

The Jello's Jiggling

Broadcasters play an integral role in creating stars and media heroes and in doing so become household names themselves.

By Chris Brown and Casey Shearer

Pink lace panty hose, alleged multiple wound knife stabbings, hotel mistresses, racial slurs, a star quarterback's broken hand, two false teeth, and an overturned coffee table hovered over by a six-six football player; what do these things have in common? You can find them all on Wriston quad during a typical weekend? No. President Clinton's dirty laundry? I'm sorry that would be incorrect, sir. The fact is that all these things are linked to the actions of sports broadcasters.

Slam Dunks

Star athletes are worshipped as heroes in contemporary American society. Grown men and young children alike clamor for a gift of an athlete's smelly-ass, athlete's foot-infested, used, dirty shoes while women scream at the chance to catch Dennis Rodman's jersey or jock strap as he hurls it into the stands while running off the court. And yet these athletes could never be stars if it weren't for sports broadcasters and the magic of radio and television. Broadcasters are the bridge between the athlete and the regular person watching or listening at home. Broadcasters create nicknames and can put positive or negative spin onto a player's actions. When we watch an NFL football game on FOX we are letting Pat Summerall and John Madden into our living rooms. We expect them to act like the invited guests they are and describe with accuracy and style the events that are taking place on the gridiron. Broadcasters can turn sports into poetry as Bob Costas so often tries to do with baseball. They can also turn it into an opportunity to mouth off endlessly as Bill Walton does during basketball games. They shape the experience of a non-attended sporting event almost as much as the players do. Do you actually remember John Havlicek's classic steal for the Celtics in the NBA finals or do you just remember Johnny Most screaming out in his unforgettable scratchy voice, "Havlicek steals the ball, Havlicek steals the ball!" Do you remember Bobby Thompson's shot heard round the world or do you remember the radio announcer screaming, "The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!"

Although broadcasters play a big role in our experience of game watching and listening, they are obviously second to the players. Michael Jordan would be Michael Jordan and have won 5 NBA titles whether Marv Albert was calling the games or Casey was calling the games. However, broadcasters help create legends and make it easier for an audience to love or hate a player. James Worthy wouldn't be the same if Lakers' play-by-play man, Chick Hearn, hadn't coined the name "Big Game James".

In fact basketball wouldn't be the same if Hearn hadn't coined the phrase "slam dunk". There would be no way to describe a jumpshot by Chris if someone hadn't come up with "airball". Lambeau field would not be the "frozen tundra" if it weren't for Howard Cosell. Broadcasters play an integral role in creating stars and media heroes and in doing so become household names themselves.

Sleepy-time

Anyone who hasn't been in Rip Van Winkle mode or holed up in the Sun Lab for the last three months knows the name Marv Albert; although this may be more for his sexual exploits than his broadcasting talent. None the less, Albert's trial for sodomy would not have been news if he wasn't already a nationally prominent figure. Even the most casual sports fan knows the names John Madden, Bob Costas, Dick Vitale, and Dick Enberg. The die hard fan can tell you the name of hundreds of broadcasters from all over the sports globe and their trademark calls. They are famous for their voices and their ability to enhance the experience of a live sporting event. Watching a goal being scored in a soccer match is one thing, hearing Andreas Cantor accentuate it by screaming, "Gooooooaaaaaaaalllll!!!! Gooooooaaalllll! Goal, goal goal goal goal GOOOAAL!!!!" is something altogether different. Knowing a basketball game is out of reach is one thing, but having Chick Hearn tell you that "it's in the refrigerator, the door is shut, the lights are out, the eggs are coolin, the butter's getting hard and the jello's jiggling" is something special in an otherwise anti-climactic moment. Broadcasters draw viewers and listeners in, helping to build tension and set up drama. They can turn a simple game into a battle of epic proportions. They can turn ordinary men into heroes and heroes into goats with a few correctly timed and worded statements. Good broadcasters foster enthusiasm and excitement even during dull games.

The Sporting News

We have noticed that enthusiasm and excitement have been known to be missing on occasion on the Brown campus when it comes to University athletics. You can often find more people at a meeting of the Christian Fellowship than at some Brown sporting events. Perhaps people have commitments and cannot make it to the games. This is no excuse for not caring about the outcome. We need to do something to enthuse the Brown community about sports. The answer? Read our column every week. That would be a good start, but Brown Student Radio may have a better solution: sports broadcasters.

For the past two years the Brown Student Radio Sports Network has been broadcasting selected games of Brown men's and women's ice hockey and men's and women's basketball. Unfortunately only a small portion of the student body actually knew that BSRSN existed.

New deal

This year that should change. As of last Monday evening at 7:00 pm Brown Student Radio has resurrected itself and is broadcasting six days a week on 88.1 FM WELH. The BSR Sports Network will be an integral part of Brown Student Radio programming. To compliment student DJs, BSRSN will broadcast selected hockey and basketball games this fall. These live game broadcasts will be supplemented by a weekly sports roundup show that will run between 7 and 8pm and be the backbone of BSR's non-music programming. Maybe the talents of BSR's sports broadcasters can help build the enthusiasm for athletics that has been missing on the Brown campus.

BSR's broadcasters do not have to create stars because Brown teams are already full of them. The football team has All-American Sean Morey B'99 and national interception leader Rocky Parsons B'98. The men's basketball team has the Ivy League's top returning scorer in Aaron Butler B'99 and the women's team has the fourth-leading scorer in the country in All-Ivy performer Vita Redding B'99. The women's hockey team has sent two of it's players, Katie King B'97 and Tara Mounsey B'00 to this winter's Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan. These stars shine bright, but some of the campus doesn't even know who they are. Hopefully BSRSN can make these names household names all over the Main Green and Wriston quad. This task will fall to Brown Student Radio's sports director Casey Shearer B'00 and his team of broadcasting superstars. Hopefully they can provide the Brown community with the same kind of memorable moments as the famous sports broadcasters mentioned above and maybe in the process will get people shouting "with no regard for human life" and "weak cheese gets grated" (Shearer's trademark calls) with as much regularity as they do Keith Olberman's "from way downtown...bang!" The only way this can happen is for you, the students and residents of Providence, to listen. So grab your radios, turn 'em on and tune in to 88.1 FM WELH and Brown Student Radio Sports.

Casey Shearer B'00 has never worn a garter belt
Chris Brown B'00 helped Casey invest in a personal dominatrix.