

CHAPTER 10: Commercialisation and the media

Factors leading to the commercialisation of contemporary physical activity and sport

Key definitions

- **Advertising** is a means of communication with the potential users of a product or service.
- **Commercialism** is the treating of sport as a commodity, involving the **buying and selling** of assets with the market place as the driving force behind sport.
- A **commodity** is something that is **useful**, has **value** and that can be turned to **commercial** or other advantage.
- An **endorsement** is a deal whereby a company will pay an individual for its brand to be associated with that individual.
- The **golden triangle** links and provides an overlap between the **media, commercialism, and sport** and its governing bodies.
- **Merchandising** refers to a variety of products available for sale and the display of those products in such a way that stimulates interest and entices customers to make a purchase.
- **Professionalism** is the practising of an activity, especially a sport, by professional rather than amateur players.
- **Social media** is the use of websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Spectatorship** is the act of **watching** an event, especially a sports contest.
- **Sponsorship** is when a person or organisation **pays** the cost of an activity or event.
- **Role model** is a person who someone admires and whose behaviour he or she tries to copy.

The historical and social context of commercialism

The **evolution** of commercialisation in sport has occurred through the past three centuries.

This began with tradesman **donating prizes** in kind at holy days to highly organised rural sports often sponsored by local publicans. Such **sponsorship** was supplemented in the eighteenth century with noble **patronage** or by a town or district that had **local government**.

This led to increased **gambling** and **spectatorism**, which in turn encouraged event organisers to seek further commercial development.

By 1900 the tradition had produced **folk heroes**, national **competition networks**, **international** championships and the popular interest of selling thousands of **newspapers** daily and bringing whole cities to a standstill.

Broken time payments

Opportunities for **working classes** to participate in sport were restricted by their long six-day working weeks and Sunday Sabbatarianism. In the UK, the Factory Act of 1844 gave working men half-a-day off, making the **opportunity** to take part in sport more widely available. Working class sportsmen found it hard to play top level sport due to their working hours.

On occasions, **cash prizes**, particularly in individual competitions, could make up the difference in loss of earnings, with some competitors also wagering on the outcomes of their matches. As professional teams developed, some clubs were willing to make '**broken time payments**' to players, i.e. to pay top sportsmen to take time off work.

Broken time payments

As attendances increased, it became feasible to pay men to concentrate on their sport **full-time**.

In the late 1880's, the industrial North of England had many working class men (mill workers and miners), who started to play rugby (figure 10.1). The **loss of earnings** that such a worker experienced whilst playing rugby on a Saturday was considerable and so became a major inhibitor. Some clubs began to make '**broken time payments**' as compensation for the loss of income.

Many in the RFU (North and South) simply refused to accept the concept of broken time payments.

A notable development was in 1893 when clubs in the industrial north of England put it to the Rugby Football Union that players who worked should be given 'broken time payments' to compensate them for pay lost while representing their club.

Many of the Northern administrators were ex-public school and strongly defended **amateurism**. The eventual outcome in 1895 was a split between twelve northern clubs who decided to break all links with the union and form the **Northern Rugby Football Union (NRFU)** on amateur lines, but with the acceptance of the principle of payment for broken time.

In the 1896/7 season the Northern Union introduced a challenge cup with all teams allowed to enter which caused great excitement. The final was held on May 1st 1897 between Batley and St. Helens at Headingley. Batley won 10-3 watched by between **13,000 to 14,000 fans** who paid £620 (gate money) between them.

It was not until late August 1995, that **professionalism** in the Union game was agreed. The IRB did not really have a choice, with a lot of money beginning to flow into the game from advertising and TV. It was considered to be a complete injustice (by the players) that the players themselves were not able to share in this bounty.

Spectatorism

A **spectator sport** is a sport that is characterised by the presence of spectators, or watchers, at its competitions (figure 10.1). A spectator is a person who **watches** an event.

Victorian Sport (1830-1901)

- **Mass spectator** sport began to take off.
- For the masses, **Saturday afternoon** free from work was the turning point, enabling them to play and spectate.
- For example, the **Heathens** (Newton Heath Football Club) - home ground at Belle-Vue Stadium Manchester (figure 10.2 shows large numbers of spectators surrounding the pitch).
- 'The Heathens' became a professional football team in 1885 and adopted its present name in 1902, **Manchester United FC**.

Edwardian sport (1901-1918)

- Organised sporting involvement expanded rapidly across all classes.
- **Male working class** influence increased, notable for football in England and rugby in Wales.
- **Working class women** were largely excluded from sporting involvement.
- Sport was increasingly a matter of **national** concern.
- **Commercialisation of sport** continued with large numbers of spectators and increased number of **professionals** in major sports.

figure 10.1 – early rugby from 1850



figure 10.2 – the Heathens in about 1880



Between the wars (1918-1940)

- **Commercialisation** of sport expanded rapidly, especially the provision of spectator sport.
- Sport as part of a **national culture**, now extended to the majority of the population.
- Most sports were still **class oriented**.
- **Football** continued to increase in popularity and by the 1930s was the most popular spectator sport.
- Most spectators at professional soccer games were **men** who were able to **spend** some money at the turnstiles to support their local teams.

1940-today

- An improved **standard of living** and working conditions has enabled **participation** and **spectatorism** for most social groups.
- **Amateur** administrators reluctantly allowed commercial forces to enter the world of sport.
- **Television** coverage increased in importance for sport, sponsors and spectators.

In the twenty first century the core audience of sports fans is a reliable **commodity** that can be profitably sold to advertisers. On occasions a much larger and less committed audience can be drawn in to take place in the general national and international spectacles which generate their own momentum through their sheer size. This was witnessed by the support the UK population gave to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London 2012.

The promised sporting legacy of these games was to inspire a generation through sport and there is evidence that many sports have shown an upward trend. For example, cycling, gymnastics and track and field athletics (mainly driven by the weekly Parkrun initiative) have increased their participation levels.

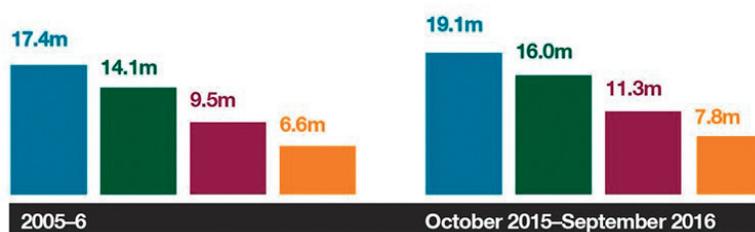
The biggest live attendance at a global sporting event occurs at the FIFA World Cup. The 2010 FIFA World Cup attracted live audiences of 3,178,856 and this increased by 7.31% to 3,429,873 in 2014, with the competition reaching a global **in-home television audience of 3.2 billion** people. FIFA partners, such as Adidas, Coca Cola and Visa have direct advertising and promotional opportunities and preferential access to FIFA World Cup broadcast advertising and so are able to target live spectators and the in-home television audience.

Participation

A comparison of how many adults are taking part in sport at various frequencies in 2005-2006 (47.6 million) and 2015-2016 (54.2 million) is illustrated in figure 10.3 (the frequency of exercise is coded in the figure). Note that the exercise level base is 30 minutes of moderate exercise and the overall participation increase is **11.4%**.

figure 10.3 – participation figures

Number of adults taking part in sport at moderate intensity by frequency (30 minutes at moderate intensity)
 At least once in last month At least once a week At least twice a week At least three times a week



Source: Active People Survey 1 and Active People Survey 10
 (Sport England, April 2005-2006 and October 2015-September 2016)

Participation

Various trends account for the increase in these participation figures:

- More than 7.2 million women now play sport and do regular physical activity – 250,000 more than following the launch of **This Girl Can** campaign (figure 10.4) thus reducing the gender gap.
- More disabled and black minority groups are taking part in sport.
- The number of people over 16 playing sport once a week has risen to over 15.6 million.
- There is evidence that participation and sports spectatorship are symbiotically linked. Spectating at live sporting events appears to have complementary effects on participation and vice versa.

figure 10.4 – This Girl Can



Commercialism and commodities

Sport commercialism and British social history are intertwined as witnessed by:

- The commercialisation of leisure pursuits during the **eighteenth century**.
- The growth in the spread of organised sport and physical recreation during the nineteenth century.
- The spread of television and the media coverage of sport in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty first century.

The **growth of commercial activity** has increased participation and audience numbers, resulting in an improvement in sporting excellence (as witnessed by TeamGB's results since the 2004 Olympic Games) and improved sporting facilities (figure 10.5).

The fact that **governing bodies** clung onto the concept of **amateurism** for so long, has in turn forced athletes into the arms of commercialism.

figure 10.5 – facilities as a heritage



Sport as a commodity

Sport and its audience are sold as **commodities** to **advertisers**.

The high price of the **advertising** slots during **major sport events** is based on the capacity of the sport to reach millions of potential **customers** for any number of products. The audience benefits from an increase in **televised** sport.

Sport is a **commodity** which simultaneously has evolved from **cultural** and **economic** activity.

Rules and codification

To become a commodity, sport not only has to be producible but also to be **reproducible** within a standard format, yet maintain **uniqueness** for each game, match or event. This requires that particular games within sport are played under identical and **stable rules** in both amateur and professional sports.

It requires the training of players to maintain the ethics of **sportsmanship** and the teaching of **fair play**, a basic underlying principle that underpins the **role** of sport in society.

The **codification** process was one of the first functions of early sports organisations and was important to **amateurs**.

STUDENT NOTE

For an introduction to this topic, refer to AS/A1 OCR ISBN 9781901424911, Part 6, Chapter 14.

Spectators

Spectators consume the sport commodity over a period of time, with different degrees of intensity of consumption and in a variety of ways:

- Attendance.
- Broadcast in TV or radio, but mostly TV.
- Print, in tabloid newspapers.
- Word of mouth.

Today, the **Olympic Games**, soccer's **World Cup** and **Formula 1** motor sport dominate all other sports competitions, attracting audiences in their millions.

Sports labour

Both professionalisation and rule changes push sports organisations into becoming involved in the **sport labour market** and the development of **elite sportspeople as commodities** within the global labour markets. Hence they have an economic value and players and coaches are under pressure from stakeholders to deliver.

Advertising

Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them.

The selling or **merchandising** of products associated with sport is a major media objective. For example, electronic billboarding around an arena is aimed at the cameras. Advertising breaks on TV (although usually coincide with a break in play) attract large sums of money from the products they advertise.

These types of adverts not only get the general public interested in specific sports, but interest is also directed towards the advertised product.

Merchandising

In the sports merchandising business, the property of value to a team is their name, logo and sports stars.

Through sponsorship and merchandising agreements the licensee is able to manufacture goods with logos, trademarks and trade names of the team, for example Manchester United merchandise (figure 10.6). The licensees believe that with the goodwill of the fans, they will associate with their clubs' identity and buy the merchandise.

A **sponsor** will expect to promote its products by using a performer's image in return for financial support. A contract will be commercial and dependent on the star status of the sportsperson.

Advertising and merchandising are closely related concepts in the area of retail marketing and communications. Retailers use advertising to project a brand image and to drive traffic to retail **stores** or **websites**.

Merchandising is the strategic placement of products that attracts attention and contributes to sales once customers are in stores (figure 10.6 of the Man United shop).

figure 10.6 – MU merchandise



Sponsorship

Sponsorship advertising is a type of advertising where a corporation pays to be associated with a specific event, for example, Virgin Money London Marathon (figure 10.7).

Sports with the best sponsorship deals are sports with a **high fan base** such as football, tennis and snooker. During televised football games, the **half-time** TV adverts tend to have a heavy sports orientation. Equally, many adverts are tennis based around the time of Wimbledon.

Sponsorship is varied and covers all aspects of the team sports and events/competitions, stadium and grounds:

- **Team sponsorship** is one of the most prominent forms of sports advertising. Many businesses of all sizes choose to sponsor a sports team as a way to **promote** their company.
- The brand name will be featured on the kits of the player, for example, Chelsea's £60m a season deal with **Nike**.
- Eclipsed by Manchester United's £75m a season deal with **Adidas**.
- Sponsoring a local team can generate lots of **revenue**, great publicity and create a huge amount of valuable goodwill for businesses of all sizes.
- Adidas has a long-standing relationship with Team GB (figure 10.8), which began 31 years ago at Los Angeles 1984 and extends to the 2024 Olympic Games.
- Adidas remains the British Olympic Association's (BOA) longest serving domestic sponsored partnership for team kit and footwear.
- Nowadays the **sponsorship of stadia** is a common occurrence and selling the stadium's naming rights can bring in massive revenue.
- For example, Stoke City FC announced (from the start of the 2016/17) the Britannia Stadium was to be known as the **bet365 Stadium** for the Premier League season.
- Stoke City Chief Executive Tony Scholes said: 'The Premier League is constantly evolving and to ensure that Stoke City remains as competitive as possible it's important we explore as many ways as possible of generating revenue'.
- **Event/competition sponsorship** ranges from local to national to international level.
- For example, **Aegon** have been investing in British tennis since 2009 and crosses all levels of the game,
- From **nurturing young talent** through our Aegon FutureStars programme, encouraging amateur participation through tournaments such as the Aegon County Cup.
- Helping professional players reach **further potential** through the platform of the Aegon GB Pro-Series.
- And **supporting top players** through our national Davis and Fed Cup Teams.

Endorsement

Sporting role models (figure 10.9) often gain the attention of a corporation who wish to use the athlete's popularity and reputation to help **promote** a service or product. The sponsoring corporation will therefore pay that individual for him or her to endorse its product.

The individual will be seen to be endorsing the product by **wearing** the brand name, appearing in advertising campaigns both on television and in the print media for that particular product. Legally endorsements will be created through an **endorsement agreement** between the individual sporting star and the brand which they are endorsing.

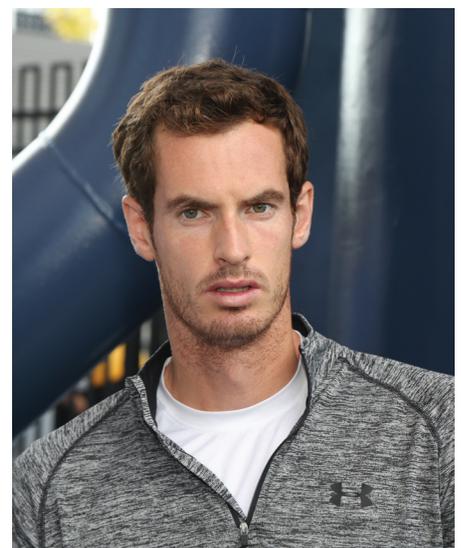
figure 10.7 – Virgin Money London Marathon



figure 10.8 – BOA Logo



figure 10.9 – Andy Murray, now endorsed by Under Armour



Advertising, sponsorship and endorsement deals and the sports star

Puma is Usain Bolt's largest sponsor (figure 10.10). In 2013, he signed an endorsement deal worth an estimated \$10 million per year to remain with the company throughout his competitive sporting career. He is expected to earn \$4 million annually to stay on as a brand ambassador following his retirement.

Advertising, sponsorship and endorsements are packaged together when contracts are exchanged between corporations and celebrity sports stars.

Figure 10.11 lists how advertising affects the sports star.

However, the **motives** of the commercial media differ from sport motives, even though some products may be seen to help sport in other than financial ways.

The **sports performer** is helped by:

- Provision of equipment.
- Income.

The **sports governing body** or organiser is helped by:

- Sport funding, which can be used to for example promote grass roots sport.
- Positive associations between the product and the sport.
- Greater exposure of the sport to the public via the media.

The **product** gains by:

- Broadening the publicity given to the product.
- Tax relief for the advertiser, since the exposure involves a cost which can be set against tax.

In the face of the recent recession, several companies have withdrawn sponsorship because **profit** is their central motive.

Drug scandals have also had an impact on player's earning, for example, Nike and TAG Heuer cancelled their sponsorship deals with Maria Sharapova after she failed a drugs test (page 144). The media have often sensationalised the lifestyle choices of a sports performer, and exert psychological pressure on high profile athletes through excessive media attention.

Sports have **marketing managers** and promoters to generate income and athletes have agents and managers to look after their finances.

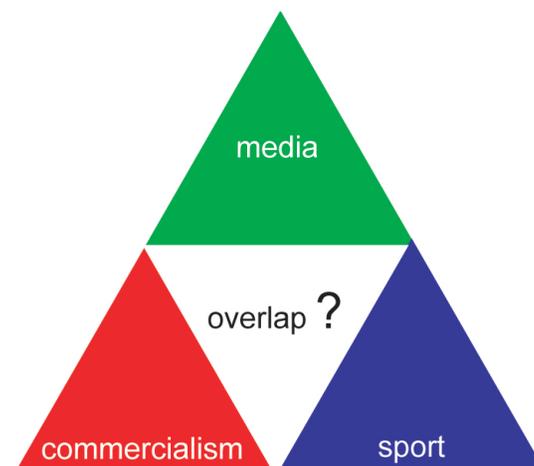
figure 10.10 – Usain Bolt and Puma



figure 10.11 – advertising



figure 10.12 – the golden triangle



The golden triangle

The so-called '**golden triangle**' (figure 10.12) links and provides an overlap between the **media**, **commercialism**, and **sport** and governing bodies. Without one, the other two cannot survive and increased media attention has led to sports becoming more exciting, leading to greater commercial sponsorship and greater participation in sport.

This key concept has been developed throughout this chapter.

Role of the media and sport since the 1980s

The roles of the media, in terms of sport, are **fourfold** (figure 10.13).

figure 10.13 – media and sport



- The basic function of the media has always been to give **information**. Radio and television give immediate **results**, **event descriptions** and **rankings**.
- **Education**: the media **inform**, **advise** and **critically analyse** issues through explanation, discussion and debate. Terrestrial and satellite TV have **documentaries** which give coaching advice, explain the risk of drug-taking, and give post-event discussions on games.
- **Entertainment**: a TV programme will give experience and pleasure to an armchair spectator almost equivalent to the live event. Attending live events is expensive, hence the popularity of screens in pubs, clubs or parks near to the venues, (Henman's Hill/Murray's Mound at Wimbledon for example).
- **Advertising**: the selling or merchandising of products associated with sport is a major media aim. An example of this is a tennis player wearing a certain make of headband, sports shoe or shirt. Each club in both rugby and soccer displays sponsors' names on its shirts. **Electronic billboarding** around an arena is aimed at the cameras. Advertising breaks on TV (although usually coincident with a break in play) attract large sums from the products being advertised.

The impact of the media on sport

The impact of the **media on sport** is extensive. They can **promote** balanced, active, healthy lifestyles and lifelong involvement in physical activity. This is via the people it presents, the way these people act and the messages they give. These messages could be given in children's programmes as well as in adult news and documentaries.

Hence the media's **selective** use of visual and written material can have a major influence. Most important is the **balance** of the message, not just the hero worship of sports stars, but help in recognising the **problems** as well as the pleasures of achievement. The media can give insight into the effort needed for success, and a belief in the ideal of fair play.

20th/21st century developments to ticket sales

Today media coverage of sport is widespread.

- By listening to **commentators**, **pundits** and **watching replays**, spectators, players and coaches improve their knowledge and understanding.
- **Participation** in sports covered by the **media** is always higher than for those that are not.
- Developments in the media are linked to **commercialisation** and **sport**.
- The **media** includes newspapers/magazines, radio and television broadcasting.

Newspapers

Today there are two types of press that are also available online:

- **Popular tabloids**, such as the Daily Mail, the Express, the Sun and the Mirror, focus on popular male dominated sports. Hence football, rugby and cricket are given great exposure.
- More **high-brow broadsheets**, such as the Telegraph and the Guardian, and tabloids the Independent (available online) and the i, cover a variety of sports and analyse sport in more depth.

Magazines are a distinctive media form in their close connection to the social lives of consumers, and cover specific sports enthusiasms, for example, Athletics Weekly.

Since 2014, in the newspaper industry there has been rapid **digital** growth, driven by readers. Digital newspapers and online versions of printed periodicals provide advertisers further opportunity to capitalise on a growing, smart, affluent, and digitally savvy audience.

Online sports media

Digital Sports Group is a UK digital network connecting sports fans and participants worldwide, featuring the latest news, expert opinions, results and fixtures and a variety of features. **sport.co.uk** is rapidly emerging as a major player in online sports media.

Radio

Since the 1980s there has been a rapid growth in radio audiences who have enjoyed the broadcasting of popular sporting events such as rugby and football matches, the major channel being **BBC Radio 5 Live Sports Extra**.

This national digital radio station is operated by the BBC, and specialises in extended additional sports coverage. **5 Live Sports Extra** broadcasts a variety of sports including test match special, Wimbledon tennis, and the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup Finals. The best bits from the BBC's sporting commentary are available as free **podcasts**.

The role of the BBC

Traditionally the BBC played a dominant role in televising sport, providing extensive high-quality advertisement-free coverage and free publicity in exchange for being granted broadcast rights for low fees.

Today (2017) the BBC showcases key global sport festivals, such as the Wimbledon fortnight (without commercial breaks) making it one of the UK's most prestigious, entertaining and much watched sporting events.

ITV broadcast a smaller portfolio of events, and **Channel 4** broadcast a few events from the 1980s, mainly horse races and so-called minority sports.

TV programmes can be accessed via a range of interactive computer devices and watched on multi-purpose screens which can vary from very small mobiles to large, flat, high definition screens. TV companies found sport fairly cheap entertainment compared with dramas or documentaries and so sport has been the beneficiary of media growth.

The influence of technology

Technological advances have revolutionised the way in which humans communicate. Communication satellites (figure 10.14) enable live broadcasting on a global scale, increasing viewing audiences giving more detailed coverage and more of the action, with referees miked up, and replays from different angles. Spectators can easily view at any point or dip into the action without losing the plot.

Media **technological innovations** are fuelling the insatiable appetite of the sports spectator. Tech innovations lend themselves well to social media as a means of communication and interaction, including **email**, **social networking**, instant **messaging** and chat via tech gadgets such as **tablets** and **phablets** (phone + tablet).

Fans can share sporting moments **instantaneously**. These high tech gadgets provide another outlet for the **commercial** sector to exploit. Historically, **television** broadcasting was the main source of **revenue** for elite sports teams, leagues and national governing bodies. In the twenty first century the **Internet** and **social media** are transforming **sports marketing**.

- The Internet has created new possibilities for the distribution and consumption of sporting events.
- The Internet creates new possibilities for **minority sports** (such as netball) that are not large enough to attract significant revenue from mainstream television broadcasting.
- Can attract a new audience.
- Help clubs deliver behind-the-scenes access to fans on a cost-effective basis.
- Internet technology promises to challenge how sports rights holders, such as governing bodies, protect the value of the broadcasting rights they sell to TV companies.

figure 10.14 – satellite technology



The influence of technology

- **Social media** has taken the world by storm. It has impacted the way we receive and share all kinds of news. Sports news is no stranger to social media and has had a large impact on sports journalism.
- Social media is creating new forms of **communication** between fans, athletes, teams and sponsors.
- Strategies include 'buzz' marketing which encourages existing fans to promote an event with offers that can be tracked through social media.
- **Enhanced digital media** aims to enhance the fan experience through multiple perspectives such as highlight repeats and commentary from pundits and experts who build ties with individuals and fan networks.
- The **marketing objective** is to develop **brand awareness** within sport and then go through the classic stages of adoption by developing an interest in participating in the sport, attending an event, buying a subscription or season ticket and ultimately developing close ties with the sports organisation and other fans.
- **Online sports media** (for example, **Digital Sports Group** - a UK digital network) connects sports fans and participants worldwide, featuring the latest news, expert opinions, results and fixtures and a variety of features. **sport.co.uk** is rapidly emerging as a major player in online sports media.

Sports journalists and social media

As sports journalists increasingly adopt social media so does the sporting industry. Sports news is no stranger to social media either and has had a large impact on sports journalism.

Three major global sports and sporting events with a lot of social buzz:

American football:

- There were 185 million interactions on Facebook about Super Bowl 2017.
- More than half of the commercials aired during the 2017 Super Bowl included some type of social hash tag.

Basketball:

- Two thirds of NBA players are on Twitter.
- 26 million tweets were generated about the NBA finals.

World Cup Soccer:

- 12.2 million tweets were generated by the opening game of the 2014 FIFA World Cup.
- 495 million posts, likes and comments were generated on Facebook.
- During the first week of the 2014 World Cup, Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo was mentioned 1.5 million times on Twitter between the US and Portugal.

Benefits of social media to the sports journalist

- Sports journalists experience many benefits from using social media outlets for reporting, such as interaction with their readers, listeners and viewers.
- Social media promotes the work of journalists.
- Social media can direct journalists to the stories that are the most important and most followed by sports fans.

Drawbacks of social media to the sports journalist

- There is **pressure** for the journalist to get information quickly and produce content through a variety of mediums.
- Sports journalists need to **check** social media regularly.
- There is increased **competition** from other journalist and bloggers.
- There is potential for **negative interactions** with readers, viewers, and listeners.
- There can be **inaccuracies** of data on social media outlets.
- There is a feeling of a **non-professional attitude** of journalist's handling stories/news via social media.

73% of all journalists use social media to monitor their competition.

figure 10.15 – SuperBowl 2017



The arrival of pay-per-view

In the early 1990s TV broadcasting was shaken up by the arrival of 'pay-per-view' in the form of BSkyB. Their dedicated sports channels have since become the only place for some major sports to be seen.

Starting in 2006 the Irish company Setanta Sports emerged as a challenger to Sky Sports' dominance of the British pay-TV sports market. Setanta's UK channel went into bankruptcy administration and off the air in 2009. Between 2009 and 2013 **Entertainment and Sports Programming Network** (ESPN) made an attempt to challenge Sky Sports before its British operations were bought out by Sky's current main competitor.

Pay-per-view

- **Pay-per-view** (PPV) is a type of pay television service by which a subscriber of a television service provider can purchase events to view via private telecast.
- The broadcaster shows the event at the same time to everyone ordering it (as opposed to video-on-demand systems, which allow viewers to see recorded broadcasts at any time).
- Events can be **purchased** using an on-screen guide, an automated telephone system, or through a live customer service representative.
- PPV has been introduced by BT Sport, a subsidiary of the former national telecommunications monopoly BT. Customers pay a monthly subscription for full coverage of Champions and Europa League matches when they sign up for this TV bundle.
- Having paid £897m for the rights to all Champions League and Europa League matches over three years, BT will show all 351 games live on a new channel called BT Sport Europe.
- With the rise of the Internet, the term **Internet pay-per-view** (iPPV) has been used to describe pay-per view services accessed online.
- PPV is most commonly used to distribute combat sports events, such as boxing, mixed martial arts and professional wrestling.
- There is a clear shift from cable TV to direct streaming that is accelerating many industries worldwide. For example, World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) has partially cut its cable and satellite TV contracts to embrace Internet television, and this presents the WWE fans with a cutting edge, subscription-only streaming video service.
- The smart shift to the live sports pay-per-view business could bring in millions in revenue.

Growth of pay-per-view

The growth of pay-per-view can only go in one direction, as discerning sports fans follow their teams and thus contribute to what is expected to be an increase in growth over the next few years.

The future of commercial sport

- Sports are **expensive** to run and so **sponsorship** deals and additional publicity, via the media, benefit both performers and spectators, a win-win situation.
- **Entertainment** and consumption will be the major **organising principles** for the future.
- Financial **profits** and economic **expansion** will be the goals of most sports and corporations.
- The emphasis on entertainment will fuel the success of **professional sports** in forms of 'sportainment' TV which provides online streaming platforms.

The future of commercial sport

- **Corporate conglomerates** will buy teams and link them to their media, entertainment, and Internet divisions.
- **Sport equipment manufacturers** will continue to sell the idea that involvement in sports requires highly specialised and **expensive** equipment and clothing.
- **Wealthy people** will use sports as contexts for announcing their status and identities through **appearance**, and sport **ownership**.

But despite all such predictions it is to be believed that leisure pleasure sport will be an integral part of the **lifestyle** of masses of people to improve human **wellbeing** and **quality of life** as a form of everyday **healthy** activity compensating the demanding goals and objectives of our lives.

Commercialism, media and sport in today’s world

Commercialisation creates employment opportunities in media, coaching, sport and event management, as well as stimulating businesses related to sport and benefitting the economy overall.

The following tables (table 10.1 and 10.2) set out the positive and negative impact on different aspects of commercialisation, sponsorship and the media on the performer, the coach and the audience.

Table 10.1 - positive and negative impact of commercialism, sponsorship and the media on sport

positive impact on sport	negative impact on sport
the elite performer	
increased income from sponsorship in return for using or wearing the sponsor’s goods	sponsorship and the media can be over-demanding of a performer requiring interviews at inconvenient times
the media can increase the awareness of the public of the skill, excellence and peronality of the performer (a role model)	increased pressure on a performer to obtain or change lucrative contracts for playing
improved facilities for training, coaching, TID and competition available through increased funding for a sport	the media tend to sensationalise lifestyle and non-sporting life choices by a performer instead of sporting excellence
increased participation level due to exposure of major event, people want to have a go at a new sport (eg rugby after England’s World Cup victory in 2003)	there are inequalities of coverage (minority sports don’t get much exposure), thereby performer cannot attract sponsorship
media led developments lead to more variations to sport (e.g. twenty20 cricket - summer season for Rugby League) leading to greater opportunities for income to the performer and financial gain to the sport	exposure of deviance (fighting, diving to cheat, arguing with officials) lowering role model status caused by ‘win-at-all-costs’ attitude in media
increase of profile of performer and the sport	elite performers are often treated as commodities
competition sponsorship can nurture young talent/grass roots sport	
unprecedented earning power for male athletes in most popular sports and for females in a more limited number of sports	psychological pressure on high profile athletes through excessive media attention
performers can concentrate on training without financial worries	performers are under pressure to perform when injured
positive role models encourage mass participation	

positive impact on sport	negative impact on sport
the coach	
can award contracts to performers which in professional sport gives him or her control over everything to do with playing strategy	sponsorship and the media pressure can be over-demanding of a coach
sponsorship can include coaches and enable travel to support performers at coaching camps and major events	an imbalance of salaries paid to coaches/managers of top professional clubs, such as soccer, and professional coaches/managers employed in amateur sports
the audience	
increased investment improves quality of facilities, acquiring top players and entertainment eg cheer leaders to attract bigger audiences	excessive advertising could interrupt the viewing experience
certain sports (soccer, rugby, cricket, golf and tennis) are ring fenced into terrestrial or free to view TV for primary events, therefore maintaining large audience for high status events (test matches, Wimbledon, cup finals etc.	pay-per-view TV can make some sports events expensive to watch
sports channels available (at a cost) for specific events	low attendance at events which are fully covered on TV
media led developments lead to more variations to sport (e.g. twenty20 cricket - summer season for Rugby League) leading to greater opportunities for fans and more exciting games	there are inequalities of coverage (minority sports don't get much exposure), thereby sports fans for that sport cannot see their favourite sport
technology, such as video screens and HawkEye for replays and match statistics, increase excitement, awareness and knowledge of the sport	more breaks in play can disrupt audience experience
commercial products are readily available for the spectator	player kit merchandise is regularly changed and disfavoured by some supporters due to expense
if the performers are able to work better with sponsorship, entertainment levels should rise	event schedules are planned to maximise USA viewing figures and so may not be timely for the UK arm chair spectator or athletes
	tickets to major sporting events are expensive
the growth of commercial sport through exposure/coverage in the media has increased participation and audience numbers	ticket prices go up due to the popularity of club/team
sports media can promote balanced, active and healthy lifestyles	incorrect umpiring decisions are highly published in the media and so can be questioned by fans
digital media such as newspapers, online outlets and social networking are creating a digitally savvy sports audience	social media ruins the element of surprise as media outlets get the news out faster
	media over-exposure may put some fans off from watching an event
	the media and fans can twist and exaggerate stories

Table 10.2 – positive and negative aspects of media coverage of sport

positive aspects of media coverage	negative aspects of media coverage
players or teams gain revenue from sponsors	sponsorship companies usually only focus on high profile players or teams
sponsorship can provide teams with improved facilities and/or equipment	sponsors can control event timings to suit peak-viewing times
teams or players gain publicity and promotion	players or teams can be restricted as to what products they can use
sponsorship can elevate new sports into the limelight via media publicity	sports can be overrun with sponsors – thus losing the nature of the game
more money for grass-roots teams	NGBs forced to alter rules to make games more exciting - in order to generate sponsorship interest
	more exciting events given priority over other sport
raises profile of the sport	leads to a squeeze on amateur sport
	media will not support minority sports, or low profile sports such as badminton with less identifiable role models

Practice questions

- 1) Commercial sponsorships of sports are primarily motivated by commercial interest in:
 - a. promoting a way of life based on consumptions and consumerism.
 - b. developing a single worldwide standard of living.
 - c. finding new ways to train workers who will produce goods.
 - d. building sports that bring the world together for global competitive events.

- 2) The images and messages presented by sponsors of major sporting events tend to:
 - a. dictate what people think.
 - b. influence what people think about.
 - c. be ignored by nearly all spectators.
 - d. discourage consumption-based lifestyles.

- 3) Which one of the following does not represent positive aspects of media coverage of sport?
 - a. sponsor can provide teams with improved facilities.
 - b. more money for grass roots teams.
 - c. sponsors can control event timing to suit peak viewing times.
 - d. sportspeople gain publicity and commercial benefit.

- 4) Which one of the following best describes a positive impact of commercialisation on sport?
 - a. performers are under pressure to perform well when injured.
 - b. improved facilities for training and coaching through increased funding for sport.
 - c. officials may become too dependent on technology.
 - d. pay-to-view TV can make sports events expensive to watch.

- 5) A definition of sponsorship is:
 - a. the act of watching an event, especially a sports contest.
 - b. a means of communication with the users of a product or service.
 - c. when a person or organisation pays the cost of an activity or event.
 - d. a deal whereby a company will pay an individual for its brand to be associated with that individual.

- 6) Identify three factors that have influenced the commercialisation of sport within the UK. 3 marks

- 7) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of commercialisation in sport. 8 marks

Practice questions

- 8) a) Give a definition of sponsorship. Support your answer with an example. 2 marks
- b) Identify three factors that would influence a sponsor's decision to invest in a sport. 3 marks
- 9) a) What conditions are required for commercial sport to develop? 4 marks
- b) Suggest two reasons why commercial sports have become global commodities. 2 marks
- 10) How are advertising and merchandising linked together within sport's marketing? 3 marks
- 11) Write an argument for and against the suggestion that the commercialisation of sport has been beneficial for the performer and for the sport. 4 marks
- 12) a) Describe three negative effects of media coverage on sport. 3 marks
- b) Describe three positive effects of media coverage on sport. 3 marks
- 13) Describe three ways that sport benefits TV. 3 marks
- 14) Many elite sports are now commercialised and seen as forms of entertainment. Discuss the suggestion that an increase in the commercialisation of sport has been beneficial for performers and the sport. 8 marks
- 15) Outline the positive and negative features of sponsorship for the sports performer. 6 marks
- 16) What is the role of the media in promoting healthy lifestyles and lifelong involvement in physical activity? 5 marks
- 17) Sport, commercialism and the media are all interdependent on each other for their success and popularity. Discuss. 20 marks
- 18) How should a team or national governing body use high profile athletes to grow and promote their sport? 4 marks
- 19) a) Identify some of the threats posed by the Internet and social media on the sources of revenue for an international governing body such as the International Rugby Board 4 marks
- b) In minority sports, such as badminton and extreme sports, how can the Internet be of use to promote the sport in a different manner to television broadcasting? 2 marks
- 20) Discuss the future of commercial sport. 4 marks
- 21) a) What is meant by the term 'pay-per-view'? 1 mark
- b) Briefly describe how pay-per-view has grown over the past decade. 3 marks

Answers link: http://www.jroscoe.co.uk/downloads/a2_revise_pe_ocr/OCRA2_ch10_answers.pdf