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Media Hype and Its Influence on Athletic Performance

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Abstract

A survey of university athletes examined whether uses of four media (news-papers, television, radio or the Internet) for sports information were related to self-perceptions of emotions, motivations and attitudes. The results suggest that newspaper and Internet use reduced feelings of stress among the athletes, perhaps due to athletes' use of the two media as diversions from the pressures of competitive athletics. Television use was not related to any of the measures of athletes' self-perceptions.

Keywords

College Athletes, Media Hype, Self-Perception and Media Exposure, Media Hype and Athlete Performance

1. Introduction

Collegiate athletes experience stress from several sources. They are required to attend endless hours of practices each day, travel to far-away events at various times and maintain an adequately high grade point average. Added to this stress is the potential impact of news media coverage. Athletes may be scrutinized by local sports reporters who are expected to be unbiased in their coverage of the athletes. In this case, media scrutiny involves instances when athletes are care-fully studied and/or observed by journalists. Some athletes often feel that even their personal lives are "under media scrutiny" while others may feel the pres-sure of analysis when media make predictions based on their performance and statistics. The present study attempts to examine whether media use contributes or eases the level of stress among student athletes. Through a survey of student athletes at a large Midwestern university, athletes' media use is compared with respondents' self-perceptions of their emotions, motivations and attitudes.

On the one hand, media use could have a negative impact on student athletes. Media coverage could provide unrealistic expectations about athletic performances by highlighting the stars in sports. Athletes may feel pressured into performing at a level similar to star athletes covered in the media. On the other hand, media use could have a positive impact on student athletes. Media coverage may provide a distraction or entertainment that could help athletes relieve pressure.

Research shows that athletic performance efficiency is reduced by certain distractions that can interfere with an athlete's ability to focus. According to Haverstraw (2002), distractions may arise from various sources including: The presence of loved ones you want to impress, family or relationship problems, teammates and other competitors, coaches, underperformance or unexpected high performance, frustration at mistakes, poor refereeing decisions, changes in familiar patterns and unjust criticism. Certainly, the media could also serve as a negative distraction for athletes.

Because there have been no empirical examinations on the influence of the media on athletic performance, the present study hopes to identify variables that may be influenced by media use. The results may demonstrate opportunities for ways of relieving stress stemming from media use.

A total of 147 student/athletes from a large Midwestern university were surveyed on a broad range of issues, including self-perceptions and media use.

2. Background/Review of the Literature

Win or lose, an athlete's performance and life is oftentimes publicly discussed and critiqued by the media. Winning brings about excessive stories glorifying the athlete and perhaps may encourage fans (and the athlete him/herself) to hold high expectations for future competitive performances. Conversely, losing brings forth negative news stories, criticisms and backlash.

Media hype refers to a news event where the media coverage is perceived to be out of proportion to the event being covered, such as the number of reporters at the scene, and the amount of news media published or broadcast. Media hype or frenzy is often used in reference to a critique of news and entertainment media.

Initial evidence suggests that the employment of self-handicapping strategies has a beneficial effect on negative affective states associated with the perceived threat of evaluative contexts (Harris & Snyder, 1986; Leary, 1983). The present study sought to describe the type of self-handicapping behaviors demonstrated by student athletes as well as to assess the stress-buffering role of athlete self-handicapping on indices of media use. Specifically, it was hypothesized that among high trait-handicapping athletes, those who report a greater degree of performance-debilitating obstacles prior to competition would report higher levels of media use as well as lower control over circumstances, confidence and concentration than non handicapping athletes.

Jones and Berglas (1975) contend that athletes may actually control their athletic environment and their sself-presentation in order to construct positive

comments and attention about their athletic performance. According to Jones and Berglas (1974), self-handicapping represents and individual's conscious and proactive use of excuse-making behavior that allows one to protect self-esteem and his or her sense of athletic competence (Higgins & Snyder, 1989; Tice, 1991; Tice & Baumesiter, 1990). These unassuming schemes are often employed by athletes who feel as if their egos are threatened. Athletes who are uncertain of the athletic outcome then can rely on excuses or self-handicaps as a method that allows them to cope athletic situations characterized by uncertainty of "winning" the athletic event (Higgins & Snyder, 1989).

The athlete's negative perceptions of their performance or behaviors act as obstacles to winning success, according to this theory (Jonas & Berglas, 1974). The athlete's perceptions of their anticipated performance may be affected by negative conditions like excessive media use and hype. Media hype may give the athlete an opportunity make excuses for an inadequate performance. These obstacles, according to Jones and Berglas (1974) may ultimately work in such a way that the help to minimize the athlete's responsibility for performing poorly and losing an important event or competition. Therefore, self-handicapping allows an athlete to manipulate the causes for their failure, loss, or poor performance. This ability to create causal attributions for failure allows the athlete tominimize their perceived reduction self-worth and the accompanying feelings of anxiety and emotional distress (Jones & Berglas, 1974; Jones & Berglas, 1975).

Experimental data for self-handicapping has recently been studied within the competitive sport industry. These empirical research studies have acknowledged the various categories of self-handicapping behaviors that intercollegiate athletes may use (Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986; Rhodewalt, Morf, Hazlett, & Fairfield, 1991; Rhodewalt, 1990). Studies in this area have also investigated the influence of team solidarity and level of self-handicapping behavior (Carron, Prapavessis, & Grove, 1994; Hausenblas & Carron, 1996). Studies have also examined the relationship between self-handicapping, the athlete's personal goals, and team climate (Ryska, Yin, & Boyd, 1997).

A basic motive in self-handicapping behavior is the preservation of self-esteem (Tice, 1991; Tice & Baumeister, 1990) and Snyder (1990) contends that the various emotional states that accompany fluctuations in self-esteem provide important clues as to the effects of self-handicapping strategies. For example, Harris and Snyder (1986) found that among individuals with a high dispositional tendency to self-handicap, those who employed the self-handicap strategy of reduced practice effort prior to an evaluative task also reported lower levels of pre-task anxiety. Arkin and Baumgardner (1985) and Leafy (1986) engaged low and high socially anxious students in social interaction tasks under either handicapping or nonhandicapping conditions. Reported happiness, comfort, and other affective ratings were higher for the low anxious athletes under the nonhandicapping condition, whereas no discernible differences in ratings were observed between low and high anxious students under the handicapping condition. These authors conclude that self-handicapping appears to have a

beneficial effect on the affective states of high trait anxious and high trait handicapping individuals. However, no psychological research has evaluated the role of media use on self-handicapping behavior among a sport population. In determining the effects of media use on types of self-handicapping used by athletes (i.e., loss of concentration, lowered sense of control) well as the degree to which media use and media hype influences the ability to cope with competitive stress. Research results could provide psychologists and athletic personnel practical information to assist athletes in developing adaptive attributional styles in competitive sport.

Previous research has identified circumstances that may elicit self-handicapping behavior in sport, such as an important event, strongly felt cohesion among teammates, or the desire to fulfill teammates' performance expectations (Carron et al., 1994; Hausenblas & Carron, 1996; Rhodewalt et al., 1984; Ryska, Yin, & Boyd, 1999; Thill & Cury, 2000). These circumstances are very plausibly ones that would intensify performance pressure and pose a threat to athletes' self-esteem or public image (Tice & Baumeister, 1990). Chronic lack of self-esteem may further increase the likelihood that athletes will engage in self-handicapping behavior. Prapavessis and Grove (1994, 1998) have found that dispositional self-handicapping among athletes is associated with poorer chronic self-esteem and esteem-related affect just prior to competition. This research does not directly address the effectiveness of self-handicapping to protect or enhance self-esteem in case of failure, rather, it investigates effects of media use on likelihood to engage in self handicapping behavior.

2.1. Self-Handicapping as a Self-Presentational Phenomenon

Early discussions of the psychological processes surrounding self-handicapping were explicitly focused on the maintenance of personal beliefs about competence and control (Higgins, 1990). However, it is now recognized that the same strategies used to protect and/or enhance self-perceptions of competence and control might also be used as impression management strategies to protect and/or enhance one's public image (Schlenker, 1980; James & Collins, 1995). Take for example, a basketball player who tells teammates he has a sore arm or publicly massages his arm prior to a game. Is he doing so because he wishes to provide himself with a ready-made excuse if he plays poorly, or because he wishes to provide others with a viable reason not to denigrate him if plays poorly? Kolditz and Arkin (1982) suggested that both processes might be involved, and they documented the relevance of the self-presentational (i.e., impression management) motives by showing that behavioral self-handicapping was unlikely to occur under experimental conditions that prevented others from knowing whether or not a potential impediment to performance existed. Higgins (1990) reinforced the belief that self-presentational motives were an important element of the self-handicapping process by stating that "most investigators have studied self-handicapping within conditions that are best regarded as "public", [and] the available evidence suggests that handicapping tendencies are stronger under

public than under private conditions" (p. 26). Other researchers have drawn similar conclusions from their analyses of the self-handicapping literature (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985; Snyder, 1990).

2.2. Research Questions

The following research questions were developed for investigation:

- Does media hype cause athletes to become overconfident and result in athletic incompetence?
- Do some athletes let media distractions impact them negatively? And if so, what types of athletes are most affected by media hype?
- What type of athletes will use media hype as inspiration to succeed?

2.3. Variables under Investigation

2.3.1. Public Self Consciousness

Public Self Consciousness refers to the tendency to think about the external or public aspects of the self (Briggs, Cheek, & Buss, 1980) and Other Directedness refers to an orientation towards others, such as pleasing others or conforming to the social situation (Briggs, Cheek & Buss, 1980). Fear of Negative Evaluation refers to the degree to which people experience apprehension at the prospect of being negatively evaluated by others (Leary, 1983).

2.3.2. Impression Management/Self-Presentation Theory

A qualitative study undertaken by James and Collins (1995) suggests the importance of impression management in sport, revealing that the athletes believe impression management is instrumental in athletic development. Results obtained in the James & Collins (1997) study clearly demonstrate that self-presentation concerns are associated with athletic performance and stress.

Based upon research on athletes and self-presentation, it does appear that self-presentation theory offers an appropriate framework for investigating and understanding the effect of media pressure, self-presentation (Impression management) on athletic performance.

2.3.3. Self-Esteem

Self-serving bias, self-esteem, and self-handicapping reveal the depth of one's concern for self-image (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982). Self-presentation or impression management refers to the tendency to want to present a desired image both to an external audience (other people) and to an internal audience (ourselves). According to research on impression management, we work to manage the impressions we create. People will excuse, justify, exaggerate, or apologize as necessary in order to protect self-esteem and verify self-concepts (Schlenker, 1980; James & Collins, 1995; Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982; Tice & Baumeister, 1990).

Jones and Berglas (1978) have described self-handicapping as a set of behavioral strategies enacted before a performance that permits the individual to externalize failure and internalize success. These researchers conducted two

field studies that investigated individual differences in self-handicapping among competitive athletes. Data obtained in both studies found that high self-handicapping athletes withheld practice effort relative to low self-handicappers prior to competitions that posed a threat to self-esteem.

2.3.4. Athlete's Media Use

The theoretical and empirical data regarding third-person effect, self-esteem, self-presentation, and an athlete's media use will be used to explore the influence media may have on athletic performance.

2.3.5. The 4C's

According to Mackenzie (1997), mental qualities known to affect successful performance for athletes are concentration, confidence, control and commitment (the 4C's). In this study, we examine the role that overexposure to media, particularly before a "big game" affects any, or all, of these athletic qualities.

According the Mackenzie (1997), the 4C's are defined in the following ways:

- Concentration—ability to maintain focus
- Confidence—believe in one's abilities
- Control—ability to maintain emotional control regardless of distraction
- Commitment—ability to continue working to agreed goals

Mackenzie (1997) believes that the most important element in positive outcomes for athletes involve the employment of certain techniques such as relaxation, providing opportunities for the athlete to create positive mental imagery focused on concerntation, and high self-perceptive and believe in one's abilities, along with the other C's can significantly be used to help an athlete engage in the 4C's.

- Research Question: Does media create more anxiety? And if so, what strategies should athletes use in order to relax and achieve the 4Cs?

2.4. Operationalization of the 4cs

Scholarly work on the 4cs of athleticism has been conducted by several researchers (Harris & Snyder, 1986; Leary, 1986, Ryska, Yin, & Cooley). The operationalizations of the 4cs have been published in work conducted by Ryska, Yin, and Cooley (1998) as well as Mackenzie (1997).

2.4.1. Concentration

Concentration: This is the mental quality to focus on the task in hand. If the athlete lacks concentration then their athletic abilities will not be effectively or efficiently applied to the task. Research has identified the following types of attention focus:

The demand for concentration varies with the sport which is why we would like to survey athletes involved in individual and team sports alike.

Sustained concentration—distance running, cycling, tennis, squash

Short bursts of concentration—cricket, golf, shooting, athletic field events

Intense concentration—sprinting events, bobsleigh, skiing

Common distractions are: anxiety, mistakes, fatigue, weather, media hype, public announcements, coach, manager, opponent, negative thoughts etc.

2.4.2. Confidence

Confidence results from the comparison an athlete makes between the goal and their ability. The athlete will have self-confidence if they believe they can achieve their goal.

When an athlete has self-confidence they will tend to: persevere even when things are not going to plan, show enthusiasm, be positive in their approach and take their share of the responsibility in success and fail. This is why we are measuring self-esteem and confidence.

2.4.3. Control

Identifying when an athlete feels a particular emotion and understanding the reason for the feelings is an important stage of helping an athlete gain emotional control. An athlete's ability to maintain control of their emotions in the face of adversity and remain positive is essential to successful performance. Two emotions that are often associated with poor performance and emotional control are anxiety and anger.

Anxiety comes in two forms—Physical (butterflies, sweating, nausea, needing the toilet) and Mental (worry, negative thoughts, confusion, lack of concentration). Relaxation is a technique that can be used to reduce anxiety.

Research Question: What role will media play in creating anxiety?

When an athlete becomes angry, the cause of the anger often becomes the focus of attention. This then leads to a lack of concentration on the task, performance deteriorates and confidence in ability is lost which fuels the anger—a slippery slope to failure.

2.4.4. Commitment

Sports performance depends on the athlete being fully committed to numerous goals over many years. In competition with these goals the athlete will have many aspects of daily life to manage. The many competing interests and commitments include studies, family/partner, friends, social life and other hobbies/sports.

Within the athlete's sport, commitment can be undermined by:
- a perceived lack of progress or improvement
- not being sufficiently involved in developing the training program
- not understanding the objectives of the training program
- injury
- lack of enjoyment
- anxiety about performance—competition (which could come from the media???)
- becoming bored
- coach athlete not working as a team
- lack of commitment by other athletes

3. Method and Design

A survey was administered to student-athletes during study sessions at a large Midwestern university. The surveys were distributed by members of the university's athletic department. A total of 147 surveys were completed. Because not all athletes took part in the study sessions, it is not possible to compute an accurate response rate, though the athletic department encouraged all athletes to participate and believed most did.

Respondents represented ten different sports, with football (37) and baseball (24) having the largest number of participants. The ten represented sports were; football, basketball, golf, tennis, swimming/diving, volleyball, baseball/softball, wrestling, and track and field/cross country, and gymnastics. More males than females participated (73 - 27 percent). Year in school was distributed relatively evenly. All respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Four items on the questionnaire asked respondents about their media use. Respondents were asked: "How many days in a typical week do you use the Internet for information about sports events or sports news?" Respondents were also asked about how often they read sports pages of newspapers, watch sports on television or listen to sports on radio.

Respondents also were read a series of statements dealing with self-perceptions. The items dealt with perceptions of emotions ("I tend to get very anxious before a test or performance"), motivations ("I always try to do my very best, no matter what"), and attitudes ("I admit that I am tempted to rationalize when I don't live up to others' expectations").

4. Results

A total of 147 student-athletes participated in the study. A series of regression analyses were conducted to examine if any of the four media use variables (frequency of using newspapers, television, radio or the internet for sports information) were related to self-perceptions. Several significant results were found.

Interesting, the only media use variable that did not produce any statistically significant result was television use.

Four significant findings were related to newspaper use. As Table 1 shows, the more respondents read newspapers for sports information, the more they said they tend to put things off until the last moment. The three other variables were all negatively related to newspaper use. The more respondents read newspapers for sports information, the less they said they generally hate to be in any condition but "at my best," the less they said they would do better if they did not let emotions get in the way, and the less they said they try to get as much sleep as possible when something important is coming up.

Regression analysis presented in Table 2 shows that Internet use for sports information also produced four significant results. All four results were negatively related to Internet use. The more respondents said they used the Internet for sports information, the less likely they were to get anxious before an exam or performance, the less distracted by noise or creative thoughts, the less they

Table 1. Effect of newspaper use for sports information on athletes' self-perceptions.

	Beta	Sign.
I tend to put things off until the last moment R-Square: 0.050; Adjusted R-Square: 0.041	0.224	0.025
I generally hat to be in any condition by "at my best." R-Square: 0.055; Adjusted R-Square: 0.045	−0.234	0.019
I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way R-Square: 0.072; Adjusted R-Square: 0.063	0.269	0.007
When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible R-Square: 0.048; Adjusted R-Square: 0.038	−0.219	0.028

Table 2. Effect of Internet use for sports information on athletes' self-perceptions.

	Beta	Sign.
I tend to get very anxious before an exam or performance R-Square: 0.048; Adjusted R-Square: 0.039	−0.20	0.027
I am easily distracted by noises or my own creative thoughts R-Square: 0.037; Adjusted R-Square: 0.027	−0.191	0.050
I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way R-Square: 0.063; Adjusted R-Square: 0.054	−0.252	0.011
I would rather not take any drug that interfered with my ability to think clearly and do the right thing R-Square: 0.048; Adjusted R-Square: 0.038	−0.218	0.028

thought they would do better if they didn't let emotions get in the way, and the less they said they would rather not take any drug that interfered with their ability to think and do the right thing.

Finally, one significant relationship was found for radio use: the more respondents said they listened to sports on the radio, the less they said they try to get as much sleep as possible when something important is coming up (see Table 3).

Overall, then, nine significant results were found. Eight of the nine suggested media use had a positive influence on self-perceptions.

Next, a factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying factors across the self-perception variables. Using principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation, two factors were identified: the first dealing with the need to do one's best; the second related to anxiety and emotional stress. Indexes then were created with the variables dealing with these two factors. However, when the indexes were analyzed as dependent variables in regression analyses, only one significant relationship was found. The more respondents used the Internet for sports information, the less psychological stress they felt (beta = −0.192, p = 0.05). In this case, Internet use explained only 3.7 percent of the variance.

5. Discussion

The present study attempted to examine if the same relationship holds true for college athletes. If athletes spend a great deal of time watching sports on

Table 3. Effect of radio use for sports information on athletes' self-perceptions.

	Beta	Sign.
When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible	−0.257	0.010
R-Square: .066; Adjusted R-Square: .056		

television, listening to sports on radio and/or reading sports in newspapers and on the Internet, the athletes may feel added pressure to perform better—up to the standards of athletes covered in the media—and thus suffer psychological stress.

The findings here suggest media use can play a role in athletes' self-perceptions. In most cases, this role is positive.

Newspaper and Internet use appear to have the largest impact on student athletes. However, in most cases, the effect is positive—reducing the level of stress for athletes. Student athletes who are heavy readers of sports in newspapers tend to be less worried about always being at their best, about letting emotions get in the way or about trying to get as much sleep as possible.

Internet use, meanwhile, also appears to have lowered the level of stress among respondents. Student athletes who are heavy users of the Internet for sports information tended to worry less about being distracted by noises or creative thoughts, about letting emotions get in the way or about taking drugs that interfere with their ability to think clearly and do the right thing.

Thus, the findings suggest that newspaper and Internet use are more likely to be a diversion for student athletes, a way of unwinding and releasing stress associated with their own performances. In other words, newspaper and Internet use positively impact student athletes by providing a break from the high stress levels that come with competing in collegiate sports.

Only one regression result suggests a negative media effect. The more respondents said they read newspapers for sports information, the more they reported that they tended to put things off. This again could be attributed to the diversion aspect of media use. Respondents may read a lot of newspaper sports stories and thus delay taking part in certain activities.

Interestingly, television use does not appear to have the same effect. Television use was not related to any of the self-perception measures in our study. In other words, television use was not related to the relieving of stress among student athletes despite the fact that many people—non-athletes—use television for diversion. One plausible reason for the lack of significant results could be that many of the respondents in our survey participated in sports that receive little television coverage. A female gymnast, for instance, may not be able to watch gymnastics on television very often and thus may not view television use as a way of relieving stress. This gymnast, however, would be able to read endless news reports about gymnastics on the Internet. Local papers also provide some coverage of sports such as gymnastics. In other words, the type of sport an ath-

lete competes in may play a role in the impact of media use.

While media use has the potential to negatively impact athletic performances, the mass media can also be used to cultivate or bring out the best in an athlete. By lowering the stress levels of student athletes, media could be used as a tool to positively motivate and influence athletes' behavior.

5.1. Limitations

Survey research is from time to time regarded as a convenient and easy research methodology. However, as with any other research method, it is easy to design a study using surveys that are poor in quality. Yet, survey research can often produce not only high quality data but may also yield data that provides real-world value. While there is no such thing as a perfect study, this research has a few limitations.

We would have preferred to have a larger sample size. Yes, larger sample sizes generate better estimates of the population being investigated, however, it is often difficult and extremely challenging to obtain an adequate number of responses. In this study, we secured data from 147 student-athletes. The university currently has a total of 550 athletes serving in 20 sports. This means that our response rate for the study was over 27%. We recognize that it is a rare event in research that everyone asked to participate in a survey will reply. We expected a higher response rate since the student athletes were asked to complete the survey during study hall and or time spent with their tutors. It is possible that some athletes could have completed the survey and for some reason the responses were not returned to the investigators.

5.2. Future Research

The results, then, point to several avenues for future research. First, while our study suggests that newspaper and Internet use may lower stress levels for athletes, it does not answer the question of why. Are athletes using media sources as a distraction from the daily stress? Or are athletes using media sources as a way of feeling better about their own capabilities? They may feel that reading about sports helps them be better prepared for their own competitions.

Second, future research could examine other media effects on athletes. Perhaps media use could have wide-ranging influences on student athletes that go beyond self-perceptions. Sports have become an important societal institution around the world. The effect of media use on student athletes is certainly an area that deserves further research.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Survey on Athletic Performance

1) How old are you? (Select the age range that best applies to you)
❏ 18 - 24   ❏ 25 - 29   ❏ 30 - 39   ❏ 40 - 49   ❏ 50 - 64   ❏ 65+

2) What is your gender?
❏ Male   ❏ Female

3) What is your ethnicity?
a) ❏ Caucasian   ❏ African American   ❏ Hispanic   ❏ Asian
❏ Native American   ❏ Other
b) *if other, please identify _____

4) Please circle your level of agreement for each statement in the table below.
(5 = *Strongly agree*, 4 = *Agree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 1 = *Strongly disagree*)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) The media (newspapers, tv, and radio) is fair in reporting the news	5	4	3	2	1
b) The media tells the whole story	5	4	3	2	1
c) The media provides accurate coverage all the time	5	4	3	2	1
d) The media is biased	5	4	3	2	1
e) The media reports on issues that I care about	5	4	3	2	1
f) The media offers thorough coverage on Cuba's politics	5	4	3	2	1
g) I am satisfied with the amount of coverage on international news	5	4	3	2	1
h) The media invades people's privacy	5	4	3	2	1
i) The media does watch after its audience's interest	5	4	3	2	1
j) The media is concerned with the community's well-being	5	4	3	2	1
k) The media does separate fact from opinion	5	4	3	2	1
l) The media can be trusted	5	4	3	2	1
m) The media is concerned about the public interest	5	4	3	2	1
n) The media is factual	5	4	3	2	1
o) The media has well-trained reporters	5	4	3	2	1
p) The media is free from government influence	5	4	3	2	1
q) The media is free from corporate influence	5	4	3	2	1

Answer each question in the table below. Write your answers in the blank column located on the right.

On average, how many **hours** do you spend:

	Activity	Hours
a)	watching entertainment tv?	
b)	watching American network tv news (ABC, CBS, NBC)?	
c)	watching American cable tv news (CNN, FOX, MSNBC)?	
d)	watching Spanish tv news?	
e)	reading a newspaper's front page?	
f)	reading a newspaper's sports section?	
g)	reading a newspaper's international news section?	
h)	reading other sections of a newspaper, not including the front page, sports section, or international news section?	
i)	reading a news magazine?	
j)	listening to news radio?	
k)	surfing the Internet?	
l)	reading weblogs?	
m)	participating on weblog discussions?	
n)	reading online news sites?	

Please indicate (by writing a number in the blank each item) the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements as a description of the kind of person you think you are most of the time. Use the following scale.

0 = disagree very much

1 = disagree pretty much

2 = disagree a little

3 = agree a little

4 = agree pretty much

5 = agree very much

_____ 1) When I do something wrong, my first impulse is to blame circumstances.

_____ 2) I tend to put things off until the last moment.

_____ 3) I tend to over prepare when I have an exam or any kind of "performance."

_____ 4) I suppose I feel "under the weather" more often than most people.

_____ 5) I always try to do my best, no matter what.

_____ 6) Before I sign up for a course or engage in any important activity, I make sure I have the proper preparation or background.

_____ 7) I tend to get very anxious before an exam or "performance."

_____ 8) I am easily distracted by noises or my own creative thoughts when I try to read.

_____ 9) I try not to get too intensely involved in competitive activities so it won't hurt too much if I lose or do poorly.

_____ 10) I would rather be respected for doing my best than admired for my potential.

_____ 11) I would do a lot better if I tried harder.

_____ 12) I prefer small pleasures in the present to larger pleasures in the dim future.

_____ 13) I generally hate to be in any condition but "at my best."

_____ 14) Someday I might "get it all together."

_____ 15) I sometimes enjoy being mildly ill for a day or two because it takes off the pressure.

_____ 16) I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way.

_____ 17) When I do poorly at one kind of thing, I often console myself by remembering I am good at other things.

_____ 18) I admit that I am tempted to rationalize when I don't live up to other's expectations.

_____ 19) I often think I have more than my share of bad luck is sports, card games, and other measures of talent.

_____ 20) I would rather not take any drug that interfered with my ability to think clearly and do the right thing.

_____ 21) I overindulge in food and drink more often that I should.

_____ 22) When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible the night before.

_____ 23) I never let emotional problems in one part of my life interfere with other things in my life.

_____ 24) Usually, when I get anxious about doing well, I end up doing better.

_____ 25) Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult.

The personality traits of private an public self-consciousness are measured by items on the Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS: Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). To take the SCS, read each item blow and then indicate how well each statement describes you using the following scale.

0 = extremely uncharacteristic (not at all like me)

1 = uncharacteristic (somewhat unlike me)

2 = neither characteristic or uncharacteristic

3 = characteristic (somewhat like me)

4 = extremely characteristic (very much like me)

_____ 1) I'm always trying to figure myself out.

_____ 2) I'm concerned about my style of doing things.

_____ 3) Generally, I'm not very aware of myself.

_____ 4) I reflect about myself a lot.

_____ 5) I'm concerned about the way I present myself.

_____ 6) I'm often the subject of my own fantasies.

_____ 7) I never scrutinize myself.

_____ 8) I'm self-conscious about the way I look.

_____ 9) I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings.

_____ 10) I usually worry about making a good impression.

_____ 11) I'm constantly examining my motives.

_____ 12) One of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror.

_____ 13) I sometimes have the feeling that I'm off somewhere watching myself.

_____ 14) I'm concerned about what other people think of me.

_____ 15) I'm alert to changes in my mood.

_____ 16) I'm usually aware of my appearance.

_____ 17) I'm aware of the way my mind works when I work through a problem.

News Scales

Please indicate (by writing a number in the blank each item) the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements about sports media. Use the following scale.

0 = disagree very much

1 = disagree pretty much

2 = disagree a little

3 = agree a little

4 = agree pretty much

5= agree very much

_____ Sports journalists often fail to get all of the facts right

_____ Sports journalists try to manipulation what people think

_____ Sports journalists often don't deal fairly with athletes on all teams

_____ Sports journalists often do a poor job of separating fact from opinion

_____ Sports journalists are concerned with our team's success

_____ Sports journalists watch out for our team's interest

_____ Sports journalists are concerned with doing what's best for our team.

_____ Sports coverage in the media influences the way I perform.

_____ Sports coverage in the media influences the way my teammates perform

_____ Sports coverage in the media influences the way other college athletes perform

_____ Sports coverage in the media influences the way professional athletes perform

_____ Sports coverage in the media influences the way high school athletes perform

1) How many days in a typical week do you read the sports section of a newspaper or a sports magazine?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

2) How many days in a typical week do you watch sports events or sports news on television?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

3) How many days in a typical week do you listen to sports events or sports news on the radio?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

4) How many days in a typical week do you read a newspaper?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

5) I have been instructed and comfortable working with the media.

❑ Not at all   ❑ A little   ❑ Some   ❑ A lot

6) How many days in a typical week to you use the internet for information about sports events or sports news?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

7) How many days in a typical week do you watch television news?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

8) How many times have you been interviewed by sports journalists?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

9) How many times have your teammates been interviewed by sports journalists?

❑ 1 - 2 days   ❑ 3 - 4 days   ❑ 5 - 7 days a week   ❑ None

10) Where would you put yourself on the following scale?

❑ Underachiever   ❑ Achiever   ❑ Overachiever

11) Which sport(s) do you compete in? Check all that apply

❑ Baseball/Softball   ❑ Basketball   ❑ Track and Field/Cross Country
❑ Football   ❑ Golf   ❑ Gymnastics   ❑ Swimming and Diving
❑ Tennis   ❑ Volleyball   ❑ Wrestling

12) What is your year in school?

❑ Freshman   ❑ Sophmore   ❑ Junior   ❑ Senior
❑ Graduate Student   ❑ Alumni

13) Open-ended question (optional). What is your perception of the media/journalists? Does hype affect athletes performance, in your opinion. Why or why not. Use this space to tell us what we may not have considered asking you about the role media play in an athlete's life.

<< Thank you for your participation! >>