

**A COVERAGE ANALYSIS OF THE AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY  
1994-95 BASKETBALL SEASON IN THE LEAF-CHRONICLE**

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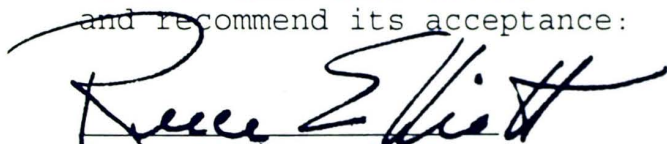
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A COVERAGE ANALYSIS OF THE AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY  
1994-95 BASKETBALL SEASON IN THE LEAF-CHRONICLE

A Thesis

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Master of Art Degree

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the newspaper coverage The Leaf-Chronicle provided the Austin Peay State University men's and women's basketball teams for a five-week period during the 1994-95 regular season. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were made.

A content analysis was used to compare the 42 basketball articles and 20 photos covering APSU teams that appeared in The Leaf-Chronicle from January 4 through February 7, 1995. Out of the 42 articles, 23 covered the men's team and 19 covered the women's team. Additionally, article column inch space, page placement, and author of article were studied. Out of the 20 photos, 13 were of male players and seven were of female players. Photo placement was also studied.

An analysis of 42 articles after they were characterized as describing winning, losing, determination, or attitude was conducted. A comparison of word descriptors coded positive, negative or neutral was also conducted.

The results of the quantitative research indicated the APSU men's team received better coverage than the APSU women's team in all examined categories. The results of the qualitative research indicated the APSU men received better media coverage in the categories of losing and determination, while the APSU women received better coverage in the categories of winning and attitude.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

This study is designed to determine whether The Leaf-Chronicle's newspaper coverage of the Austin Peay State University (hereafter referred to as APSU) men's basketball team differed from the coverage of the women's basketball team from January 4 through February 7, 1995. The Leaf-Chronicle, Tennessee's oldest newspaper, was selected for this study because it was the primary, local newspaper for Clarksville, Tennessee, the hometown of APSU; and file copies of the newspaper were available.

This study will examine whether the local newspaper engaged in different print media treatment for the APSU men's and women's varsity basketball teams and will discuss print media coverage theories that support the findings. Both teams are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I-A and are members of the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC). In this study, it was hypothesized that The Leaf-Chronicle will provide more quantitative coverage and better qualitative coverage for the APSU men's varsity basketball team than it provides for the APSU women's varsity basketball team.

The specific hypotheses to be tested through this coverage analysis, applying specifically to APSU and The Leaf-Chronicle, are as follows:

1. A larger quantity of articles about the men's basketball team will occur than about the women's basketball team.

2. More newspaper column inch space will be allocated to articles for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team.
3. More photos will appear for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team.
4. Higher priority newspaper placement of articles and photos will occur for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team.
5. The newspaper will print more articles authored by a sports beat writer for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team that has no sports beat reporter; conversely, fewer articles released by the APSU Sports Information Office (SIO) will appear in the newspaper for the men's team than for the women's team.
6. The newspaper will print more technical sport terms and positive, aggressive word descriptors addressing winning, losing, determination, and attitude for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team.

This study will investigate and document, quantitatively and qualitatively, the coverage The Leaf-Chronicle, the local daily newspaper for Clarksville, Tennessee, provided the APSU men's and women's basketball teams. Specifically, an analysis of the newspaper's coverage will be conducted for a 35 day period. The quantitative analysis will report the total number of APSU basketball articles printed; column inch space of the articles;

placement of the articles in the sports section; primary author of the articles; number of basketball photos printed; amount of space occupied by the photos; and the placement of the photos in the sports section.

The qualitative analysis will examine the word descriptors employed to discuss the teams' winning, losing, determination, and attitude. The coverage analysis will be restricted to the articles and photographs that appear exclusively in the newspaper's sports section during the dates as specified by this study.

The following literature review will focus on previous research conducted by other persons in the topic area of media coverage provided for men and women athletes. The literature review will attempt to limit the type of media coverage to print media contained in local newspapers; and limit the sports coverage to college basketball teams.



## CHAPTER 2

## Literature Review

"Communication theorists agree that mass media are the cement of the American social life. They are a source of common interest and conversation" (Tuchman, p. 30, 1978). Newspapers are classified as true, basic forms of American journalism (Lever and Wheeler, 1993). The function of journalism is to "gather information and deliver it to a medium...that can, in turn deliver some fraction of the collected material to the public" (Koppett, p. 89, 1981). But, it must not be overlooked that the newspaper industry is a business and thus, survives on the ability to generate profits. Koppett argued that in order to make a profit in the newspaper business, the paper must satisfy the reader enough to make him or her purchase the product day after day. The sports section may be one source of providing this satisfaction.

American newspapers have been covering American sports since the 19th century according to Lever and Wheeler (1993). These same researchers reported the integral importance of the sport pages, as a part of the total newspaper, grew during the 20th century. It was then that they became an established feature for many newspapers. "...Sports writing was always something else. It was literature. It was sociology. It was legend" (Jackson, p. 52, 1993). Jackson (1993) described professional sports

writing as an art because the writer's task was to paint a picture of athletes and athletic endeavors by words alone for readers who may not have witnessed the sporting event. Jackson (1993) paid the highest credit to the sports writers who were able to write about routine sporting events that conveyed the feeling of dynamic excitement to the readers.

Lever and Wheeler (1993) cited that in recent times, small-town newspapers served as a critical source of local and regional events for the community. Other past researchers have determined that in cities and states that cannot support a professional team, the value of the collegiate sports teams dramatically increases for the local newspaper as a business and for the newspaper readers as an interest (Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham, 1986). APSU, along with its varsity athletic department, located in Clarksville, Tennessee, and The Leaf-Chronicle represent one example of Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham's college sport and local newspaper relationships.

The Leaf-Chronicle covers all APSU varsity sporting events according to Chris McClaskey, the newspaper's spokesperson (personal communication, October 27, 1995). The sport teams at APSU may be referred to as news makers (Koppett, 1981). This title was so granted since the newspaper depends on the sport teams to generate game results that are captured in the sports section. Koppett's (1981) fan-readership theory presented the premise

newspapers will try to reach their loyal readers and prospective customers by regularly providing coverage of game results. The Leaf-Chronicle has reflected this theory for the APSU varsity sport teams.

Koppett (1981) suggested there was a strong allegiance between local sport generating organizations, such as APSU, and local newspapers. His fan-readership theory concluded the administrators of sport-desired fan support and interest to gain both economic and psychological benefits. Concurrently, newspapers desired optimum newspaper sales to generate profit. This allegiance identified by Koppett between local sports and local newspapers was based upon the desire for both increased fan support and increased newspaper copy sales. "The more people there are that care about the game, the larger the potential reading audience; and the larger the number of readers, the greater the number of potential ticket sales" (Koppett, p. 56, 1981). In short, both business enterprises, newspaper and college sports, depend on each other for customers and hence have the potential to profit from each other.

Most sporting events are planned contests according to V. Austin, APSU Sports Information Office (personal communication, October 27, 1995). College basketball games are no exception to this policy. The newspaper that then provides coverage of a sporting event subsequently printed coverage of a known, scheduled event. The newspaper reporter



was the individual identified by Koppett (1981) who normally attended the scheduled sport event. "In sports reporting, the reporter usually does write the story, and his name appears on it. But his primary responsibility is to collect information--scores, quotes, description, whatever--since he is the only representative of the paper actually at the scene" (Koppett, p. 114, 1981).

In the 1990s, newspapers entered a more sensitive, touchy-feely era in attempts that sought more ways to connect to and to retain readers (Morton, 1993). Morton noted local newspapers were especially prone to use this strategy and this technique was employed in an obvious manner within the sport pages. "The goal, of course, is to attract and keep readers, which is good for business if not always good for journalism" (Morton, p. 68, 1993). Fisher (1994) documented results of a nationwide sample conducted in 1993 of 800 community newspapers readers, gender nonspecific, and revealed they always, or at least frequently, read sports news at a daily rate of 46 percent.

### College Basketball

Basketball was identified as a prime example of a college sport that attracted a high number of fans and generated monetary profit for many Division I-A colleges, (Basralian and Goldman, 1995). Consequently, university basketball teams wanted to play the best possible

competition in order to increase their spectator appeal (Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham, 1986).

APSU offered both men's and women's varsity level, Division I-A, basketball during 1994-95 (APSU Bulletin, 1993). Though APSU provided varsity level basketball for both sexes, it was worth noting "there was little change in attitudes towards women's sports until the historic passage in 1972 of Title IX, which required colleges and universities to provide women with the same opportunities equal to those extended to the men" (Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham, p. 28, 1986). The APSU men's team was initiated in 1929 and named the Governors; the APSU women's team was restarted in 1978 after a death of a player according to V. Austin, APSU Sports Information Office, and named the Lady Gobs (personal communication, October 27, 1995). According to Wulf (1995), the state of Tennessee was described as the mecca for women's collegiate basketball, based upon team ability and fan support.

#### Newspaper Coverage for College Women's Basketball

Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) concluded basketball was the most popular varsity sport for women with 96.2 percent of colleges offering the sport. Though women are presently offered the opportunity to play basketball at almost 100 percent of colleges and universities, according to Sage and Furst (1994), there remained a much lower degree of media coverage of women's sports when compared to men's sports

coverage in the local newspapers. Their results indicated coverage of men's local sports in local newspapers exceeded the coverage of local women's sports in local newspapers by almost 80 percent. "Women had most coverage in the smallest newspapers (22.4%) and the least coverage in the largest newspaper (3.6%), with coverage by the medium-sized newspaper in between (10.3%)" (Sage and Furst, p. 295, 1994). Likewise, Rintala and Birrell (1984) concluded the average newspaper coverage for women's sports was approximately 15 percent, men and other types of participants, such as animals, claimed the remaining 85 percent. Repeatedly, researchers have shown women's newspaper coverage was significantly lower than the newspaper coverage allotted for men's sports. Sage and Furst (1994) suggested these results may have reflected either biases of the sports section staff or were derivatives of the subculture of the local area.

Women's college basketball has increased its fan support in the recent years--"total attendance for women's college hoops has almost tripled since 1984, growing from 1.3 million to a record 3.6 million in 1994" (Wulf, p. 68, 1995). Lustigman (1995) stated "although male athletes still dominate sports headlines, the attention on women athletes continued to grow daily because of the growing following of women's sports" (p. 44). She specifically mentioned though sports pages did not yet fill their pages with features



focusing on women's sports, the number of female athletes to receive coverage was increasing, albeit, at a slow pace.

Lustigman (1995) demonstrated increased newspaper coverage was reflected by the media covering the 1994-95 NCAA champion University of Connecticut women's basketball team, both in local home area and nationally. "Female athletes are steadily gaining recognition in the eyes of the press" (Lustigman, p. 44, 1995).

Bridge (1994) concluded men's basketball teams received better coverage in the sports section than women's basketball teams received. "It is common for outstanding female athletic achievements to a) follow major stories on male sports losses, b) be covered minimally on inside pages, or c) not be covered at all" (Bridge, p. 22, 1994).

Luebke (1992) reported the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) studied the sports coverage provided in four newspapers named by the Associated Press as maintaining exemplary sports sections. Luebke's 1992 study revealed that stories about male athletes outnumbered articles about women 23-to-1; stories about women were only 3.5 percent of all sports stories; stories exclusively about men received 218.8 times as many column inches as women exclusive articles; and photographs printed of men outnumbered photographs of women 13-to-1.

In a study of eight newspapers conducted in 1979, the researcher, Junetta Davis, discovered there was a precise,

definite pattern of gender bias in all eight papers. Specifically, her reports attested to the fact news articles about women were shorter than news articles about men; and articles about women received smaller headlines than articles about men (Davis, 1982).

Birrell and Cole (1994) revealed in Women, Sport, and Culture that many authors who contributed articles to their book stressed unequivocally not only are female athletes under-represented in the sports section in comparison to male athletes, but newspapers collectively engaged in symbolic annihilation of women. Symbolic annihilation of women was first described by Gerbner in 1972 as a media technique of either trivializing women's sports or predominantly focusing the media coverage of women athletes on gender role characteristics (Tuchman, 1978). Gender role stereotypes "are set portrayals of sex-appropriate appearance, interests, skills, behaviors, and self-perception" (Tuchman, p. 5, 1978).

Other researchers suggested that even when female athletes were discussed in the sports section, articles about them appeared less frequently than articles about male athletes. The amount of coverage was described as the quantitative difference. The type of coverage for men and women athletes was described as the qualitative difference.

"Women were consistently trivialized and marginalized through the type of coverage received" (Kane and Greendorfer, p. 36, 1994). Female athletes were frequently stereotyped with word descriptors that described them as feminine, sensual, trivial, and devalued; while word descriptors for male athletes tended to focus on strength and success (Kane and Greendorfer, 1994).

Duncan, Messner, Williams, and Jensen (1994) reported that during the televised 1989 NCAA basketball tournament final four games, in men's basketball, "verbal attributions of strength outnumbered attributions of weakness by a nearly six-to-one ratio. In women's basketball, attributions of strength outnumbered attributions of weakness, but by only a two-to-one ratio" (p. 263).

Birrell and Cole (1994) cited several articles written by researchers that demonstrated the differences between the quality and quantity of verbal descriptors used in describing men's and women's sports. Creedon (1994) agreed with Duncan et al., (1994) that verbal attributions associated with strength outnumbered those of weakness approximately 6-to-1 for male basketball players; whereas verbal attributions associated with strength outnumbered those of weakness by only a 2-to-1 ratio.

Creedon (1994) documented results offered by various current researchers whose findings were similar to those of earlier researchers of the press' treatment of women



athletes within the newspaper sport section. "Men's basketball contests were framed as dramatic spectacles of historic import, while women's basketball contests were given the feel of neighborhood pickup games" (Kane and Greendorfer, p. 37, 1994). Creedon (1994) concluded the language sports writers chose to describe female athletes was predominantly words that were characteristically feminine; that portrayed the female body as graceful and aesthetically pleasing. Her detailed research indicated basketball was considered a game of physical power and force, stereotypically associated with males rather than females, thus creating male ownership. The concept of male gender ownership of basketball was reinforced by the media's choice of less aggressive and more passive terms when writing about women's basketball teams (Creedon, 1994). She concluded many newspapers allowed men's basketball teams better quality coverage than they allowed for the women's basketball teams.

Researchers such as Sage and Furst (1994), Birrell and Cole (1994), Creedon (1994), and Davis (1982) had found in their investigations that women athletes, specifically college basketball players, were under-represented in newspaper coverage both in quantity and quality. This investigation was initiated to determine if The Leaf-Chronicle enjoined those sport coverage practices described by these previous researchers.

## Definitions

Several terms used in this study will be defined:

Austin Peay State University: Austin Peay State University, founded in 1927, in Clarksville, Tennessee is governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. APSU provides various undergraduate and graduate programs, primarily based to meet a strong liberal arts experience. APSU is a member of the NCAA I-A level and belongs to the Ohio Valley Conference (APSU Bulletin, 1993).

The Leaf-Chronicle: The Leaf-Chronicle is Tennessee's oldest newspaper established in 1801. It had a daily circulation of 22,000 copies and a weekend circulation of 24,500 at the time of this study. The sports section of the newspaper is located in section B (C. McClaskey, personal communication, October 27, 1995).

Column Inch Space: Column inch space is "a measurement of space on a type page, one inch deep and as wide as its columns" (Peters, p. 56, 1983).

Qualitative Research: Qualitative research means a description or analysis of a phenomenon that does not depend on measurement of variables and it occurs in a natural occurring environment (Wimmer, 1987). The research results do not test the hypotheses; while the review of literature results in tentative, working hypotheses and strategies (Gay, 1992).

Quantitative Research: Quantitative research means a

description or analysis of a phenomenon that does depend on measurement of variables. This form of research calculates the number of times a variable is present and most often uses numbers in its calculation (Wimmer, 1987). The research results in a testable hypothesis, to be supported or to not be supported by the results of the study (Gay, 1992).

National Collegiate Athletic Association: The NCAA establishes varsity athletic standards and official playing rules for college sports. Seven-hundred-fifty colleges with men's basketball programs and 550 colleges with women's basketball programs are members.



## CHAPTER 3

## Methodology

This analysis of The Leaf-Chronicle coverage was based primarily on Becker and Creedon's (1989) three theories that explained the journalistic under-representation and trivializing of women in sport sections of newspapers. These researchers termed this as quantitative and qualitative coverage differences. Becker and Creedon (1989) theorized athlete's gender difference (male versus female) highly influenced the quantitative and qualitative newspaper coverage provided the female athlete due to three reasons; a) people did not like the unknown; b) female sports were perceived as inferior; and c) some sports were viewed as inappropriate for women.

This investigation was initiated to determine if The Leaf-Chronicle enjoined those gender-biased sport coverage practices described by the previous researchers. The method of investigation for this study was an analysis used to measure quantitatively and qualitatively The Leaf-Chronicle's newspaper coverage provided for the APSU men's basketball team and the APSU women's basketball team.

The Leaf-Chronicle was chosen for coverage analysis of APSU men's and women's basketball for several reasons. Most pertinent to the selection of newspaper was the fact it was the most comprehensive local newspaper for Clarksville, Tennessee. No other local newspapers were considered for

this study, since there existed no other daily newspaper in Clarksville, Tennessee. Additionally, the paper was printed on a daily basis, equating to possible sport coverage seven days a week. The final reason for selection was that previous copies of The Leaf-Chronicle were available from the newspaper's circulation department.

Thirty-five issues of The Leaf-Chronicle were coded from a time period which paralleled the 1994-95 APSU men's and women's basketball season to assist in determining whether the hypotheses were supported or non-supported. The newspaper issues that were printed from January 4 through February 7, 1995 were analyzed for APSU basketball coverage. The dates used for this study were selected for three reasons. First, by January 4, 1995, the basketball team for each team was well established (APSU basketball schedule, 1994-95). Each team had played at least six games prior to that date. Second, each team played the same number of games between the selected dates; a total of ten games each (APSU basketball schedule, 1994-95). Third, with the selected dates, each day of the week was represented at the same frequency; five times. Therefore, five Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays were examined in the study. Since each day of the week was represented an equal number of times, this negated coverage that focused specifically on a day or days of the week.

While reviewing a five-week period of The Leaf-

Chronicle, only the sport sections were used. APSU basketball box scores, printed mathematical summary of basketball games presented in tabular form, were not considered for this study. Specifically, this study examined printed APSU basketball articles with their headlines and APSU basketball photos contained within the sport sections of the newspaper. Photograph cut lines (captions) and article headline size were also not used in this study.

The unit frequency was each APSU basketball article and photograph that appeared in The Leaf-Chronicle sports section within the specified study dates. This study was concerned with the newspaper's printed coverage for APSU basketball contained within basketball articles and photos.

With the parameters of the study established, the first tabulations were conducted. The primary step was to review all pages of the sport sections of The Leaf-Chronicle, from January 4, through February 7, 1995, and determine those dates that contained articles and/or photos of APSU basketball. If an article or photo about APSU basketball appeared in a section of the newspaper other than the sport section, it was not considered for this study. All the dates that The Leaf-Chronicle printed coverage of APSU basketball were then recorded.

#### Quantitative Research

In reviewing the articles, the first step was to record the writer of the article. This procedure was made obvious



by the paper since it provided the reporter's name or staff report credit above each printed basketball article.

Second, the article's location on the sport page was documented. This was made convenient by the newspaper since each page of the sport section was labelled B along with the corresponding page number commencing with one and continuing in a positive, consecutive numerical order. Then, it was determined by reviewing the articles, if each article, itself, was located above the fold or printed below the fold of each page on which the article appeared. The actual location of those articles that had portions located both above and below the fold on the same page was determined by the predominant portion (column inch space) of the article. Additionally, in reference to article location, it was documented whether the entire article commenced and finished on the same page or was continued elsewhere in the sports section. This discovery of article continuation was made clear by the newspaper's use of the terms, continued on page number and column number, if the article was not entirely contained on the page of article commencement.

Third, it was determined if the article provided coverage for the APSU men's basketball team or for the APSU women's basketball team. Again, this determination was made obvious by the writer's reference to team or player gender or by naming the coach of the team. The men's and women's team did not share the same coach. The APSU Sports

Information Office provided the names of the teams' respective coaches.

While reviewing the articles, the fourth measurement was article length. The commonly practiced journalism technique of column inch space was used for this tabulation. The standard column inch width used in the newspaper's sport section was two-inches. Any article printed with width that exceeded two-inches was converted by this researcher to a length factor to ensure this study contained a standard measurement of column inch space. Additionally, column inch space for each basketball article was counted separately for the page on which it appeared. Therefore, continued articles column inch measurements for each page of the article was recorded and the total article length was also tabulated.

Fifth, basketball photos that appeared in the sport section of The Leaf-Chronicle during the specified dates of the study were analyzed. To do so, all copies of the newspaper printed during the dates of the study were examined to determine the number of basketball photos that appeared. The photos were then searched to determine whether they depicted either the APSU men's basketball team or the APSU women's basketball team. This team determination was made obvious by the photograph itself; clear visual depictions of the gender of the athlete were provided.

Sixth, the location of the photo was noted. First, in reference to location, the sport page number was noted. This

researcher used the same sport page number location technique as was applied to article page number, indicated previously. Location of basketball photo in terms of above the fold or below the fold was also determined. Again, the same procedure used to determine fold location of articles was repeated for photos in this study.

Seventh, the size of the photo was determined. The square inch total of the photo was used to determine photo size. Each photo was measured separately for total area space.

### Qualitative Research

This portion of the study investigated the qualitative comparison of word descriptors and technical sports terms as they appeared in the APSU basketball headlines and articles. For the purpose of this study, the word descriptors used in both the headlines and the articles were reviewed together to comprise the total article rather than viewed separately as headline and article. Headlines and articles, together, were analyzed to determine if they contained descriptors that were similar in describing the men's and women's basketball team in reference to characteristics of winning, losing, determination, and attitude.

First, all the articles were coded as either primarily focusing on winning, losing, determination, or attitude. Then, these categories were further classified to determine if the article and headline together portrayed APSU



basketball teams in a positive, negative, or neutral manner. Articles were coded positive if they contained verbal attributions related to strength or power or mentioned technical basketball terms. Articles were coded negative if they contained verbal attributions related to weakness or frailty or did not mention technical basketball terms. Articles were coded neutral if they were neither positive nor negative and contained no prominent word descriptors. This coding technique was used to determine whether there was a difference in the qualitative treatment of the APSU men's and APSU women's basketball teams by The Leaf-Chronicle. This word descriptor technique replicated the methodology used by Duncan et al. (1994) and Creedon (1994) as previously described.

The next chapter will report the results of the investigation of The Leaf-Chronicle APSU basketball coverage.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

The results of this investigation were obtained from the completion of the coverage analysis of 35 issues of The Leaf-Chronicle sport section. The study encompassed a five-week period, January 4 through February 7, 1995. The results were quantitative and qualitative.

#### Quantitative Research Results

The Leaf-Chronicle printed a total of 42 articles that covered APSU basketball during the time period examined. Of the 42 total basketball articles printed in the newspaper's sport section, 23 articles (55%) concerned the APSU men's basketball team. Subsequently, 19 articles (45%) of the total basketball articles printed by the newspaper concerned the APSU women's basketball team (see table 1).

A hypothesis was The Leaf-Chronicle would print a larger quantity of articles about the men's basketball team than about the women's basketball team. This hypothesis was supported during this study. The newspaper printed four more articles about the men's basketball team than it printed about the women's basketball team (see Table 1).

A second hypothesis was The Leaf-Chronicle would allocate more space, column inches, in its sport section for article coverage of the men's team than would be allocated for the women's team. During this study, the total space dedicated to APSU basketball articles was 456.4 column

inches. Of the 456.4 inch total, 293.4 column inches (64%) were dedicated to the men's basketball team. Subsequently, 163 column inches (36%) were allocated for the women's basketball team (see Table 1).

A second hypothesis of this study, a comparison of the total amount of column inches for men's and women's basketball coverage, was supported. The men's basketball team received approximately 177% more article column inch space than the women's team received for the time period of this study (see Table 1).

A third hypothesis of this study addressed a comparison of the number of APSU basketball photos that would appear in The Leaf-Chronicle for the men's and the women's basketball teams. The hypothesis was more photos would appear in the newspaper for the men's team than for the women's team. A total of 20 APSU basketball photos appeared in the newspaper during the time period of the study. Thirteen basketball photos (65%) depicted the men's team. Seven basketball photos (35%) depicted the women's team (see Table 1).

The third hypothesis of this study, difference in the quantity of photos for men's and women's basketball, was supported by the photo coverage analysis. The total number of photos covering APSU men's basketball exceeded the total number of photos provided for the women's team by approximately 185%.

If the total 663 square inches occupied by photos was

considered as an element of this hypothesis, then the space allocated for photos would, likewise, be greater for the men's team, 514 square inches, compared to photo space for the women's team, 149 square inches. In this comparison of square inches of newspaper space occupied by basketball photos, the men's team exceeded the women's team by 344%.

Table 1

Articles, Column Inches and Photos from The Leaf-Chronicle Used to Study APSU Basketball by Number and Percentage.

Category	Men	Women	Total
Articles printed/percent	23/55	19/45	42/100
Column Inch/percent	293.4/64	163/36	456.4/100
Photos printed/percent	13/65	7/35	20/100

A fourth hypothesis of this study was The Leaf-Chronicle would provide better placement of articles and photos for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team. Placement of the articles and photos were analyzed separately.

Of the 23 articles covering the men's team, 23 (100%) started on page B1, none started on page B2, and none started on B3. Seventeen of the total 23 articles (74%) commenced above the fold for the primary page on which they appeared (see Table 2).

Of the 19 articles covering the women's team, 14 articles (74%) started on page B1, 1 (5%) started on page B2, and 4 (21%) started on page B3. Six of the total 19



articles (32%) commenced above the fold for the primary page on which they appeared (see Table 2).

Table 2

Article Location from The Leaf-Chronicle Used to Study APSU Basketball by Placement and Percentage.

Location	Men	Women	Total
Page B1/percent	23/100	14/74	37/88
Page B2/percent	0/0	1/5	1/2
Page B3/percent	0/0	4/21	4/10
Above fold/percent	17/74	6/32	23/55

Of the 13 photos covering the men's team, 13 photos (100%) appeared on page B1, none appeared on page B2, and none appeared on page B3. For the men's team, 10 of the total 13 photos (77%) were above the fold (see Table 3).

Of the seven photos covering the women's team, seven photos (100%) appeared on page B1, zero appeared on page B2, and zero appeared on page B3. For the women's team, zero (0%) of the seven photos were above the fold. All 13 (100%) APSU women's basketball photos were placed below the fold on the sport pages (see Table 3).

Table 3

Photo Placement from The Leaf-Chronicle Used to Study APSU Basketball by Placement and Percentage.

Location	Men	Women	Total
Page B1/percent	13/100	7/100	20/100
Page B2/percent	0/0	0/0	0/0
Page B3/percent	0/0	0/0	0/0
Above fold/percent	10/77	0/0	10/50

The fourth hypothesis was supported for better article placement for men's basketball when documented by page number alone; and was also supported for article placement in terms of above the fold placement (see Table 2).

This fourth hypothesis was not supported for better photo placement for men's basketball by page number alone; and was supported for photo placement in terms of above the fold placement (see Table 3).

A fifth hypothesis was the newspaper would print more articles written by its sports department for the men's team than for the women's team. All 23 articles (100%) that covered the men's team were written by The Leaf-Chronicle's sports writers. No APSU men's basketball articles were credited to the APSU Sports Information Office during this study (see Table 4).

Twelve of the 19 articles (63%) that covered the women's team were written by The Leaf-Chronicle's sports writer. Seven (37%) APSU women's basketball articles were

credited to the APSU Sports Information Office during the study (see Table 4).

The fifth hypothesis of the study, the men's team would receive a higher quantity of articles written by The Leaf-Chronicle sport writers was supported (see Table 4).

Table 4

Article Author from The Leaf-Chronicle Used to Study APSU Basketball by Number and Percentage.

Writer/percent	Men	Women	Total
<u>Leaf-Chronicle</u> /percent	23/100	12/63	35/83
APSU Sports Info/percent	0/0	7/37	7/17

#### Qualitative Research Results

A sixth hypothesis of this study was The Leaf-Chronicle would print more technical and aggressive words, equating to positive descriptors, while addressing the characteristics of winning, losing, determination, and attitude for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team. A few examples of positive word descriptors, associated with strength attributions, were: firepower, quick, strong, knockout, defensive power, aggressive and launched. A few examples of negative word descriptors, associated with weakness attributions, were: vulnerable, eat away, mourn, frigid, sewn up and heartbreaker. A few examples of neutral word descriptors were: carry, run, won, and lost.

For the men's basketball team, 4 (17%) of the 23 total articles were coded winning, of those three (75%) were coded

positive, one (25%) was coded negative, and none were coded neutral. Of the 23 articles, 6 (26%) were coded losing, of those four (67%) were coded positive, two (33%) were coded negative, and none were coded neutral. Of the 23 articles, 6 (26%) were coded determination, of those three (50%) were coded positive, three (50%) were coded negative, and none were coded neutral. Of the 23 articles, 7 (31%) were coded attitude, of those two (28.5%) were coded positive, two (28.5%) were coded negative, and three (43%) were coded neutral (see Table 5).

For the women's basketball team, 7 (37%) of the 19 total articles were coded winning, of those six (86%) were coded positive, none were coded negative, and one (14%) was coded neutral. Of the 19 articles, 5 (26.5%) were coded losing, of those three (60%) were coded positive, none were coded negative, and two (40%) were coded neutral. Of the 19 articles, 5 (26.5%) were coded determination, of those one (20%) were coded positive, none were coded negative, and four (80%) were coded neutral. Of the 19 articles, 2 (11%) were coded attitude, of those one (50%) was coded positive, one (50%) was coded negative, and none were coded neutral (see Table 5).

Research results for the sixth hypothesis in the category labelled winning, showed newspaper articles for the men's team were positive 75% and for the women's team were positive 86%. This sixth hypothesis for the characteristic



of winning was not supported (see Table 5).

In the category labelled losing, research results for the men's team were positive 67% and positive 60% for the women's team. The sixth hypothesis for the characteristic of losing was supported (see Table 5).

Research results for a sixth hypothesis in the category labelled determination, showed newspaper articles for the men's team were positive 50%, and for the women's team were positive 20%. This sixth hypothesis for the characteristic of attitude was supported (see Table 5).

In the category labelled attitude, research results for the men's team were positive 28.5%, and positive 50% for the women's team. A sixth hypothesis for the characteristic of determination was not supported (see Table 5).

When the total articles were reviewed, regardless of their category of winning, losing, determination, or attitude, and measured only in terms of positive, negative or neutral, the qualitative results for the 23 articles covering the men's basketball team were 12 (52%) positive, 8 (35%) negative, and 3 (13%) neutral. Using this same strategy for analyzing the coverage of the women's basketball team, the qualitative results of the 19 total articles were 11 (58%) positive, 1 (5%) negative, and 7 (37%) neutral. A sixth hypothesis was not supported when the word descriptor results for newspaper coverage for the APSU men's and women's basketball team were studied without this

researcher first labelling the articles in terms of winning, losing, determination, or attitude (see Table 5).

Table 5

Positive, Negative, and Neutral Word Descriptors as Characterized by Winning, Losing, Determination and Attitude from The Leaf-Chronicle Used to Study APSU Basketball by Number and Percentage.

<u>Gender-Code</u>	<u>Win</u>	<u>Lose</u>	<u>Determine</u>	<u>Attitude</u>	<u>Total</u>
male positive	3/75	4/67	3/50	2/28.5	12/52
female positive	6/86	3/60	1/20	1/50	11/58
male negative	1/25	2/33	3/50	2/28.5	8/35
female negative	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/50	1/5
male neutral	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/43	3/13
female neutral	1/14	2/40	4/80	0/0	7/37
male total	4/17	6/26	6/26	7/31	23/100
female total	7/37	5/26.5	5/26.5	2/11	19/100

This study indicates The Leaf-Chronicle provided better quantitative newspaper coverage for the APSU men's basketball team. This study also indicates the newspaper provided better qualitative treatment for the men's basketball team in two of the four areas studied; losing and determination. When the articles were not characterized as describing winning, losing, determination or attitude, and only coded positive, negative or neutral then results indicated The Leaf-Chronicle provided better qualitative treatment for the APSU women's basketball team.

## CHAPTER 5

## Discussion

Summary of Results

Five of the six hypotheses presented in Chapter One have been supported by the data collected. One of the hypotheses presented was not supported. The study supported The Leaf-Chronicle habitually provided better quantitative newspaper coverage for the men's APSU basketball team than for the APSU women's basketball team. The data support the under-representation process previously credited to Becker and Creedon (1989). Conversely to Becker and Creedon's (1989) study, this researcher reported The Leaf-Chronicle did not always provide better qualitative treatment for the APSU men's basketball team than it provided for the APSU women's basketball team. The newspaper consistently provided better quantitative coverage for the men's team in all areas specified by this study, and also provided the men better qualitative coverage in specific characterizations. The implication of this study is that the newspaper most frequently provided favored coverage for the men's basketball team.

The first hypothesis was supported. The newspaper did print more articles for the men's basketball team than it printed for the women's basketball team (see Table 1). It is interesting to note that during the time period studied, the teams played the same number of games. This researcher



believes the men's team may have received a larger number of articles because there was greater (estimated 400%) support by basketball fans for the men's team than for the women's team. Fan support was defined as fans attending the games (V. Austin, personal communication, October 27, 1995). By printing more articles about men's versus women's basketball, the newspaper followed the previously described prediction of Koppett (1981), who suggested there was an allegiance between local sports generating organizations and local newspapers.

The second hypothesis that more column inch space would be allocated to the men's basketball team was supported. The newspaper provided almost twice as much space (177%) for articles about men's basketball than for articles about women's basketball (see Table 1). Again, this result may have well been predicted by Koppett (1981) and his newspaper and sport generating allegiance premise.

During this study, the average article length for the men's team was 12.8 column inches and the average article length for the women's team was 8.6 column inches. Also interesting to note, when only the women's basketball articles written by the newspaper's sport writers were considered the average article length for women increased to 9.6 column inches.

The third hypothesis was also supported that more photos of the men's basketball team would be printed by The



Leaf-Chronicle than would be printed for the women's basketball team. Again, the newspaper provided almost twice the number of photos (185%) for the men's team than for the women's team (see Table 1). The average size of the men's team photos was 39.5 square inches compared to 21.3 square inches for the women's team. When same gender article and photograph accompaniment was considered there was a 23:13 relationship for the men's team and a 19:7 relationship for the women's team. Simply, the newspaper printed a photo depicting the men's basketball with approximately every second men's team article printed; the newspaper printed a photo depicting the women's basketball team with approximately every third women's team article printed.

The fourth hypothesis was supported that the men's basketball team would receive better location for articles, by page number and above the fold placement (see Table 2). The fourth hypothesis was also supported that the men's team would receive better photo location by above the fold placement, but was not supported that the men's team would receive better photo placement by page number (see Table 3).

These placement results affirm Potter's (1985) study that concluded there was not a gender balance for newspaper coverage featuring men and women. Potter's study clearly indicated that females were under-represented as main characters on the front page.

This study of newspaper coverage for APSU basketball

portrayed the lack of gender balance as demonstrated by the newspaper's higher frequency placement of articles and photos for the men's team in the most newsworthy position, page B1 and also above the fold. Interesting to note, at no time during the study did the women's team receive article placement above the fold in newspaper issues that also provided any article for men's basketball. Also interesting to note, though all seven photos of women's basketball appeared on page B1, none appeared above the fold.

The fifth hypothesis was also supported that the newspaper would print more articles for the men's basketball team than for the women's basketball team authored by its own writers than authored by APSU Sports Information Office (SIO) (see Table 4). Interesting to note, during this study six of the seven articles credited to the SIO appeared on the day of the scheduled game referred to as pre-game publicity. Only one article credited to the SIO appeared the day after the game referred to as post-game results.

Cramer (1994) suggested because women's sports receive a lesser amount of press coverage than men's sports, newspapers were more likely to assign beat writers to the men's team and depend more heavily on SIO press release efforts for women's sports. The Leaf-Chronicle's assignment of a beat writer for the men's team and apparently not for the women's team may have been the reason for support of the fifth hypothesis.

The sixth hypothesis was not supported that The Leaf-chronicle would provide a favored qualitative difference for the men's basketball team. The characteristics of losing and determination supported the hypothesis; winning and attitude non-supported the hypothesis (see Table 5). Contrary to Duncan et al. (1994) this researcher did not find that positive word descriptors strongly favored the men's team. During this study of the newspaper's coverage of APSU basketball, this researcher did not find the quality of attributions of strength and weakness for men's and women's team to consistently differ.

Of the seven articles credited to the APSU Sports Information Office, four were positive and three were neutral. When the SIO articles were removed from the total sum of articles, the qualitative results remained almost unaltered. This comparison of total articles to articles written by the newspaper's sport writers only revealed articles coded positive, 58%:58%; negative, 5%:8%; and neutral, 37%:34%. This suggests that the sport writers for The Leaf-Chronicle were not providing better qualitative newspaper coverage for the APSU men's basketball team during the time of the study.

### Recommendations

Researchers have suggested that the newspaper coverage for women's sports, though notably lagging behind coverage for men, has increased in recent years. This study revealed



The Leaf-Chronicle provided significantly more quantitative coverage for the APSU men's basketball team than for the women's team. Yet, the newspaper's qualitative coverage did not greatly favor the men's basketball team. In those instances when The Leaf-Chronicle provided better qualitative coverage for the men's basketball team, Kane and Greendorfer (1994) would have suggested the choice of language used by the media reinforced the idea men maintained a higher position of authority than women in American society. Several solutions were offered to resolve the qualitative differences of word descriptors used for the male and female athletes. "They can choose to use androcentric language...choose to consciously create and use a language that is not gendered...and linguistically affirm the right of women athletes to fair and equal treatment" (Duncan et al., p. 270, 1994).

Perhaps future studies could continue to analyze The Leaf-Chronicle's coverage of APSU basketball teams, as well as other APSU men's and women's athletic teams. It would also be interesting to challenge the newspaper's reporters and editors to let them know their sports page coverage policies of the APSU basketball teams do not support gender balance and appear to be biased. If The Leaf-Chronicle would provide similar coverage for APSU men's and women's teams, that gender balance may have the greatest influence on the local sports fans' and newspaper readers' perception of

support for local college sports by the local daily newspaper. A better gender balance of newspaper coverage for the APSU sports teams by The Leaf-Chronicle may enable the sports teams and the newspaper allegiance to flourish. Also, if the newspaper would provide the same newspaper coverage for both men and women athletes, the local newspaper may be able to escape the stereotypical print media image of women present in today's mass media.

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