the corner. But you’re not going to sell Wheaties yelling “S1C!” So I would say, ‘So-and-so comes out of the windup, here comes the pitch... and it’s a called strike breaking over the outside corner to a batter that likes the ball a little higher (Smith 26).

But while re-creations provided ample entertainment to the audience, the embellished nature of the broadcasts severely compromised the integrity of sport. Many former broadcasters share stories about the off-the-wall details they threw into broadcasts in order to liven them up. This was perhaps most common when the wire went dead and the announcers stopped receiving the play-by-play from the stadium- a rather frequent occurrence. Because of the multitude of competition from other stations, many broadcasters feared acknowledging a lost wire signal would drive listeners elsewhere. Thus, broadcasters would instead stall by making up stories about stadium issues causing a delay, announcing foul ball after foul ball, or other extravagant, yet false scenarios. Former Dallas-Ft. Worth Spurs- of the Double-A Texas League- announcer Charlie Jones recalls one re-created broadcast he took to a whole new level:

One night, the Spurs play the Braves in Austin, Texas, and the ticker dies. First thing I do, have the batter foul off five straight pitches. Then I get creative and from our Dallas studio saw in Austin a *snake* meandering into the screen behind the catcher. The fans start screaming as our engineer plays war whoops, chairs moving around, the umpire calling time. We have players from both dugouts form a semicircle around home plate. They're watching to see what it was; nobody wanted to fool with a snake. The groundskeepers cowered because it might be, it looked like, hey, it could be a water moccasin, and they can kill! Ain't show biz grand.

By now we're rollin'. I say the umps have phoned the Humane Society. That, of course, took time. Had to get a number, call, and, on the air, you could hear in the distance the siren from the Humane Society van as it neared the park. We had men get out with ladders and long wooden sticks with pinchers on the end to try to catch the snake. Every time it bobbed his head, he'd weave through more of the screen. People are transfixed! For 20 minutes we tell

the snake story, and then the ticker goes back on. So we immediately have the Humane Society grab the snake, get it down, put it in a box, close the box, put the box into the vehicle, slam the door of the vehicle, and away they went.

I went back to the game, which wasn't nearly as good (Smith 32).

As entertaining as re-creations could be, they never completely and accurately gave the audience the truth. Broadcasters served more as actors than reporters, and many times even the scores shared over the air turned out to be wrong. When it came to honesty and integrity, re-creations were sorely lacking. However, re-creations provided a certain entertainment aspect that objective play-by-play announcing simply does not have. Long-time Major League Baseball announcer Merle Harmon was nostalgic about the re-creation days: "Today, nobody does re-creations. It's less expensive to travel and do games live off satellite than use Western Union. Too bad. They were often better than the real thing" (Smith 29).

In time, radio gave way to a new medium: television. Though, that is not to say the transition was quick or seamless. The first-ever televised baseball game occurred on May 17, 1939, in a college game that featured Princeton versus Columbia at Columbia's Baker Field. The game was broadcasted using only one camera to cover the entire field, making it nearly impossible for the camera to follow the flight of the baseball when it was hit. Soon thereafter, legendary broadcaster Red Barber, who later went on to be the inaugural co-winner of the first Ford C. Frick Award for broadcasting excellence in 1979, announced the first televised Major League Baseball game on August 26, 1939. The game, which aired on the station W2XBS, was played at Brooklyn's Ebbets Field where the Cincinnati Reds beat the Brooklyn Dodgers 5-2. This time, the station chose to use two cameras to show the game, each located near the baselines. From there, the advancement of the incorporation of television into baseball broadcasts was vast. With

the first telecast of a World Series game in 1947, and the first televised All-Star game a mere three years later, television staked its claim in baseball. Furthermore, the next significant revolutions of televised baseball broadcasts came in 1951. In that year, baseball witnessed its first color telecast of a Major League Baseball regular season game, the first live coast-to-coast telecast of any sports event, and the first live coast-to-coast telecast of a World Series. All of these momentous revolutions of televised baseball games helped lay the foundation for modern-day telecasts (“MLB”).

Unfortunately, the impacts that television had on baseball broadcasts are not all viewed as positive consequences. When going about everyday life, one may often hear the saying “television corrupts.” Television is often accused of being the source of corruption and impurity in children, teenagers, and adults. With the infinite amounts of drugs, sex and violence on television, it is easy to see the potential for corruption. However, many critics would argue that television corrupts more than just the morals and values of viewers, but also sports. In particular, these critics often argue that television has corrupted sports broadcasting, which in effect, has led to the corruption of the game as well. They believe that the advent of television is one of the primary causes of the severance between traditional baseball broadcasts and the modern style of baseball broadcasting. In the earlier broadcasting days, when the radio was the sole medium for baseball broadcasts, announcers described the game and its plays in far more detail than modern day broadcasters. With the listener’s inability to observe the game visually, they instead relied heavily on the clear, descriptive recapitulation of every play in order to understand what was taking place. For example, in his call of Sandy Koufax’s perfect game against the Chicago Cubs on September 9, 1969, Vince Scully speaks with superbly descriptive detail:

You can't blame the man for pushing just a little bit now. Sandy backs off, mops his forehead, runs his index finger along his forehead, and dries it off on his left pants-leg... Sandy into his windup. Here's the pitch: *swung on and missed, a perfect game!* On the scoreboard in right field it is 9:46 P.M. in the city of the angels, Los Angeles, California, and a crowd of 29,139 just sitting in to see the only pitcher in baseball history to hurl four no-hit, no-run games (Novak 280).

Scully's incredibly vivid description of each simple movement by Koufax allows the audience the opportunity to recreate a seemingly exact representation of the historic game and moment in its mind, despite not being able to visually see the game. It is this unique aspect of radio broadcasts that many believe has been lost in the switch to televised broadcasts. This belief is further demonstrated by Brent Musburger's call during the fifth game of the 1995 American League Division Series: "Line drive, we are tied! Griffey is coming around! He's going to try and score! Here's the throw from Bernie. Here's the division championship! Mariners win it, Mariners win it" (*My Oh My*). This was Musburger's call to the same play as the one that Dave Niehaus was announcing earlier, except through a different medium of communication. Niehaus's call was given over the radio and it clearly contained far more information and is much more descriptive than that of Musburger's, which was given during a television broadcast. While Niehaus sets up the situation and dissects the play as it is occurring with unmatched excitement, Musburger states very little, leaving it up to the viewers to observe for themselves what is happening in the play. That, in the opinion of many critics, is the most serious problem with modern day television broadcasts of baseball games. Nowadays, particularly due to television, sports broadcasters often forego the play-by-play call of the game because they naturally assume that those watching at home can see the play for themselves. In his chapter on

sports broadcasting in The Joy of Sports, Michael Novak explains that “[Sportscasters] have a naïve faith in the human eye . . . The function of a broadcaster is to give us form” (Novak 259). By trusting that the viewers witness what is happening, broadcasters tend to abandon their primary job of depicting the action in an objective manner.

Furthermore, much of the increased subjectivity of baseball broadcasts is a result of the “dead time” between plays created because of one’s ability to see the game for himself through television. In radio broadcasts, there is very little “dead time” because the announcer is constantly in charge of enlightening the audience of every minute detail in the game. Such details include the score, the count, runners on base, the number of outs, and the inning. Without constant reaffirmation of these important details, the audience often loses the ability to follow the action of the game, thus creating a largely unsuccessful broadcast. However, on televised broadcasts, there is almost always an information bar on the screen that displays all of this important information. Because of the information bar, which was introduced in the late 1990s, broadcasters do not feel compelled to repetitively share such information with the viewers, which, in effect, creates “dead time.” To fill this “dead time,” the broadcasters, and, in particular the color commentators, often share their own past experiences in baseball, ask trivia questions, or simply attempt to entertain the audience. The problem is, though, as Novak explains, baseball fans “do not want to be entertained. [Baseball fans] want to experience the event” (257). In Novak’s eyes, too many modern announcers now are more in the business of entertaining their audience rather than giving an accurate call of the game. They choose to tell stories or jokes even in the most crucial game situations, and often end up failing to tell the audience what is happening, believing that they can see that for themselves. In large part, this is due to the

convenience of television because telecasts provide the audience with all of the game information on the screen while allowing the broadcasters to expand on their own topics.

Nevertheless, the consequences of the relatively new entertainment-based broadcasts are not always viewed as negative. Personal stories from the commentators and trivia questions give the viewers a unique perspective and history of the game. Many viewers often wonder about particular aspects of baseball, and by having a former player in the announcer's booth, they are given the opportunity to have their questions answered. Also, since many people complain that baseball is too slow of a sport, various entertainment ploys from the broadcasters, whether they are jokes, humorous stories, or mid-game interviews, help keep viewers from turning the channel, consequently helping television ratings. One high ranking producer for televised sports, Ryan Jones<sup>1</sup>, argues without these entertainment ploys, viewers would often simply turn off the broadcast when a game gets out of hand. He explains that being able to negate telling the audience all of the "little things" allows the announcers to create interest when the game itself fails to do so. The longtime producer said, "on TV, [Mariners announcers Dave] Sims, [Mike] Blowers, and [Jay] Buhner can have an in-depth conversation about Nolan Ryan in the seventh inning of a game that the Mariners are trailing by seven runs, and Sims doesn't need to say, 'ball one, a little outside' [or] 'he swings and misses with a violent swing, blah blah blah.' The viewers can see what's happening" (Jones 2012). Additionally, sports reporter Brad Adam expects to see more three-man broadcasts booth during the coming seasons as a means to provide more interaction between color commentators, and, consequently, more stories from back when they played (Adam 2012). What a viewer wants in a broadcaster- or a broadcast in general- varies by the person. There are certainly many traditionalists who prefer the announcers to do

---

<sup>1</sup> Assigned name given as he requested anonymity because he was speaking from his experiences rather than from his company's official views.

nothing more than objectively recapitulate the action of the game. But, television often calls for a less traditional and less enthused demographic. It is those viewers television broadcasters target with the offbeat stories and fancy graphics.

In addition, baseball broadcasts have changed in a number of other fascinating ways since the advent of television and its incorporation into baseball broadcasts. One of the most unique and notable changes is that of the drastic increase of technology used during the games. For instance, because of television and its influence on baseball broadcasting, more and more announcers are choosing to interview both players and coaches during the game. One early example of a mid-game interview came during a rain-delayed playoff game in 1998, causing Joe Torre, “the New York Yankees' manager [to wince] when two of his players were interviewed in the dugout” (Rushin). Clearly, the players and coaches are not overly fond of the idea of mid-game interviews. However, due to the importance of television to baseball, and the extremely large profits made off of the telecasts, players and coaches are reluctantly forced to abide by the television network’s requests. Because of the financial benefits riding on television contracts and allowing broadcasters increased access, in-game interviews are a trend many industry professionals believe will not only remain a part of the game, but also grow in usage. Another unique addition to baseball broadcasts was the idea of using microphones on players, coaches and umpires during the games. This, too, was demonstrated during a 1998 American League Championship Series game, when “Yankees first base coach Jose Cardenal, wearing a microphone, ribbed 39-year-old base runner Tim Lincecum for being old,” to which Lincecum responded, ““you know they got that on TV”” (Rushin). While the use of technology in the middle of games gives incredible insight into the activities and conversations that go on during a game, it also makes the game seem much more like a television show, meant predominantly for

entertainment purposes. One should not expect baseball broadcasts to buck this trend, though. According to sports television producer Pike Parker, sports television stations are looking for increased access with the players as they look for unique ways to form a more personal bond between player and fan (Parker 2012). Once again, critics argue the continual shift of baseball broadcasting to more of a form of entertainment detracts from the traditional form of reporting the game of baseball. Though typically entertaining and occasionally informative, the rate of growth of technology in baseball is often seen as an alarming trend that and ultimately attacks the tradition and credibility of the game.

But while some question the use of additional technology in the game, there is no doubt a paradigm shift is occurring in that direction. Professionals in the industry expressed certainty in the fact new technologies will continue to become a larger part of the game broadcasts. In the same way football telecasts display a yellow line to mark the first-down location, broadcasters could choose to superimpose statistics next to the players on the baseball diamond, said Pat Brown, a northwest sports television producer (Brown 2012). Graphics are not the only increase viewers are likely to experience, though. Most of the professionals interviewed agreed that in time broadcasts will continue to increase the numbers of cameras and microphones throughout the stadiums. This would then allow television viewers to see the game from just about every angle in the ballpark. In fact, Parker expects new stadium designs to keep television broadcasts in mind, so as best to capture the game with a true panoramic feel (Parker 2012). Moreover, broadcasters are always looking for the next best way to bring the ballpark atmosphere to the television screen and give viewers unique insights into the intricacies of the game. Adam feels the “sky is the limit” for the future of televised baseball. He stresses expansions such as helmet cameras can give the television audience a baseball watching experience unlike any they have

ever experienced and that “there will be innovative and technical advances ever year” (Adam 2012).

An increase in the number of sights and sounds captured by the camera crews, however, places a significant burden on the television production crews to tie the broadcast together. As Brown warns, “the biggest limitation in TV is that no matter how many cameras you have, you are still essentially looking at the game through a cardboard tube” (Brown 2012). Despite the fantastic technological advances made in past years, therein lies perhaps the greatest difference between watching the game at home and at the ballpark. Whereas when attending the game in person one can soak in several different sights, sounds and smells at one time, television cameras cannot replicate that medley of sensations. Therefore, “it is incumbent upon the production crew to tell the story of what happens in a truthful way” (Brown 2012). ROOT Sports Northwest reporter Jen Mueller agrees, noting with all the advances in technology, there is little margin for error amongst producers and directors: “You can’t go to black during a broadcast. You have to have something to look at. If you miss the play or can’t get to the replay in time, or are having technical difficulties, it’s difficult to cover. If you miss a play, people will notice because they’re counting on being able to see it on TV” (Mueller 2012).

Furthermore, every year, it seems, baseball broadcasts unveil new, and spectacularly advanced technological additions. The introduction of digital playback devices to Regional Sports Networks in the early-2000s changed the course of telecasts in a dramatic fashion. The new playback systems allowed production crews immediate access to anything that had been recorded without the hassle of rewinding outdated tape machines. This eventually led to an increase in slow-motion replays, which were then taken to an exciting new level with the adaptation of “Ultra Mo” cameras in broadcasts. Jones explained, Ultra Mo “allowed us to record

10-50 times as much information for replays. In the past, we could only record 30 or 60 frames per second, with Ultra Mo, we can get up to and past 1000 frames per second” (Jones 2012). In prior replays, the cameras could not keep up with the action of the game and so it often came across blurry, he said. But with Ultra Mo, the cameras can record at such a fast rate, the replays look strikingly clearer. Additionally, in just a five-year span starting in the mid-2000s, the producer explained high definition became the exclusive standard for baseball broadcasts. Now, Brown believes the next big push viewers will see is the expansion of 3-dimensional broadcasts. However, he admits such a transition will likely occur rather slowly, as the new technologies are not yet where they need to be to see such a shift take place. All of these large-scale advancements have worked together to, in some ways, allow viewers to feel almost as if they are at the park when they watch games on TV—with some obvious limitations. But, contrary to what the viewer at home sees, such a compilation of technology puts an immense amount of pressure on those in the production truck to completely and accurately tie it all together.

Technological advances do not impact baseball broadcasts merely in a behind the scenes fashion, either. In a world that places an ever-increasing focus on fan interaction, baseball is no exception. Learning from the likes of *American Idol* and fantasy football, baseball is attempting to stake its claim in social media and fan interactions as well, according to many broadcasting professionals. Mueller explained the phenomenon: “TV stations are looking for ways to engage fans who participate in fantasy sports and who don’t want to just watch a game, but experience it from their couch or living room (Mueller 2012). Mueller said everything from text-in promotions to social media sites, coupled with the constant adaptations of other cutting edge technologies are all in play as television stations attempt to make viewers a part of the game. But it is not just the television side that is seeing this shift in focus. Mueller said every professional she knows on the

radio side of baseball broadcasting is experiencing the same overthrow of traditional broadcast style. On-line chats, blogs and constant attention to social media are essential to creating the necessary interactive atmosphere the audience now expects. Mueller said it is a rather cutthroat dimension: “Everyone is competing for a fan’s time and loyalty, which means nothing’s off the table when it comes to fan interaction” (Mueller 2012).

All of these remarkable technological advances bring baseball fans across the globe unparalleled looks into the complexity of the sport. However, the mere advent of television was arguably the chief underlying factor in baseball’s global sprawl. Previously a sport relatively unknown to the rest of the world, television introduced people everywhere to “America’s National Pastime.” One of the noteworthy milestones on the path of becoming an international sport was achieved on April 12, 1969, when NBC International broadcast a game between the San Francisco Giants and San Diego Padres to fans located in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. From there, NBC worked with Telesistema Mexicano and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to broadcast games in Mexico, and in both English and French in Canada (“Broadcasting of Baseball Expands”). This was really one of the first times that baseball sought to achieve a global market that would be able to view several games. Then, on June 17, 1992, Major League Baseball broadcast its first regular season telecast to the United Kingdom, drawing almost 300,000 viewers, and thus establishing itself in the United Kingdom television market (“MLB”). Certainly the international expansion of baseball telecasts had impacted more than just the broadcasts- it also greatly influenced baseball itself. Televised baseball broadcasts in foreign nations helped create a fan base in those countries, and ultimately led to increased popularity and participation in the sport. The impact of this globalization on the game is tremendous. By the end of the 2005 Major League Baseball season, 28.7 percent of Major League players were Latino,

while another 2.5 percent of players were Asian (Lapchick 2006). The start of the 2011 season saw those numbers more or less stall, as 27.7 percent of Major League players were Latino while only 2.1 percent were Asian. But where the impact of the globalization of baseball is really felt is in the Minor Leagues. While Major League players only span 14 different countries and territories, Minor Leaguers hail from 41 different countries and territories. Also, compared to the 27.7 percent of international born players in the Majors, 47.4 percent of all players in the Minors were born outside of the United States. Furthermore, many front-office employees for Major League franchises are from countries outside of the United States, furthering baseball's reach around the globe (Lapchick 2011). Unmistakably, the globalization of baseball broadcasts has helped change the overall makeup of the game and its players, and such globalization was a direct result of the integration of television and baseball.

Moreover, television contracts have played a considerable role in the transformation of baseball broadcasting. The profit-driven endeavor that is professional baseball requires enormous television deals in order for a regional sports network to air Major League Baseball games. In 2007, Fox Sports Net Northwest agreed to terms with the Seattle Mariners on a twelve year, four hundred million dollar contract for the right to broadcast the team's games. The importance of broadcasting to the sport is undoubtedly huge, so much so that the television contract alone was nearly four times as great as the Mariners' team salary during the 2007 season and an even greater multiple since then (Hickey 2007). Yet, that was in 2007. The dollar figures thrown around in the millennium's second decade are mind-blowing. The Texas Rangers and Anaheim Angels have both recently negotiated massive television contracts with the Fox Sports subsidiary in each team's respective region. The Rangers struck first late during the 2010 season, agreeing to a 20-year deal worth 80 million dollars annually, or roughly 1.5 billion dollars over the life of

the contract (“Rangers” 2010). Not to be outdone, the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim countered with a 20-year deal reportedly worth upwards of three billion dollars, or roughly 150 million dollars per year. These new contracts are game-changers for the recipients, who can then turn around and invest more in player payroll, while still turning a profit (Baxter and Shaikin 2011). The incredibly massive profits that franchises make off of television networks allow the teams to compete financially with other teams in the league, and also allow for the high player salaries in modern day baseball. But perhaps more importantly, the contracts demonstrate just how much of a financial impact television broadcasts make on the sport.

Finally, the public reaction to televised baseball broadcasts compared to those of radio broadcasts is quite mixed. While some fans prefer to be able to observe the game with the analysis and subjectivity that broadcasters bring during telecasts, others believe that broadcasts should remain objective and should merely report the game as it is, as is naturally the case for radio broadcasts. Typically, however, nearly all fans will agree that a radio broadcast is, and must be, much more vivid in the broadcaster’s description of the game, and thus there is often more excitement in radio broadcasts because announcers do not rely on the vision of the viewers to determine what is going on in the play. Those who disagree with this stance claim that television is the more enjoyable medium of communication because telecasts allow the viewers to observe the game as if they were sitting in the ballpark watching the game first-hand. Novak prefers the radio broadcast side of the debate, and adds that “excitement in the voice of the broadcaster also helped one to *see* even what in the park one’s own eyes ‘saw’ –added form, added consistency, supplied a context for comparison” (257). Many longtime fans tend to side with Novak on this debate because radio broadcasts cut out the superfluous instances that telecasts are filled with, thus making a broadcast more enjoyable in the eyes of a majority of

viewers. This is further demonstrated by the large number of fans who choose to watch the game on television, while listening to the game on the radio. By doing so, the fans are able to receive the objective broadcast, while still being able to see the game and the action for themselves. Nevertheless, there will likely never be a true consensus amongst fans on whether radio broadcasts are more enjoyable than television broadcasts, or television broadcasts triumph over radio broadcasts. One thing that is clear, however, is that each medium for broadcasting contains its own unique advantages and disadvantages.

To truly grasp the magnitude of television's impact on baseball broadcasting, however, it is perhaps most beneficial to look at a wide-scale comparison of radio and television broadcasts. Radio is the traditionalist form of broadcasting, whereas television is the sprightly modern approach. Each contains its own distinctive characteristics and importance in the game. Amongst the broadcasting professionals interviewed, a few common terms were used repeatedly to illustrate the differences between the two. The most common term was that television is clearly a visual medium. While it seems obvious given the very nature of television, the term is a bit more complex than it appears. The many camera angles and graphic options allow viewers to witness the game for themselves with fewer words than radio. As Carl Gardner, the Vice President and Market Manager of Bonneville Seattle Radio, suggests, that can be a tricky situation for broadcasters: "people want to see the game, and the art of announcing is to allow the picture to speak for itself, not to over-announce- to allow for long periods of silence while watching the image" (Gardner 2012). Often times an announcer can make or break the magnificence of the moment by choosing whether or not to speak during an exciting moment on televised sports. Mueller seconds Garner's opinion, noting "it's key for a TV broadcaster to lay out and let the viewers experience the game for themselves and resist the urge to talk over every play and fill

every second of the broadcast” (Mueller 2012). Longtime baseball play-by-play announcer Ken Levine describes the difference between the media forms as “on TV, the announcer provides captions. [On] radio he describes [the action]” (Levine 2012). One clarification almost every professional made was that pictures are not absent on radio. Instead, a radio announcer is responsible for painting the picture with words. Though, as Mueller warns, a radio play-by-play announcer must be on-point with their descriptions of the action because “if you blow a call, that was your listener’s only chance to hear it. They’ll miss the excitement and the context of why the play was so important in the game” (Mueller 2012). Pictures are an ever-so-important part of broadcasting, regardless of the medium. They certainly are not exclusive to television.

Another common theme in discussing the differences between radio and television broadcasts is the undeniable generational gap that exists between fans of the two media. Major League Baseball games have been televised since 1969, but the mass quantity of games aired on television is a recent development. Even up until the early- to mid-2000s, many games around the league were aired exclusively on radio. Mueller recalled that when she was growing up as a fan of the Houston Astros, only about 30 games each year were televised (Mueller 2012). Nowadays, teams have almost all of the 162 games televised, with MLB.TV as an alternative for the few games per year that are not. Mariners Radio producer engineer Kevin Cremin explained some avid baseball fans grew up almost solely on radio, with often the only televised event being the “Game of the Week,” and thus are very loyal to the medium (Cremin 2012). That loyalty also ties into arguably the single greatest advantage radio broadcasts hold over telecasts, which is the relationship the listener forms with a good play-by-play announcer. When a baseball fan grows up inviting the same announcer into his/her home every night year after year, he/she often experiences a sort of familial bond with that announcer. Gardner describes radio as a “more

personal, intimate, relationship medium,” and notes that in cities with fatherly play-by-play figures (such as Bob Uecker in Milwaukee and Vin Scully in Los Angeles), listeners are often drawn to a medium specifically because of them (Gardner 2012). Jones supported Gardner’s views: “Very few TV broadcasters have this relationship, while nearly every decent radio broadcaster has this relationship. Dave Niehaus perfected this” (Jones 2012). Niehaus built such a strong relationship with listeners in Seattle that the Washington Association for the Blind honored him saying “they could see the game through [his] eyes” (Hughes). In fact, Gardner said, many people would “say they ‘watch the game’ on TV, but they would ‘listen to Dave Niehaus’ on the radio” (Gardner 2012). In sum, Mueller argues “a broadcaster’s style, voice quality, knowledge base, interaction and overall talent all influence fans” (Mueller 2012).

Additionally, multiple professionals agreed the adaptation of television caused a shift in how fans personally interact with baseball games. Brown explained television tends to remove the imagination from listening to a game that radio so necessarily requires (Brown 2012). Similarly, it is much more important for a radio play-by-play announcer to use more descriptive language, consciously and particularly choosing words that allow a more vivid mental picture to be painted (Adam 2012). Consequently, it takes a special type of fan to listen to an entire game via radio, according to both Adam and Mueller. The two Seattle-based sports reporters believe it takes a more “hard-core” sports fan to follow a team’s radio broadcast nightly. The fans have to be willing to engage themselves in the carefully chosen enthusiasm and melodic tones of the announcer’s voice to truly enjoy a radio baseball broadcast.

Finally, advertising has become a very prominent aspect of baseball telecasts. From spot advertisements to product placement, and further to sponsorships of such events as the “call to the bullpen,” omnipresence of advertising in baseball is yet another example of the profit-based

business of the sport. However, such a form of making a profit is not highly appreciated by baseball fans. In a survey in 2004, “81 percent of fans disapproved” with the decision to place Spiderman advertisements on the bases (McCarthy). Yet, because the main goal of advertisers is to get the advertisement shown and noticed, such approval ratings are often not taken into account. At the same time, by simply placing a product on the field or allowing a company to sponsor a pitching change, Major League Baseball can make a significant profit. Once more, this is predominantly a product of television. Television has allowed for almost constant advertising, which consequently leads to even greater profits, all of which leads to financial elation for the baseball franchises. That is not to say, though, that radio did not historically and does not today place a significant emphasis on advertising. In fact, listen to the stories of a longtime broadcaster and he will almost certainly have some comedic memories of doing in-game advertisements both on the radio and on television. Back before the Federal Communications Commission began stringently monitoring what could and could not be consumed on air, beer, cigarettes and cigars were all common advertisement subjects often requiring consumption by the broadcasters (Smith 245). As long as radio and television stations have been broadcasting games, they have relied on sponsorships and advertisements to turn a profit.

In order to maximize profit and draw, however, advertisers need to understand the largest demographics of baseball broadcasts. Both radio and television have ideal target audiences of middle-class, Caucasian males ages 25-54 (Gardner 2012). Beyond that, the two media differ in secondary audiences. In radio, “there is a large audience of people older than the target, but those are not the people being targeted by most broadcasters,” Gardner said (Gardner 2012). Television, on the other hand, typically aims for the younger adults. Mueller states, television “appeals to people who like a lot of information and a variety of entertainment options. It’s made

for people who flip through channels and hang around for an inning at a time and come back later in the game” (Mueller 2012). Adam expands on that: “TV targets younger viewers that are sports fans, but also a demo that is not hard core sports fans” (Adam 2012). As far as advertisers are concerned, though, television provides the perfect source of access to its target demographic. “Beer and alcohol ads and fast food love TV because so many young viewers are watching,” Adam said. “As for the other demo, the average person can be reached through car or insurance ads. These people are older and have more disposable income” (Adam 2012). A tenured television sports producer, Jones provides a different and fascinating insight on the target market of baseball telecasts. According to him, television broadcasts do not target a specific demographic. “We certainly want younger viewers, but the reality is that we don’t have much say in the matter. Simply put, we produce to satisfy cable/satellite affiliates, sponsors, and team partners. The demographics come with the team. Baseball audiences are old. The savvy sponsors seek teams that provide the demo group they want to reach” (Jones 2012). This idea reveals an important distinction: baseball essentially has a set demographic in place. Because of that, it is not realistic for advertisers to attempt to bring in too many new demographics. Instead, they must focus on what baseball already has and tailor marketing campaigns accordingly.

Radio, on the other hand, has to find unique means to advertise. Beer companies cannot simply flash a malty beverage on the screen and expect people to go to the store and buy a six-pack. Nor can a pizza restaurant show a golden-crust, perfectly decorated pepperoni pizza and expect families to impulsively call up a delivery order. Therefore, advertisers on the radio go about reaching audiences in different ways. One such way is by sponsoring giveaways and contests (Adam 2012). But again, as Jones explained, broadcasters really do not target the demographics as a means to increase interest in baseball. It is instead the job of advertisers to

choose when it is fiscally advantageous to sponsor a broadcast (Jones 2012). Therefore, the potential for stations to increase revenue by knowing the target demographics is relatively limited.

The future of baseball broadcasting remains relatively unclear. Most professionals sense television will continue to remain the predominant medium of choice by the majority of consumers. Jones describes the infallible nature of sports to adjust to changes in consumption media forms: “No other type of show on TV has survived the DVR/Internet/Mobile platform revolution and grown like live sports on TV... in general, network viewing is down, cable penetration has peaked, and more people watch on DVR and the web. Live sports is the exception” (Jones 2012). One trend in sports programming that may continue is the transition toward a subscription-fee model, according to Gardner. In that scenario, sports fans will be able to purchase television packages with all of the sports channels, while non-sports fans will not have to subscribe to channels they do not watch (Gardner 2012). It is also almost a certainty that baseball will continue to offer more and more access to broadcasts over the Internet. This development has its fair share of challenges, such as how television producers and directors will adjust graphics to fit legibly on a smaller screen (Brown 2012). However, the Internet broadcasts will still use the television broadcasts, and thus should not negatively impact the revenue stream of the station. Conversely, advertising is often more effective on the Internet with the ability to place pop-up advertisements, introductory infomercials before and during live streams and omnipresent banner advertisements all over the screen. Given how much baseball broadcasting has evolved throughout history, it seems like a foregone conclusion the sport and its television and radio partners will find ways to profit off of the trending new media. On the radio side, “the trend continues toward teams producing their own broadcast and selling the advertising

inventory, so that they can use the broadcast as a channel to promote the team, its corporate partners, and their in-stadium events and promotions” (Gardner 2012). Stations, both radio and television, continue to adjust their ways to best fit the current market.

All in all, the advent of television and its incorporation into baseball broadcasting has been one of the most noteworthy advancements in this history of sports. However, while television certainly has had several positive influences on the sport, there are many who would argue that its most influential aspects are negative. Nonetheless, one would be hard pressed to find any advancement in the history of baseball broadcasting with a substantial impact that could even pale in comparison to that of television. Whatever one’s opinion on baseball broadcasting, all can agree with Novak’s assessment that, “For all who report sports, however, at least this much can be demanded: a passion for excellence in covering the heart of the matter, the actual contests on the field. Today not many have it. Lacking that, the rest is beside the point” (277). Passion and excitement are vital aspects of broadcasts that truly make the great plays unforgettable. Whether such passion is exhibited over a radio broadcast or television broadcast does not matter, as long as it is exhibited. There is no doubt television has forever altered the past, present and future of baseball broadcasting. Preference and beauty are in the eye, or ear, of the beholder, and while radio will likely always have its place within the game, as Brad Adam lyrically concluded, “There’s poetry in radio, but [there’s] poetry on the field every night to see” (Adam 2012).

## V. DISCUSSION

My research, as with any study, has its limitations. No matter how complete a research study is, there are always alternative manners in which the research could have been collected that, at times, could even prove more beneficial to the final product. However, in the specific case of this study, I believe the findings would be relatively similar regardless of the measures taken to

obtain data. My reasoning for this belief stems from every professional I talked to in the baseball broadcasting industry (at every level and in a variety of jobs) gave similar responses to questions. There was no doubt a certain level of bias by every respondent, as was expected from the onset, due to their allegiance to the medium in which they work. But, the impacts of such biases were limited by obtaining responses from professionals on both the radio and television side of the industry.

If I were to change my approach to this project, there are certainly minor adjustments I would have made. For instance, the majority of my respondents were professionals who have spent a significant portion of their careers in the Pacific Northwest. Despite my best efforts to reach professionals around the United States, most of my contacts were from the Northwest. While I sent out questionnaires to professionals on the east coast and believed I would be able to reach several industry professionals in other locations, regrettably the return was largely underwhelming. That is not to say the responses I received were exclusively based in the Northwest, as a number of the respondents have indeed worked in various cities around the country. But, had I been able to receive more responses nationwide, it would have been interesting to see if responses differed by region. My hypothesis is, while particular cities may have leaned slightly more towards radio than the northwest given an affinity for legendary broadcasters, the majority of the country still, in fact, would lean towards the television side. There are simply too many advanced technological features nowadays to be seen on the television side for most baseball fans to choose strictly an audio form of taking in the game. I do believe in those markets with high-profile broadcasting legends there is likely to be a high percentage of baseball fans who watch the game on television with the sound on mute while they listen to their favorite radio voice. One complication to that method, though, is the several

second delay many television stations employ as a means to be able to edit inappropriate content before it reaches the viewers. Still, given their options, I believe in this day and age a greater number of baseball fans enjoy seeing the action for themselves on live television as opposed to relying on a wordsmith to paint the action for them.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to take a pulse of the fan to see the difference between younger and older respondents as to their preference in medium. In a rather informal survey taken from two small classes at Washington State University, it was obvious television is the preferred choice. The vast majority of student respondents claimed television is the main, and in many cases the only, medium on which they are willing to take in Major League Baseball games. A small number of respondents, however, did claim that while they enjoy watching games on television more, they value the purity and poetry of radio announcing. Similarly, in another very informal and unscientific poll (see Table 1), Seattle Mariners blog Lookout Landing recently asked readers how they planned to follow the Mariners season opener, which took place at 3 o'clock in the morning Pacific Time Wednesday, March 28, 2012, in Tokyo, Japan.

Unsurprisingly, almost half of the respondents said they intended to sleep rather than wake up early to watch the game. However, out of the respondents that intended to follow the game, 45 percent answered they expect to watch the game either on television or on the Internet. Only two percent of respondents (31 people out of 1200 responses) said they intended to listen to the game on the radio ("Three" 2012). The informal class survey, albeit with a very small sample size, in association with the unscientific poll confirmed what I expected to find: as a whole, most baseball consumers prefer telecasts to radio broadcasts, especially amongst younger generations. What would be interesting to observe is if results are the same with older generations. I

hypothesize that television would still be the medium of choice, but with a much more balanced response.

As an aspiring baseball broadcaster, this study was quite enlightening and without question altered my focus for a future career. I, personally, have always found the artistic beauty in radio broadcasting. Having grown up listening to Dave Niehaus broadcast on both radio and television, I always appreciated his work more on radio. His mastery of the medium was impeccable. When I listened to Mariners games—an event quite frequent given the number of games not shown on television—I felt as if I was sitting in the stadium watching the game for myself thanks to the vivid detail Niehaus used in his calls. Because of him I always thought I would enjoy either medium, but particular radio because of the blank canvas it provides a broadcaster. However, as my research progressed and I heard glowing remarks from professionals on the television side of baseball broadcasting, I realized my true passion lies on the television side. As Jen Mueller pointed out, “I enjoy telling stories with pictures not just words” (Mueller 2012). As I have advanced in my collegiate career and obtained incredible experience in the television broadcasting field, I share this passion with Mueller. Painting a picture with words can be exceptionally rewarding in certain instances, as with Niehaus’ award from the Washington Association for the Blind. Yet, as the cliché goes, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” That saying is perhaps never truer than in broadcasting. While being able to see the action alone is a major draw of television, I also strive to tell powerful, previously unknown stories. To achieve that goal, pictures are critical. I would certainly still cherish the opportunity to work in radio broadcasting, but for now, my focus is on a career in television.

Somewhat surprisingly, throughout my research I found the quantity of published literature on the topic to be fairly limited. From what I did find, though, my study largely corroborates that

which is available. Perhaps the greatest obstacle in using the literature was the bias that was found in many of the works. It seemed often times the author had a certain agenda that he was promoting—though that is not uncommon for books on any topic. The author generally tried to sway readers one way or the other, either towards television or radio. In my study, I attempted to absolve bias to the best of my abilities to gain a fair and impartial understanding of television's impact on baseball broadcasting.

As I mentioned above, if someone were to expand off of this study in the future, there are two intriguing directions he/she could take the research. First, one could test the responses of preferences amongst different generations. If the results still prove, as I expect, that younger generations almost exclusively watch games on television (or television broadcasts on the Internet), does that put radio's future at risk? As the older generations begin to pass away, will that mark the decline and eventual end to baseball's radio broadcasts? I do not believe such a fatalistic reaction is to be expected, as it seems there is always a place for radio. Whether in the car or away from a television set, radio still holds an important role in the dissemination of baseball broadcasts. However, should new technologies develop that allow people to view games no matter where they are (in a sense, what we are starting to see with mobile television), could that strong desire to see the game ultimately end radio's role, given advertisers would likely begin significantly cutting back on radio spots? That seems to be an interesting and important research question that could be built off of this study.

Additionally, as I mentioned, one could attempt to receive a greater number of responses from every Major League Baseball market in the country to see if preferences vary by region. It would be fascinating to see if cities with warmer climates had a higher number of respondents who preferred radio, given one's ability to listen to radio while soaking up the sun. Conversely,

do baseball fans in colder climates have a greater propensity to watch games on television since they are likely to spend more time indoors? Also, in sticking with the regional study, one could research whether the radio ratings are higher in those cities with legendary radio play-by-play announcers. All of these questions are potential expansions off of the study of how the advent of television altered the course of baseball broadcasting.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Sports have, and will likely always be, of smaller importance in the grand scheme of life relative to many other areas. They are not, however, insignificant. Sports are an outlet, an escape from the constant pressures and worries in life. They are a source of passion for millions of people around the world, a chance to leave everything else behind and enjoy the moment. And, for many, they are a career choice. Those individuals that strive to work in the broadcasting aspect of sports feel the larger ramifications of my study.

Since the magical radio call by Dave Niehaus in 1995 with which I opened this report, I knew baseball broadcasting was what I wanted to do with my life. What I did not know for the past 16 years was in which medium I wanted to work. After performing this study, my personal focus is significantly clearer. That is where this study can help others, and, in particular, those at Washington State University. The Edward R. Murrow College of Communications is one of the premiere communications programs in the United States. Naturally, students come from around the country to learn from the top-notch professors the university employs. However, while many of those students know they want to earn a degree in broadcasting, many, if not most, do not truly understand the vast differences between radio and television broadcasting. For those students, this study can be of great assistance. My goal is to lend an increased awareness to these students about the two media in hopes of helping them plan their college courses accordingly.

For students who are more adept at “painting pictures with words,” radio can be a rewarding career choice, even if previously they envisioned themselves on the television side. Furthermore, by understanding how one’s strengths fit with each medium, a student can then take courses in other areas (such as creative writing or choir) that will augment his/her strengths and better prepare him/her for a future in broadcasting. College is already a confusing time for students. Trying to figure out how to live on one’s own, make friends and pass classes is hard enough. Add to that the uncertainty of a desired career path and for some it is simply overwhelming. But, for a broadcasting student, understanding the differences between the radio medium and television medium can help alleviate at least some of the stress they are certain to experience. In all, while this study may not serve as a basis to cure a disease or stop a war, its significance should not be taken for granted. The ability for this research to help others plan their future endeavors illustrates its value.

## VII. REFERENCES CITED

Adam, Brad. Personal Interview. 5 March 2012.

Ardell, Jean Hastings and Anna Newton. "Taking the Measure of Baseball Broadcasters: What It Takes to Be a Five-Tool Announcer." Nine 15.2 (2007): 79-86,169,168. Research Library. ProQuest. Washington State University Libraries. 8 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.proquest.com/>>.

Baxter, Kevin and Bill Shaikin. "Albert Pujols, C.J. Wilson Deals Enabled By TV Revenue." Los Angeles Times Online. 8 December 2011. 23 March 2012 <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/08/sports/la-sp-angels-fox-tv-20111209>>.

"Broadcasting of Baseball Expands." Oakland Post (1968-1981) [Oakland, Calif.] 17 Apr. 1969,18. Ethnic NewsWatch: A History (ENWH). ProQuest. Washington State University Libraries. 23 Oct. 2007 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=496615141&Fmt=3&clientId=3738&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

Brown, Pat. Personal Interview. 7 March 2012.

Cremin, Kevin. Personal Interview. 22 March 2012.

Gardner, Carl. Personal Interview. 19 March 2012.

Hickey, John. "Mariners sign 12-year extension with FSN." Seattle Post Intelligencer Online. 8 November 2007. 8 November 2007 <[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/tv/338798\\_maritv08.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/tv/338798_maritv08.html)>.

Hughes, Pat. "Dave Niehaus: 'Voice of the Mariners.'" Baseball Voices. 2009. CD.

Jones, Ryan. Personal Interview. 9 March 2012.

Lapchick, Richard and Stacy Martin. "The 2005 Racial and Gender Report Card: Major League Baseball." University of Central Florida. 20 April 2006. 12 November 2007  
 <[http://www.bus.ucf.edu/sport/public/downloads/2005\\_Racial\\_Gender\\_Report\\_Card\\_MLB.pdf](http://www.bus.ucf.edu/sport/public/downloads/2005_Racial_Gender_Report_Card_MLB.pdf)>.

Lapchick, Richard with Christina Cloud, Aaron Gearlds, Tavia Record, Elizabeth Schulz, Jake Spiac, and Matthew Vinson. "The 2011 Racial and Gender Report Card: Major League Baseball." University of Central Florida. 21 April 2011. 23 March 2012  
 <[http://www.tidesport.org/RGRC/2011/2011\\_MLB\\_RGRC\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.tidesport.org/RGRC/2011/2011_MLB_RGRC_FINAL.pdf)>.

Levine, Ken. Personal Interview. 22 March 2012.

McCarthy, Dan. "MLB should find a way to cut advertising." The Daily Stanford Online. 12 May 2004. 12 November 2007  
 <<http://daily.stanford.edu/article/2004/5/12/mlbShouldFindAWayToCutAdvertising>>.

"MLB History - Broadcast Firsts." MLB.com. 23 October 2007  
 <[http://pressbox.mlb.com/pressbox/about\\_mlb/history.jsp?content=broadcast\\_firsts](http://pressbox.mlb.com/pressbox/about_mlb/history.jsp?content=broadcast_firsts)>.

Mueller, Jen. Personal Interview. 7 March 2012.

My Oh My. Writer John Bacchia. Videocassette. 1996.

Parker, Pike. Personal Interview. 6 March 2012.

Novak, Michael. The Joy of Sports. Lanham, Maryland: Madison Books, 1976.

"Rangers' New 20-Year TV Deal Worth \$80 Million a Year." SportsDayDFW. 27 September 2010. 23 March 2012 <<http://www.dallasnews.com/sports/texas-rangers/headlines/20100927-Rangers-new-20-year-2344.ece>>.

Rushin, Steve. "Playing for Laughs." Sports Illustrated 9 Oct. 1998: 20. Research Library. ProQuest. Washington State University Libraries. 23 Oct.

2007 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=35111000&Fmt=3&clientId=3738&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

Sandomir, Richard. "TV SPORTS; The Case of the Once-Feared Camera." New York Times Online. 2 July 1999. 28 October 2007

<<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9407E1DD153DF931A35754C0A96F958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=print>>.

Sims, Dave. Personal Interview. 5 March 2012.

Smith, Curt. The Storytellers. New York: Macmillan, 1995.

"Three A.M. is Early." LookoutLanding.com. 14 March 2012. 20 March 2012

<<file:///Users/cougdr/Documents/Honors%20Thesis/LookoutLanding%20Poll%20Webpage%20.webarchive>>.

## VIII. APPENDIX

The purpose of this survey is to give me, Neil Stover, a student at Washington State University, the opinions of respected professionals within the baseball broadcasting industry as a part of my Honors College Thesis. All responses are completely voluntary, and anonymity is guaranteed if desired. Please feel free to answer as few or as many questions as you choose, though answering as many questions as possible will assist me significantly in completely and properly writing my thesis.

Thank you for your time,

Neil Stover

nstover@wsu.edu

Q: How do baseball broadcasts on television differ from those on the radio?

A:

Q: How has baseball broadcasting evolved over the years with the advent and adaptation of television?

A:

Q: What advantages/disadvantages do television broadcasts have that radio broadcasts don't?

A:

Q: What advantages/disadvantages do radio broadcasts have that television broadcasts don't?

A:

Q: What demographics do television broadcasts target?

A:

Q: What demographics do radio broadcasts target?

A:

Q: What does the future hold for televised baseball broadcasts?

A:

Q: What does the future hold for baseball broadcasts on the radio?

A:

Q: What limitations do you see in broadcasting for television and for radio?

A:

Q: Do you think listeners/watchers are drawn to one medium over the other based on their ages, their regions, or any other things?

A:

Q: Are there other mediums that you see may challenge radio and television broadcasting of games in the future? If so, why?

A:

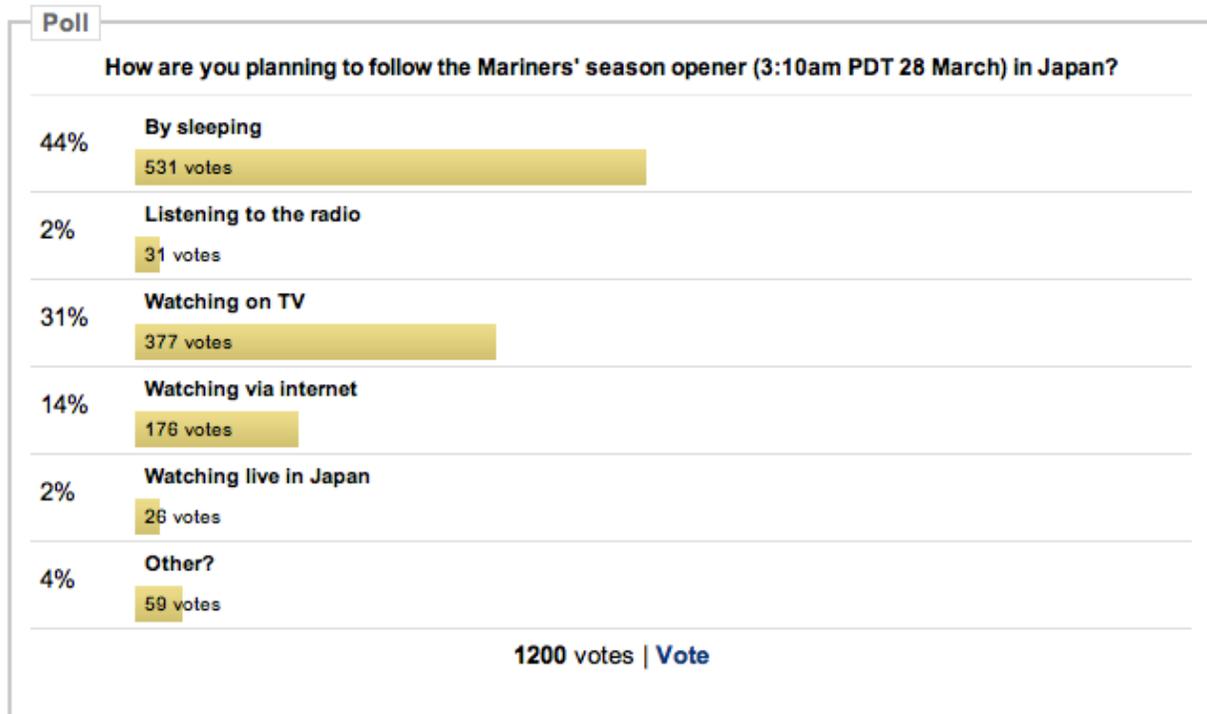
Q: Did the medium you were drawn to as a child influence the medium you've chosen to work in today? How and why?

A:

Q: Which medium (radio or television) do you prefer more for baseball broadcasts? Why?

A:

Table 1



(“Three” 2012)