

UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN REPORTERS IN SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

RESEARCH/PROGRESS REPORT



INTRODUCTION




In the world of sports and entertainment, the underrepresentation of women is a constant battle due to gender stereotypes externalizing the notion that this industry is male-dominated. This stereotype causes biases that are reflected in hiring and promotion processes. **This report will highlight these discrepancies with data points and statistics, qualitative research, and in all advocate for continuous improvement and change for more representation of women in sports.**

~ Another factor that will briefly be explored in this report, but deserves considerable attention, is the severe double underrepresentation of women of color within these similar fields.

From the Beginning...

HISTORY OF WOMEN IN SPORTS: GENDER REPRESENTATION

When network sports television began airing in the mid-to-late 1940's, it was completely dominated by men. In June of 1972, President Nixon signed the Title IX legislation which changed the landscape of women's involvement in sports. This rippled into a progressive movement that pushed for female participation in sports, subsequently creating new opportunities for women to establish themselves in the field of sports reporting.



Moving forward, prominent women figures such as Phyllis George (1974), Jayne Kennedy (1978), Lesley Visser (1984) and more became the first of many to report for sports news broadcasts. Visser is the first female NFL analyst on TV, and the only sportscaster in history who has worked on Final Four, NBA Finals, World Series, Triple Crown, Monday Night Football, the Olympics, the Super Bowl, the World Figure Skating Championships and the U.S. Open network broadcasts. Women in sports broadcasting like Erin Andrews and Doris Burke, who are now well-known figures in the industry, were made possible by Visser, who opened the way for them.



IN THE GAME & ON THE COURT



For centuries, women have been faced with a battle for gender equality. Injustices are not only experienced within the sports and entertainment industry as a reporter but especially as a female athlete of color. People such as Angel Reese, Sha'Carri Richardson, Coco Gauff, and Simone Biles, have dealt with immense inequalities on the basis of their skin color and the comparisons made to male counterparts when it comes to sportsmanship.

During the 2023 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship, Louisiana State University's star player, Angel Reese, was publicly ridiculed and criticized throughout media platforms for her competitiveness and trash talk against University of Iowa best, Caitlin Clark. Ultimately, this caused controversy and showed that the same level of competition men portray within sports is more widely accepted than women's.

NUMBERS & STATISTICS

Having little to no women in media perpetuates a narrow narrative that excludes diverse voices and perspectives, limiting the richness and authenticity of storytelling. Moreover, it reinforces harmful stereotypes about women's capabilities in traditionally male-dominated spheres/spaces, perpetuating a cycle of inequality.

20.9%

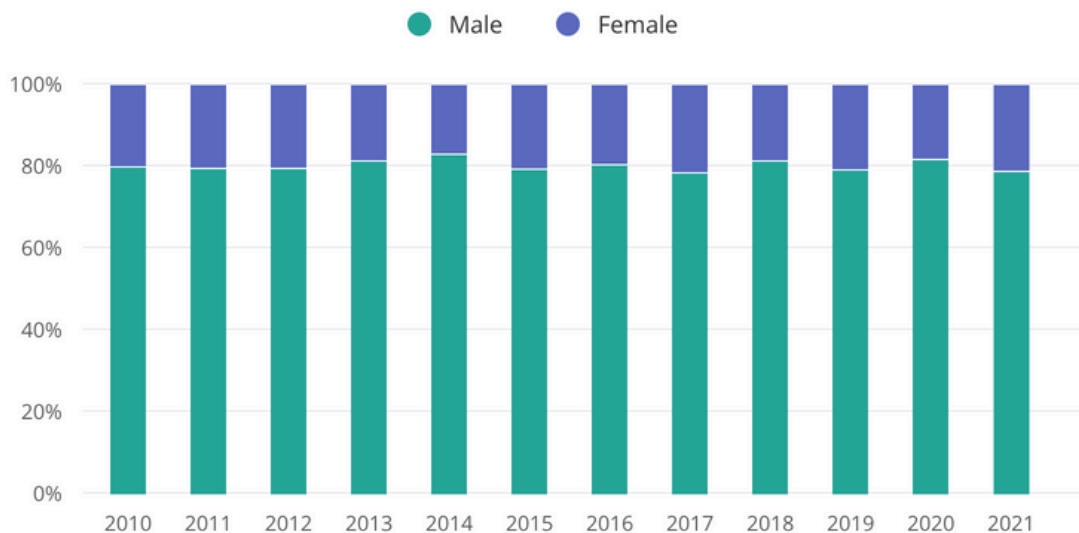
Women

79.1%

Men

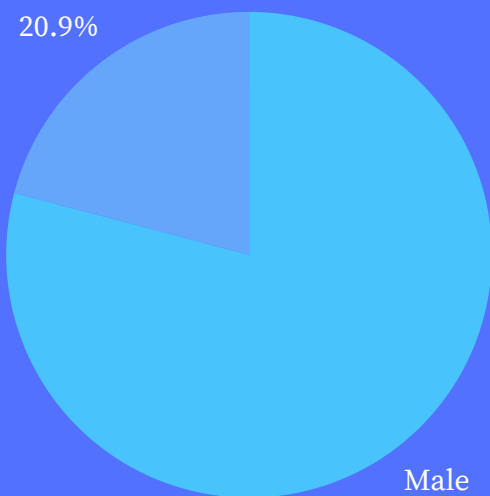
Sports Reporter Gender Ratio Over Time

This data breaks down the percentage of men and women in sports reporter positions over time. Currently, 20.9% of sports reporters are female.



Statistics provided by Zippa.com

Female
20.9%



Male
79.1%

Misrepresentation is not the only challenge a woman reporter faces. Female sports journalists are constantly pressured not only by the dominance of the industry, but also by the consumers. Due to the expectations and gender externalizations, there is an unequal expectation of these women to prove their worth. Whether it's by knowing their facts and statics on what they're covering or looking physically appealing for the audience, sexual harassment, etc. Female reporters face many systemic trials and tribulations that are reinforced by gender biases and inequity.

ICONIC WOMEN IN SPORTS MEDIA TODAY



MALIKA ANDREWS



ERIN ANDREWS



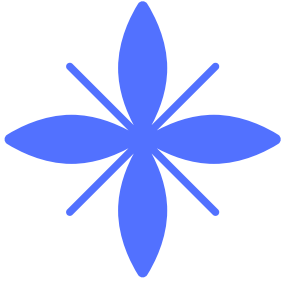
CARI CHAMPION

THE ANDREWS, CHAMPION, & MANY MORE:

MAIN HIGHLIGHT: Leading ESPN's studio coverage of the NBA is writer and NBA reporter **Malika Andrews**, who also hosts NBA Today and NBA Countdown. In the 2019–20 NBA season, she made her sideline reporting debut, making history as the youngest person to cover a Conference Finals telecast. During the COVID-19 break, Andrews reported from the NBA's makeshift campus in Florida. She received honors for her journalism while working at the Chicago Tribune and The New York Times before to joining ESPN. The University of Portland awarded Oakland, California native Andrews with accolades upon her graduation, and she was honored with the 2021 NABJ Michael J. Feeney Emerging Journalist of the Year Award for her achievements to sports journalism.

PROGRESS FOR THE FUTURE WITHIN MEDIA OUTLETS:

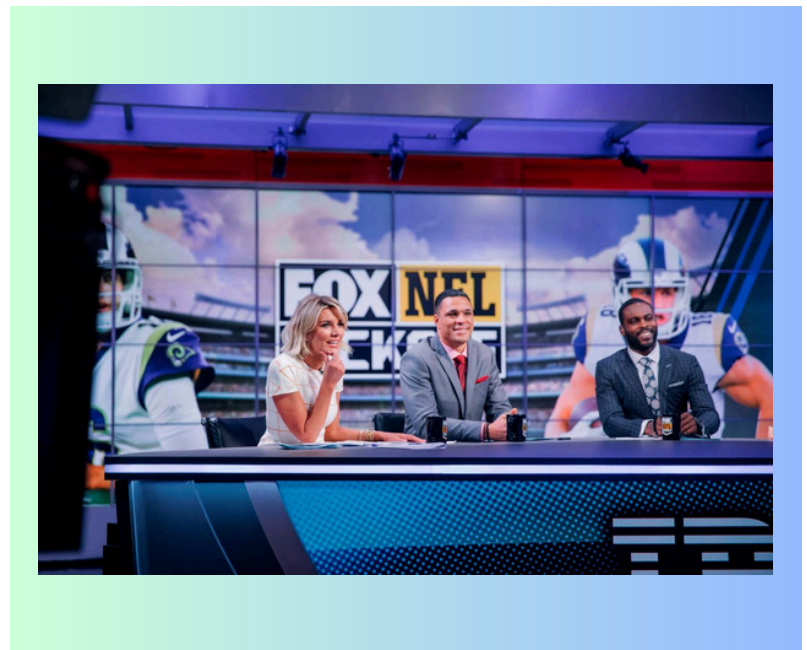
More Representation of women sport reporters requires a multifaceted approach. News companies should, first and foremost, put diversity and inclusion initiatives front and center, actively seeking out and elevating female reporters in the entertainment and sports industries. In addition, keeping and empowering women in these sectors depends critically on establishing secure, encouraging work environments free from discrimination and harassment. In addition to advocating for equal pay and mentoring programs, these strategies can also aid in breaking down obstacles and promoting the professional development of women.



Overview

CONCLUSION:

Beyond just numbers, the underrepresentation of women in sports and entertainment journalism reflects structural inequalities deeply embedded in our culture. We can create a media landscape that values diversity and justice by challenging preconceptions, dismantling obstacles, and elevating a range of viewpoints. This will enable everyone, regardless of gender, to thrive. As media consumers, we have the power to support varied representation and push for change, making sure that all viewpoints are heard and that no story is ignored.



The growing number of female sports journalists is a big step toward improving the industry. This pattern not only represents advancements in gender parity but also indicates a more inclusive cultural movement in sectors that have historically been dominated by men. More female representation encourages young females to seek jobs in sports media, which opens doors for future diversity and creativity. We may expect additional progress toward a more diverse and dynamic sports media scene as society upholds equality.

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