

Sports Media Influence on NFL Concussion awareness and player safety

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Abstract

This research paper examines the role of sporting media in perpetuating a traditional notion of masculinity within the National Football League (NFL) and portraying injury as something outside of maleness. Sports journalists hold a control over the way the public views athletes. When it relates to injuries, sports journalists reify hegemonic masculinity and promote the “masculine warrior narrative”, a disposition that forces athletes to suppress injury and pain and view them as feminized emotions that should not be displayed in public. This way of thinking leads to a decrease in injury awareness around the National Football League (NFL) and hinders the development of the sport and the culture that resides within it. As the brutal effects and the physical nature of the game of football is brought to the forefront with the NFL under litigation for contributing to brain disease; the issue of injury awareness is prevalent in American Society. This paper analyzes examples in sporting media that reflect both an “iron man” perspective that places victory over player health and changes in the way certain players handle brain injuries and the journalists that report on them.

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I have always wanted to discover how to make an impact in people's lives. Whether it is making them smile or laugh I always find comfort in helping others. A person who displayed a passion to impact others in television and served as an inspiration for me to pursue a career in Communications was Stuart Scott. Stuart Scott embodied what it meant to be an influential African American man in society. He was a staple on the popular ESPN newscast Sportscenter and every morning I watched him before school. He changed the way sports were reported by using slang in a way that was not used before. His phrases like "cool as the other side of the pillow." and "he must be the bus driver because he's taking them to school." were unique in sports broadcast media at that time. He spoke in a way that was similar to my household, my family, and my friends. He brought a piece of African American culture to the television screen. It wasn't just sports news but a form of entertainment through sports. He made me feel connected to the broadcast because his figurative language made the newscast memorable. Idolizing Scott as a child helped me come to the realization that I wanted to embody the same traits he had. I want to make news memorable the same Scott did for years to audiences of all ages and races.

I value the impact that communication has on the world. As a Communications major, I want to gain the ability to demonstrate effective skills in conveying information to an audience. The reason why I am a Communications major is because I want reach and inform others about the events around them through writing. Excellent communication is universal and transcends socioeconomic class, race, and gender. It also improves relationships and collaboration on different projects in broadcast media. In broadcasting you are required to work cooperatively

with your coworkers to help improve the quality of the newscast. These basic fundamentals of professionalism lay the foundation for exponential growth ahead.

One question I have about media professionals deals with their objectivity when they cover certain stories. Recently I have discovered that the perception of football has become increasingly negative due to the media coverage of traumatic head injuries. I want to discover the underlying motivations of the reporters who cover sporting injury and understand why they sense a pressure to promote masculinity making practices over injury awareness in football. I need to tackle this issue if I want to move forward with my career path as a sports journalist. It's something I have to understand because it is my responsibility to inform the public in a non-bias way.

In athletics, injury and pain are seen as outside of traditional masculinity and the athletes on the field are praised for playing hurt. The NFL and the media suppress the harmful impact of injuries on the player in order to avoid negative backlash from the players. Why does sporting media promote hegemonic masculinity above injury? What responsibility does the media hold to inform the public about concussion and injury awareness? Why do the players who play the sport and the public continue to believe that traditional masculinity is acceptable in football? These are questions I want to answer in my research and ultimately discover the true motivations of Sports journalists promoting hegemonic sporting masculinity within the NFL and convincing the public that injury is not as important as it should be.

Literature Review

The influx of concussions and injuries reported by players in the National Football League, along with recent lawsuits filed by former NFL players against the league has created an increasing awareness about the dangers of traumatic brain injuries (TBI's) in national sports media. This increase in awareness is because of the shift in the direction of players and sports journalists alike in the way they view player health and safety. Sports journalist's perception of masculinity shape the way they portray information about the players have to the public.

The impact of Hegemonic Masculinity and the Masculine Warrior Narrative on Sports Journalists' perception of Sporting Injury

Sports journalists have an overwhelming need to promote hegemonic masculinity and the masculine warrior narrative in the way they report information about the NFL. Anderson and Kian (2012) considered masculinity in regard to the reporting of NFL concussions and noted a change in how men understood injury – noting that masculinity has changed, along with a cultural understanding of “chronic trauma;” however, the media continues to “uphold the masculine warrior narrative” (p. 161).

Anderson and Kian (2012) studied hegemonic masculinity in American Football and sports journalists' need to uphold the masculine warrior narrative stating that “sports media has glorified the image of the emotionally and physically impenetrable football player and portrays athletes as heroes in the face of serious injury or death. This is seen as the ultimate commitment to sport and victory.” (Anderson and Kian, 2012, p.165). Nyland (2004) says that sports journalists support hegemonic sporting masculinity by encouraging masculinity-making practices. Instead of praising the strong-willed male athletes who put health before victory, sports journalists used the stories of fallen athletes in order to promote their own sporting

prowess and masculinity. It is important to construct an idea of ways sports journalists view football players in order to understand their motivation behind displaying information about injuries to the public eye.

How NFL player's perception of Pain and Injury affect media decision-making regarding health coverage.

Rodgers and Oriard (2014) speak about the overwhelming pressure player's face in the National Football League to play through injuries. They state that because of the recent media attention on the injuries of players, the public interest in men who are dealing with the effects of football's brutality has increased

Rogers and Oriard (2014) state that the athletes in the NFL believe that emotions such as fear, compassion, and tenderness are seen as a sign of weakness and pain must be repressed (Rodgers and Oriard, 2014). Donald Sabo calls this "the pain principle" and argues that it is present in many men, not only athletes. The pain principle decreases emotional expression, leads men to see their bodies as machines and not part of themselves. (Rogers, 2014, pg. 123)

When the ability to perform is threatened by injury players believe that part of their identity is at stake and push themselves to play through the pain. This can be seen as simply a player's competitive nature or love of the game but it is often these pressures that cause players to view injuries as an "inescapable part of football." (Rogers and Oriard 2014 pg. 152)

Jones and Koonce Jr. (2015) also give valid information about the perception of injuries in the NFL stating that although the NFL has implemented rule changes to deter violent hits and decrease injuries the players continue believe that the league is restricting the nature of the game. (pg. 150)

Jones and Koonce Jr. (2015) continue this idea proving the fact that football is a violent and dangerous game is part of the appeal draws viewers in each Sunday and the injuries that

result from such play leave an indelible mark on the player's physical health and mental psyche.
(pg. 132 par 4)

A key factor in why injury is viewed as outside of maleness is because mental and physical toughness factor into the athletic identity of football players. Petrie, Deiters, & Harmison (2014) examine the way that college football players deal with life, stress and injury. They state sport psychologists, athletic trainers, and coaches need to continue to be aware that certain athletes will perceive their stressors, (such as injury) as threatening or overwhelming and cope with the stressor much differently than athletes who perceive their stressors in an adaptive manner (as a challenge). (Petrie, Deiter, Harmison, 2014, pg. 13)

It is important to understand the way different athletes think in order to understand why they may want to suppress the notion that they are injured to their coaches, trainers, and other medical staff.

How player leadership impacts concussion and player safety awareness with athletes and the media.

Players are told that the only way to bring about awareness of dangers of injuries is for the players to police themselves. Trainers and Coaches will never be informed unless the players take initiative in communicating with them when they are injured. Keown (2012) writes about the change in NFL player's perception about the dangers of brain injuries by using Green Bay Packers Wide Receiver Donald Driver. (Pg.1)

Keown (2012) states in his article that although Driver's actions in encouraging his starting quarterback to leave the game after suffering a concussion greatly diminished his team's chances of winning the game, he inspired players and sports journalists alike to look at the sport

differently and see that players should prioritize their health and personal well-being over the need to win. (Pg. 2)

Keown (2012) believes that more players should take on a leadership role and encourage teammates to get a player who looks disoriented in the huddle off the field and inform the training staff. He says “the buddy system” is part of the initiative to educate players on the dangers of head injuries and multiple concussions ultimately coming to the conclusion that the problem lies within the sport, the culture, and the people who reside within it. Keown (2012) feels the biggest obstacle to the NFL's concussion policy is persuading players to leave the field or seek treatment when they know they will be finished for the game and maybe the next. However, Driver helped Aaron Rodgers, Coaches and the training staff understand how much of a danger it is for a player to continue to play after suffering a brain injury. He gave the sport a level of humanity it needed and let people see that there are genuine human beings in the helmets that cover these men. Keown (2012) agrees that attitudes are changing within the sport and media. He concludes saying that football can still be about toughness, just a different kind of toughness and that the toughest players are the ones who are clear-headed enough to speak the truth and encourage others to listen to them. (Keown 2012 Page 3)

Klis (2013) also speaks about the change in attitude from the NFL and media alike when dealing with concussions and player safety.

Klis (2013) states that when it comes to concussions, the NFL has told its players that they need to take the issue more seriously. (Klis 2013 Pg.1.) In 2010, 218 players suffered concussions in 321 combined preseason and regular-season games and in 2013 190 game concussions were reported. (Klis 2013 Pg. 4) Klis believes that because fewer concussions are being reported because the league has been making stride to reduce the number of high-speed

collisions on kickoff returns and making it easier for kickers to kick nonreturnable kicks. (Klis 2013 Pg 5.)

Klis concludes this thinking stating that in the pressurized world of the NFL, concussions can be viewed as a deterrent to the games inherent competitive nature. A coach might tell his trainer that he needed a certain player to play, no matter how dazed, in order to win. Players, meanwhile, know that if they come out because they are concussed, another player will come in to take their place.

Conclusion:

Sports Journalists have had an incredible impact on the way players and the public view the game of football. Studies show how these media professionals have displayed these athletes reflect the way the public views the athletes and how the athletes view themselves. In Anderson and Kian's (2010) we see the effect of sports journalist attempting to promote hegemonic masculinity by shaping these athletes as hero's for playing through injury and head trauma. This leads to a culture of athletes believing pain and injury is a sign of weakness and must be repressed in order to maintain a sense of masculinity to the public. By changing the way sports journalists view concussions, it has helped in changing the attitudes of the athletes, coaches, and trainers who are part of the game thus leading to an increase in concussion awareness not only in the National Football League but in American Society as well.

Methods

I wanted to look at the way the media views injury and concussions in the National Football League. Through my research I discovered that the media promotes a masculine warrior narrative and likes to show football players as heroes for playing through pain and injury to support their own hegemonic masculinity. I proceeded to take 3 steps in order to support this claim. The first step was finding effective scholarship. I went to scholarly journal databases like Google Scholar, Pace University's Library Database, and JSTOR. In each of these databases I pulled out information and other scholars literature reviews that were relevant to my topic. I studied Anderson & Kian's (2012) chapter in *Men and Masculinities* called "Media Contestation of Head Trauma in the National Football League" This source was where I was able to lay the foundation of what I wanted to talk about. The media portraying a masculine warrior narrative intrigued me and I wanted to know more about it. After reading through Anderson and Kian's (2012) work I decided that the most important information to add to my analytical research was the definition of the masculine warrior narrative and how it effects modern day media coverage of the NFL. In this literature review I found some very effective scholarship, so great that I decided to bring the topic up as a introductory piece in my Analytical Research.

Next I found a great chapter from Katie Rogers (2014) titled "I am a Gladiator: Pain Injury and Masculinity in the NFL" In Rogers' (2014) work I found something interesting called the "pain principle". Rogers (2014) stated that the "pain principle" is the need for men to view their bodies as machines to be worked and to repress pain and emotion. This was a very important factor in why media professionals tend to portray athletes as physically impenetrable. Rogers (2014) also stressed the need for media professionals to portray the sport of football as a gladiator sport, and essentially dehumanize the men who play the sport. These topics were

interesting and directly related to my research question which deals with the media promoting the idea of traditional masculinity and the warrior narrative. Rogers' (2014) scholarship represented something I could build my research and analysis off of and provide clear examples of why the media has these underlying motivations to portray men as such.

Another piece of scholarship that supported my research question was Petrie, Deiters, and Harmison's "Mental Toughness, Social Support and Athletic Identity" study, where they show how injuries are viewed differently by athletes starting at the youth level throughout college and the pros. The main information that stood out the most to me and that I found necessary for my analytical research was their work on the two different types of athletes. They state that some athletes perceive injury as overwhelming and pay close attention to their injuries while others tend to see injury in a more adaptive manner (as challenge that can be overcome) due to the understanding of injury within the culture of the sport that they play. This information directly relates to my research topic. While studying masculinity and injury awareness, I realized that cultural background plays a huge factor in the way we perceive different things, and injury is no different. If athletes were told from a young age to see injury as a challenge that can always be overcome they will carry that with them throughout their lives. Petrie, Deiters, and Harmison prove that point and I needed their work to realize that this was a very important topic I couldn't forget to include when talking about the way we see men in society and how it relates to the way the media portrays athletes to the public.

The second step in the process was to find media examples to support my claims. Writing is a process and writing analytical research in a new pattern was a challenge for me. I decided to do what I know how to do best. Because I am constantly reading articles about the topics important in my discourse community I know a lot of examples about media perpetuating a

traditional notion of maleness. I took a prime example of a player I myself know stands for a man whose identity within the sport of football is defined by their ability to play through injury. Pittsburgh Steelers Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger embodies what it means to be tough. I used ESPN Staff Writer Jeremy Fowler's article "The Toughness rep: 5 reasons why Ben Rothlisberger has it." as an example. Fowler praises Roethlisberger for being able to withstand punishment and fight through injuries. He looks at injury as a challenge that is easily overcome by the "elite" players in the league. Fowler perpetuates that the fact that Roethlisberger is able to till play while injured and not take himself out the game as reason he is so respected around the league instead of shedding light on the disservice Roethlisberger is doing to himself by not seeking treatment. I then turned to the scholarship I had researched within the field and Anderson and Kian's (2014) work fit perfect with the purpose of the article. Their scholarship was supported by the media example of Fowler. He clearly stated that the fact that Roethlisberger was able to fight through his injuries added to his "legend" as one of the best players in the league and Anderson and Kian stated the reason sports media professional do this is because they themselves believe that the players should not show pain and they glorify the athletes who push through pain such as Rothlisberger.

Next I turned to Rogers' scholarship on the "pain principle". I led off with this information to inform my reader of the definition of the pain principle and why it is important to my research. I used an example of CBS New York Writer Jeff Kidal stating in his article that the NFL is a barbaric and gladiator-like sport "where military ethic endures" as a "next man up" attitude is spread around the league. I used the pain principle and information from Rogers' scholarship that directly correlates with Jeff Kidal's article. In essence the point I was attempting to get across was the fact that media professionals believe that the sport is such an aggressive

and brutal gladiator-like sport they tend to dismiss information about concussions and injury and pain and focus on these players who literally are replaced over and over again. This leads to a deceptive view of the NFL to the public who now sees the players who play the sport as replaceable by the next man willing to sacrifice himself for ultimate sporting victory.

I bring up my third and last media example toward the end of my analytical research, stating that in the NFL players themselves also believe that hiding injuries such as concussions is acceptable. I use players like Former Jacksonville Jaguars Running Back Maurice Jones-Drew who stated that if it came to playing or hiding a concussion he would hide it. He stated that taking himself out of the game meant that he wouldn't be able to provide food for his family and it would devastate him to believe he let his family, coaches, and teammates down. This adds to the notion of traditional masculinity portrayed in sporting media. Jones-Drew looks at the sport as part of his masculine identity. The very things that make him a man in American Society, like putting food on the table, being a provider for his wife and his kids, leading the team to victory and being an example on and off the field lead him to play through his injuries. In the end the players know they may suffer long term damage to their health down the road but essentially they are saying the momentary victory now is worth the years of brain and body damage down the road. Media professionals capture the culture within the league and display it to the public so now we also see that NFL players think this way so now we begin to believe it is acceptable because the players themselves see it acceptable. It all leads back to that cultural understanding of awareness and the fact that as Petrie, Deiters, and Harmison (2013) said, some players perceive injury as overwhelming and others view it in an adaptive manner. Jones-Drew would be an example of a player who views injury as a challenge that can be overcome with a different

state of mind and represents the culture within the NFL as one of its most prominent players in the 21st century.

Analytical Research

In the National Football League (NFL) the concussions that have increased and the violent nature of the sport has been showcased on television and other forms of media. This has led to an increased awareness and an influx of new information about the dangers of concussions and injuries in football. However, sports journalists' perceptions of football players' injuries and concussions is dependent upon their view of masculinity. This impacts the way the public and the players themselves see injury and pain. This paper will review present day sport policy, particularly in regard to professional football, in terms of injury and suggest that media coverage perpetuates a "traditional" notion of masculinity- one that sees injury as something outside of maleness.

The media coverage of Pittsburgh Steelers Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger serves as evidence of media praising traditional masculinity. Roethlisberger is a player who is known for his toughness on the football field. His big 6'5', 241-pound figure towers over many players in the NFL and because of his physical stature media professionals expect Roethlisberger to perform on the field and not be impacted by injury. ESPN Staff Writer Jeremy Fowler wrote that Roethlisberger's "ability to withstand punishment and come back for more has added to his reputation as "an iron man", both in Pittsburgh and around the NFL." (Fowler, 2016, pg. 1) Fowler continues saying that the fact that Roethlisberger never misses extended playing time, returns from weird injuries and takes an enormous amount of hits throughout his career, yet still continues to play makes him a "legend" in the eyes of his teammates, coaches, and Steelers fans everywhere. Rogers (2014) states that when the ability to perform is threatened by injury players believe that part of their masculine identity is at stake and push themselves to play through the pain. (Rogers, 2014, pg. 152) Sports journalists, who observe this behavior on the field, portray

the player's actions in a positive light for sacrificing themselves and their personal health to lead their team no matter what the cost. The media perception of Roethlisberger shows how media professionals and football players have a high regard for masculinity over injury and view it as something that should not hold men back. This preserves a traditional notion of masculinity one that glorifies emotionally and physically impenetrable football players who put their personal health aside as a commitment to victory. Consequently, the public sees injury as a challenge that can always be immediately overcome. They forget that recovery is a process and steps need to be taken to insure players are healthy.

Another example of media professionals promoting traditional maleness is the media coverage of Los Angeles Rams Quarterback Case Keenum. With his team in a tied game late in the fourth quarter, Keenum suffered a concussion after he hit the ground on a sack. Immediately after the hit his teammates lifted him up and Keenum, obviously disoriented, continued to play. Keenum then fumbles the ball and loses the game in an event that showed the disconnect in communication between players and coaches and trainers in the NFL. However, Forbes Contributor Alex Reimer wrote the Rams were not the ones to blame as a result of Keenum's injury. Reimer said "Imagine the reaction if an independent athletic trainer sitting all the way up in the press box demanded a stop to the action on the field. Suffice to say, it almost certainly wouldn't go over well. As long as NFL coaches are judged on their win-loss records, it's not realistic to expect them to willingly remove starters from games for precautionary purposes." (Reimer,2015, pg. 1) Anderson & Kian (2012) defined this as masculine warrior narrative, stories of "heroic disposition, even in the face of debilitating injury or risk of death" (Anderson & Kian, 2012, p. 155) The NFL is subject to these narratives because the members of the media that cover the sport are primarily men. These male sports journalists uphold hegemonic masculinity,

while covering the NFL, a male dominated sport. Reimer promotes the masculine warrior narrative and a traditional notion of maleness because he believes that it is so rare for athlete to take themselves out of the game the team should not be subject to blame. He explains that when a victory hangs in the balance all of the education and risks of chronic head trauma go away. Winning becomes the only thing that matters. With former players stepping up and suing the league for subsequently resulting in permanent brain damage to its athletes, the media is tossed front and center inside of this controversy. Media professionals continue to display a pressure to promote a masculine warrior narrative that lies within the sport. These professionals want to capture the culture of the league and the players and coaches' way of thinking when it comes to injuries to star players, but do not understand that it is sending a message to the public that injury is not a factor in football player's ability to win. The evidence of brain damage in former NFL player's shows us that injury is clearly a factor and may continue to be. If the environment around the league does not change and pressure taken off trainers and coaches and put into the hands of the players the NFL may never effectively combat the concussion epidemic, it faces.

In the NFL players in leadership positions serve as an example to the rest of the team. They feel the need to be strong and brave and not show weaknesses. Rogers (2014) writes that "emotions such as fear, compassion, and tenderness are seen as a sign of weakness and pain must be repressed" (Rogers, 2014, pg. 45) Donald Sabo calls this "the pain principle" and argues that it is present in many men not just athletes. The pain principle decreases emotional expression and leads men to see their bodies as machines, not part of themselves. (Rogers, 2014, pg. 150) Media professionals are guilty of using their influence to promote the pain principle within football and show the sports as barbaric and gladiator-like. CBS New York Writer Jason Keidel writes that "the NFL is an industry, where the military ethic endures-next man up." (Keidel, 2015, pg. 3),

Keidel continues stating that the NFL is like this by design and that fans understand what the players in the sport go through day in and day out but also understand that they can be replaced. He says that “Even knowing what these men endure, we look with haunting indifference toward the next draft to replace the very players we idolized. For better or for worse these are America’s gladiators. We sit at home from the comfort of our couch but the brutality clearly doesn’t bother us as much as it should.” (Keidel, 2015, pg.4)

Keidel’s article serves as evidence that neither the public or media has seen anything wrong with the barbaric nature of the sport and that explains the disconnect between what is real and what is shown to the public. In the golden age of the NFL (1980’s and 90’s) some of the game’s best players were idolized for playing through injuries. This is because of what the media professionals display to the public. They inform fans who are worried that for every legendary player that is damaged by the brutal nature of the NFL, there is another player that can take their place through next NFL Draft. The public forgets about the player who was injured and fixate themselves on the next player added to the team. This is essentially the gladiator mentality that media professionals promote leading to a rise in athletes wanting to play through their injuries to make sure they don’t lose their job or ability to participate in the masculinity-establishing community of the NFL.

In the article “Players still willing to hide head injuries” The Associated Press interviewed multiple player perspectives on hiding head injuries in the NFL. According to the Associated Press (2011)” 23 out 44 players said that they would try to conceal a concussion rather than pull themselves out of a game.” (Associated Press, 2011, pg. 1) Buffalo Bills Linebacker Andra Davis stated that when he first came into the league the culture was completely different. The league exemplified a “whatever goes” culture. Almost to the point that

if players came out of a game with even a slight concussion they weren't "giving their all for their team." (Associated Press, 2011, pg. 2) Former Jacksonville Jaguars running back Maurice Jones-Drew gave the media a straight forward answer when asked about concussion reporting. Jones-Drew stated that players have no choice but to hide it. "The bottom line is: you have to put food on the table No one's going to sign or want a guy who can't stay healthy. I know there will be a day when I'm going to have trouble walking. I realize that but this is what I signed up for. Injuries are part of the game. If you don't want to get hit, then you shouldn't be playing." (Associated Press, 2011, pg. 3)

Jones-Drew serves as evidence of the hyper masculine culture of the NFL and the different ways that football players deal with life stress and injury. Jones-Drew believed that injury was an expectation during his time playing and that there are consequences to playing the sport. It is clear that football is more than just a game to Jones-Drew, it is a way to ensure his family is financially stable and that his role as the man and provider of the household stays intact. This exemplifies his own cultural understanding of injury. Petrie, Deiters, and Harmison (2013) state that football players deal with injury differently than others. They believe while some athletes will perceive certain stressors (such as injury) as threatening or overwhelming, often times football players perceive their stressors in an adaptive manner (as a challenge). (Petrie, Deiter, and Harmison, 2013, Pg. 13) Players like Jones-Drew and Davis show that the common way of thinking around the NFL is that concussions are a type of injury that should not stop a player from playing. In most cases injuries and concussions are seen as a challenge that should be overcome if players want to keep the things they value the most (family, financial security, respect from teammates, masculine identity) As men these players are expected to adjust to challenges of life without being impacted. Media professionals support these athletes,

understand their struggle and are willing to portray these athletes as heroes for doing whatever is necessary to preserve their masculine role within society. This leads to a traditional notion of masculinity being spread out into the public and a decrease in understanding of injury as we now see athletes as role models for sacrificing their own personal health in the future for respect in the eyes of other men in the present.

Concussions and Injury awareness are the biggest issues that contemporary sports face today in modern day society. Media Professionals hinder the growth and development of not only the National Football League and its players but scientific research as a whole by promoting masculinity over injury. They are deceiving the nation, placing players who suppress their injuries and pain on a pedestal above those who don't. If the media continues to promote the masculine warrior narrative, football as a gladiator sport, and the traditional notion of masculinity as acceptable no information about the dangers of concussions will ever be uncovered. The NFL will continue to suffer through more lawsuits from the families of former players stating the brutal effects of the game have caused their fathers and husbands to commit suicide. Even though the sport can be entertaining for households around the country the players that play are slowly killing themselves by the minute. No one will ever know unless the media does its responsibility and informs them clearly without their own hegemonic masculinity getting in the way.

Discussion

After going through the steps of my Analytical Research I began to understand that writing is a recursive process, its constantly changing and as your ideas change, your papers change too. I've done so much research I feel confident that I am one of the most knowledgeable student on the sports media's relation to the NFL concussion crisis. If anyone even attempts to get into a debate with me I can state, all of this work I did and the tons of media examples and scholarship that support my claim. In essence it is the very process of writing this Thesis paper that has made me want to continue with this topic for my Honors Thesis. I know I can delve deeper into this topic and truly discover more about the underlying motivations of the media when it comes to information about injuries and concussions. Much like how this paper was constantly changing, the topic itself of masculinity, football, and media perception is also constantly changing. There are so many examples out in the world that you can take a look at and have a sophisticated dialogue on. I feel it is essential to go through a process like this in order to understand your writing. It will make you feel more confident but also help you in understand more beyond what is stated in your sources or in your scholarship, but your own view and opinion on your topic and why it is valid. If I learned anything from this project, it is that if you take the necessary steps to build a solid research project you will understand the topic more than anyone you know and you can build off of it for years and years to come. I sure hope to as I continue my academic career at Pace University.

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