**Introduction**

Over the past 100 years, sports have become a major part of American culture as well as different cultures around the world. The word sport is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.” In 2017 Marketing Charts said that about 57% of American adults are pro football fans, a number that went down from 67% five years before (Marketing Charts, 2017). As you can see sports are pretty popular among the population and they heavily influence our culture, they have become a mainstream way of entertainment in the United States and abroad.

A huge reason for the popularity of sports around the world is the fact that they are so readily available 24/7 and that is due to the invention and popularity of the radio in the 1920s and later with the invention and boom of the television in the 50s and 60s. These two devices allowed us to follow our favorite teams and become closer to them without having to travel and go see them in person, it was much easier than in the past. Now with modern technology it is easier than ever to keep up with your favorite teams. Usually the conventional form of following your team would be to watch them either on a local or national broadcast. Most national broadcasts consist of two commentators and one sideline reporter. Most national broadcasts consist of two to three commentators, in the NFL a rules expert, and one to two sideline reporters depending on the magnitude of the game being covered. Broadcasting is such a large part of sports and how our society is able to consume them.

When calling a game, it is human nature to have at least a small bias. There is serious effort by commentators to avoid bias but it will usually slip into a broadcast with most things said being very minor and not affecting the broadcast much. There are many types of bias that could affect a broadcast but the main two that are present are conformation bias and affinity bias. Social Talent’s 2019 article “9 Types of Bias and the Shocking Ways They Affect your Recruitment Efforts” defines affinity bias as, having affinity with someone who went to the same college as you, came from the same town, or has a similar personality to you. This could affect commentators because they could describe someone differently based on the college they attended or personality instead of ability or the things they should use to describe the athletes and the game. Conformation bias is defined as making a judgement based on perception, not the truth (“9 Types of Bias and the Shocking Ways They Affect your Recruitment Efforts,” 2019). This could affect broadcasts because a commentator could favor someone who is perceived better than another player, instead of describing them fairly. Bias is not super prevalent in broadcasts but if you look closely it is there and a problem within broadcasting and consuming mainstream media.

**Literature Review**

These articles discuss the effects of calling a game for your local team and how that determines what language you use when calling the game. Desmarais and Bruce (2009) look at how local pressures influence the commentary of a rugby match. They did this by recording 15 rugby matches between New Zealand and France and observed the way that the commentators from each side called the game. They found that being on different sides makes the commentators produce very different versions of the same event. This is true because each country has different biases which will lead to them describing the game differently. Noll (2007) looks at how television contracts affect how a game is called, in other words bias toward something because of the company and how it affects revenues from these contracts. He uses broadcasts of games as well as television contract revenue data to make his conclusions. He finds that the performance of broadcasters is based on the structure of the market. This is because the field is competitive leading to more bias and better performance from broadcasters.

A main type of bias that is present in modern day media is racial bias. This is mainly shown when athletes of different race are described differently than others. Schmidt and Coe (2014) examine racial bias surrounding the NFL Draft. They used 41 mock drafts to help show how athletes from different ethnicities were described. They found that white athletes were described in terms of mental traits while non-white athletes were described in terms of physical traits. This shows that some commentators use stereotypes when it comes to describing athletes. Sterkenburg, Knoppers, and Leeuw (2010) look at how racial bias affect sports broadcasts as well as the mainstream media. They used other studies as well as broadcasts themselves to see how certain biases affect the broadcast. They found that there are some biases shown in broadcasts but it is nothing major and there are efforts to cover it up and make it not too obvious. This is because there are areas geographically that show more bias than others and it is a bit more accepted but even there, there isn’t any obvious bias. Buffington and Fraley (2008) look at how students perceive race in a sporting context. They use data from the students themselves to see how athletes of different ethnicities are perceived in their eyes and how it relates to broadcasters. They found that the students give black and white athletes different mental and physical traits when describing them. The authors believe that this has to do with mainstream sports broadcasters describing athletes differently, sometimes based on ethnicity.

The main way people watch sports is through television. These studies look at bias in television broadcasts, is it present or not, and how much is there? Bruce (2004) looks at how televised sports demonstrate the resilience of race and racial differences. Bruce uses transcripts of the games to show this. Her findings show that commentators do sometimes draw on racial ideologies. But this happens mainly because of the immense pressure that these commentators are under when calling a game. Sabo, Jansen, Tate, Duncan, and Leggett (1996) look at racial stereotypes in broadcasting and what commentators say when it comes to describing athletes of different ethnicities. They used about 340 hours of video from 7 different nationally televised events to figure this out. They found that there were efforts made to describe athletes fairly, the treatment of race across different productions varied, black athletes were mostly described without stereotypes, Asian athletes were often described with cultural stereotypes, Latino athletes’ descriptions were mixed, and nationalistic bias was evident in all broadcasts. This shows that there will always be some type of bias but commentators do their best to avoid it. Woo, Kim, Nichols, and Zheng (2010) look at the differences in broadcasts of the same event from 3 different countries. They used the broadcasts of the World Series from the United States, China, and South Korea to show the differences and possible bias included in each broadcast. They found that the South Korean broadcast was very biased toward the Boston Red Sox, the US broadcast was largely neutral with many informative comments and the Chinese broadcast was similar to the US broadcast, informative and pretty much bias-free. The reason for these findings is that the South Korean broadcast is the least affiliated with Major League Baseball while the other 2 are closer to MLB.