2003

Half the story: Olympic women on ABC News online

Dianne M. Jones
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UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the treatment of elite Australian female and male athletes in the new sports media. A content analysis of Olympic Games coverage, within a selected sample of bulletins on ABC News Online, was conducted from September 13 to October 2, 2000.

The analysis addressed both the amount and nature of coverage during the sample period. The data suggest the biased practices of the traditional sports media may have migrated to online sports journalism. Yet they also indicate an improvement in both the extent of women’s sports coverage and the range of sports covered.

Female and male athletes received relatively equal treatment in the number of words written about them but, against their participation at the 2000 Games, sportswomen were under-covered in pictures on the Web site. One athlete, Cathy Freeman, dominated News Online’s Olympic coverage. Her exposure came at the expense of her Australian team mates, especially those women who competed in team sports.

Nor could sportswomen escape stereotypically feminine postures in descriptions of their athletic achievements. Reports often characterised adult females as emotionally vulnerable and dependent adolescents. Male athletes were far less likely to be described in similar emotive terms.

These findings are discussed in the context of factors which may influence how women and their sports are portrayed in future in the sports media, including changing news gathering and reporting practices, promoting awareness of gender issues in sports coverage among student journalists, and ongoing gender equity reform within the Olympic arena.
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Dianne M. Jones
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Certainly, all sports are games but equally not all games are sports. War games or diplomatic games are matters of analogy, not sports events. Sports are play in a closed universe, seemingly isolated from society's other activities. More to the point, some play is a game, not a sport. Essentially a sport is a repeatable, regulated, physical contest producing a clear winner.¹

1.1 Introduction

The online media's coverage of sportswomen has not been studied in Australia, even though the evidence presented in Chapter 2 shows traditional media's coverage, in Australia and overseas, treats sportswomen and their achievements differently to their male counterparts. This chapter provides an historical background to women's participation in sport, with a focus on Australia, and discusses how this participation has been reported by the mass media.

Sport in modern society is much more than a game.² Participation in sports, for example, is widely acknowledged as an important contributor to nation building, personal and community growth, health and wellbeing. When the media report on sport and its athletes, they provide information about potential role models for their young audiences. But when the media ignore or under-report events or issues involving female athletes, these sportswomen can become invisible to news audiences. This chapter suggests ways in which sports coverage

¹ This thesis uses a modified Oxford referencing style. Sources are cited in footnotes rather than in endnotes. Footnotes also convey pertinent background information and their numbers continue across chapters. Dates, numbers (including percentages and measures of distance, weight etc) and quotation formats are News Ltd. style.
³ "Sport" describes the entire institution, single activities and these activities collectively (Oxford Pocket English Dictionary of Current English, 8th rev ed, 1996),
on the Web, specifically by Australia’s national public broadcaster, can be examined to see how sportswomen and their achievements are reported.

1.2 Sport and Historical Boundaries

Records of ancient civilisations show graphic evidence of a precedent for female participation in sport. In ancient Crete, for example, Minoan women engaged in early and dangerous sports with men. Defying all the Mediterranean traditions of confinement, Minoan sportswomen, apart from dancing, also drove chariots, boxed, braved the bulls and ran. Representations and depictions of bull games, variously called bull vaulting, bull grappling, bull dancing and bull leaping, far outnumber any other games in the Minoan period.

Figure 1.1

The Toreador fresco, a relic of the Minoan civilisation, is now housed in the Archaeological Museum at Herakleion.

while "sports" (the more popular term in the United States) refers to various activities and organisations.


The *Toreador* fresco, seen above, is believed to be the most potent Minoan artifact discovered. It portrays a galloping bull with three acrobats. One of the acrobats, a dark-skinned male, appears to be somersaulting over the back of the charging bull while two women are in front and rear spotting positions. It is difficult to decipher exactly what these figures are doing. Witcombe says the context and their proximity to the raging bull clearly speaks of a game or ritual involving bravery, agility and skill; “qualities which in any other contemporary eastern Mediterranean culture would be thought of as residing exclusively within the domain of men”.\(^7\)

The first female sports champion, according to Cashmore, was Cynisca who won the quadriga race, for chariots with four horses abreast, in 396BC. Cynisca owned, trained and entered the horses, but was barred from attending and competing in any of the Panhellenic festivals of ancient Greece. Scholars have noted her victory was “from a distance, from the outside” and Cynisca’s experience as an outsider, not a participant, foreshadowed the role of spectator that women were to play for centuries in sport.\(^8\)

Down the centuries, outright opposition to women’s participation in this male domain was based on notions about the natural state of the female body: women were seen as physically more delicate, emotionally less tough-minded, competitive and aggressive than men, and their relationship with men was one of dependence. As Cashmore points out, all these notions are sexist and have been strongly


challenged since the late 1960s, but their impact on the entire character of sport is still evident today.9

Small sparks of promise have ignited. In Ireland in 1891 Eva Francisco won the women’s 100 yards race in a time of 13 seconds. Dyer says this athletic performance was not only the first in Ireland by a woman, but is now accepted as the earliest fully attested women’s athletic performance in the whole of Europe. By 1899 the spark was dead. Women’s athletics disappeared from Ireland for 50 years, stamped out by the combined effects of religious conservatism, male chauvinism and political division.10

Just as they were barred from competition in the ancient Olympic Games, women were not seen at the first modern Olympics in 1896. But four years later, 11 women were permitted to compete in golf and tennis.11 Even the so-called father of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, wanted women excluded from competitions in which men were involved.

Marked by the morals of the age, but also influenced by a very personal conception of the role of women, he dismissed female sports as ‘exhibitionism’ and, as late as 1912, wrote ‘the Olympic Games should be open to men only’.12

In the United States anti-discrimination laws were utilised in the fight for equal rights in sport. The 1972 Title IX section of the US Education Amendments Act was intended to remove preferential treatment, on the basis of sex, in any education programme or activity receiving

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9 Ibid.
federal funds. As soon as it was passed, Title IX was used by sportswomen to push for equality with males, resulting in an immediate increase in resources and participation rates for young girls and women in high school and college athletics. By 1989, two million females were participating in interscholastic sports. Before Title IX the figure was approximately 300,000.13

Researchers have since claimed the anti-discrimination legislation had a contradictory effect, leading to male control of amateur sports in high schools, colleges, non-school agencies and the Olympic movement.14 Messner says the influence of the women’s movement on sport, reflected in the passage of Title IX and on-going battles for gender equality, has created an environment in which women’s quest for self-determination, equality and control over their own bodies is being resisted by defenders of the status quo. He argues stereotyped media portrayals of the female athlete, and her body, increasingly undermine any potential threat to male power posed by sportswomen.15

Hall also notes a duality of outcomes under Title IX. She says there have been remarkable improvements and benefits to girls’ and women’s sport programmes. But the legislation has also produced problems “since the price of parity is costly and women’s sports

13 Mary Jo Kane, "The Post Title IX Female Athlete in the Media: Things are Changing, but How Much?" Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 60, no. 3 (1989), p.59. Note: In the early 1970s, before Title IX, women comprised only 7 per cent of all high school athletes and colleges awarded essentially no scholarships to women. By 1982, the percentage of high school women athletes had increased to 35 per cent. By 1985, colleges had awarded more than 10,000 athletic scholarships to women. In 1996, 100,000 women competed in intercollegiate sports programmes (Hallmark, 1999, p.1). While the increase is notable, Hallmark says women, who comprise about 50 per cent of all undergraduates, still account for only one-third of all collegiate athletes and do not receive fair funding at many institutions (1999, pp.1-2).

programs often became carbon copies of male models which are sometimes neither rational nor particularly human". In 1996, the United States General Accounting Office reported a "gap ... remains in overall opportunity between men’s programs and women’s programs".

More than 3400 years after the Minoan women of ancient Crete braved the bulls and defied sexual exclusion, sport still talks. It converses in most languages, but sport in contemporary society still is not a universally accepted, everyday calling for females.

1.3 Understanding Sport

Sport speaks of institutionalised competition, physical prowess, and intrinsic and extrinsic participant motivation. According to Horne, sport is a set of cultural practices with significant historical and sociological resonances. As an example, historically sport in nineteenth century British public schools served the interests of elite groups and reinforced the values of a patriarchal society. Sport was seen as a vital form of moral character training for males. It produced the leadership and team work skills required by the dominant class, both domestically and in governing the Empire.

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Note: Horne also says that by the 1920s football, in its professional form, was a major leisure interest of the British male working class, and an important expression of community identity.
Kidd says two decades of scholarship last century also supports assertions that the sport form of physical activity was never the universal practice many still claim it is. He agrees sports should be understood as a particular approach to physical activity, developed by upper-class males in industrialising Britain, and:

... spread by ‘rational recreation’, immigration, imperialism and the emulation of like-minded elites elsewhere. They were only slowly taken up over the course of the ... [nineteenth] century by the underclasses, females and non-Europeans, in the continual dynamic of social change and the renegotiation of practice and meaning.

1.4 Sport in Australia – A Brief History

Early organised sporting activities in Australia, as detailed by Vamplew, reflected the transfer of Britain’s sporting heritage to the new Antipodean colonies. Sport was part of the “cultural baggage” brought out to Australia by the convicts, the free settlers and the accompanying administrative and military personnel.

Migrant Englishmen played cricket, raced horses, and imported British sporting equipment, horses, game birds, greyhounds and even foxes. Their organised picnics featured old rustic sports – greasy poles and pigs, Aunt Sallies and sack races. The Scots held Caledonian games and pioneered golf. The Irish played their versions of football and celebrated St Patrick’s Day with sports and race meetings. Other immigrant groups such as the Germans imported their traditional sports of skittles, crossbows, target rifle-shooting and, later, gymnastics. But

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the sheer number of Britons inevitably led to their activities dominating the colonial sporting calendar.\textsuperscript{22}

Sport provided a link with what had been left behind. Between nostalgia and deliberate attempts by the colonial wealthy and educated classes to replicate English social life, including its social structure, Australia's sporting course seemed set. It would be British. Our first world champion was a sculler (another sport imported from England). In 1876 Ned Trickett defeated the Englishman, Saddler, on the Thames River.\textsuperscript{23}

The continued flow of migrants to Australia from Britain throughout the nineteenth century reinforced the early cultural continuity in terms of sporting activities. But, as Vamplew writes, towards the end of the century there was a growing self-confidence within Australia about sport and other issues.

Australian participants no longer simply followed a lead set by Britain. The development of Australian rules football has been called "a first sign of a desire to go it alone".\textsuperscript{24} A clearer break from Britain came in horse racing. The Melbourne Cup, first run in 1861, was soon acknowledged as the premier race in Australia. The Cup departs from British tradition in two ways – it is not named after an English classic

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p.3.
\textsuperscript{24} Vamplew (1994, p.7) acknowledges "footy", soccer and rugby probably shared a common ancestry in traditional folk football. When the first rules of Australian (or Victorian as it was then) football were formulated in 1859, there was not a standardised game in Britain on which to model an Australian version. Thus there was no conscious decision to reject the British game, for none existed.
such as a Derby or Oaks, and it is a handicap rather than equal-weights race.

In another break from Britain, Australians also competed against individual nations and the world. For a relatively small country, with limited resources, Australia has achieved at the highest levels of international competition. In 1896, at the first of the modern Olympics in Athens, Australia had one representative. Edwin Flack won both the 800 and 1500 metres track events.

Australian men have participated in every modern summer Olympics. Not so Australian women. They had to wait until 1912. Our first female team, of just two competitors (and two chaperones), returned from Stockholm with a quinella in the 100 metres freestyle. Sarah “Fanny” Durack was our first female Olympic champion and Mina Wylie took the silver medal. In 1956 in Melbourne, the first of only two times the Olympics have been held in the southern hemisphere, Australian sportswomen and sportsmen won 35 medals, including 13 gold medals. At the Sydney Games in 2000, Australian athletes achieved their best result – winning 58 medals, 16 of them gold.

Sport is viewed as a particularly important institution in Australian society, occupying a unique place in our national identity and social infrastructure. It has been called a major preoccupation, even a national religion or obsession. In a 1960 article in *Sports Illustrated*, Herbert Wind noted its omnipresence and saw Australia as:

> ... a land completely surrounded by water and inundated with athletes ... Australia is a sports playing, sports watching, sports talking, altogether sports-minded country such as the world has never known before.\(^{25}\)

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Superlatives aside, contemporary Australian society continues to embrace sport. Australians enjoy watching televised sporting events. In 1997 sports programmes were the most commonly watched on television after news and current affairs programmes. They were viewed regularly by over half of all Australians aged 18 years and over.26

Ten of the top 20 television programmes in Australia in 2001 were sport-related. The ratings winner, Channel 9’s telecast of the Wimbledon men’s final, drew more than three million viewers. Figures for 2000, most likely coloured by the Sydney Olympics, show sport accounted for all of the top 10 shows.27

Advertisers too like televised sport. An estimated $150 million a year is spent on advertising on Australia’s winter football codes, about $30 million on cricket, $20 million on tennis and $10 million on motor racing. In the main, these are professional men’s sports and their sponsors are guaranteed a high level of media coverage. Marketing director of Australia’s biggest beer company Carlton & United Breweries, Paul Kennedy, says television is a cost-effective way to reach their target audience. “Males 18-plus are high watchers of sport,” he says.28

As well as watching sport on television, attending sports events is a popular pastime. In 1995, the most popular sport was Australian rules football with an aggregate season attendance of more than 1.8 million

spectators. The largest sporting event in the world, in terms of participants and spectators, is the Olympic Games. With a global television and Internet audience estimated in the billions, Sydney 2000 drew thousands of athletes from 200 countries to compete in 28 sports in front of about seven million ticket holders.

Sport in contemporary Australia has other major economic benefits. More than 115,000 people are in paid, full-time, sports-related jobs. Sport accounts for more than 2 per cent of Australia’s gross domestic product, with sales of goods and services reaching $12 billion. Australian households spend over $4 billion every year on sport and recreation. In 2001, the Howard government announced extra funding of $161.6 million over four years, bringing its total commitment to sport development, participation, management and anti-drugs initiatives to approximately $547 million.

1.5 Women in Sport in Australia

So, for many Australians, sport is important and worthwhile. It is seen to play a positive and important role in our social development. This belief in the significance of sport is frequently demonstrated by the “adulation of individual sportsmen and sportswomen, some of whom have achieved sporting celebrity or hero status”.

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30 The official count, even though there were 31 separate sports, is 28 as swimming, water polo, diving and synchronised swimming are grouped as aquatic sports. Two hundred countries (199 National Olympic Committees plus East Timor) competed under the IOC flag.


34 Jobling, 1987, p.92.
Sporting champions provide role models, heroes and heroines, helping to unite Australians and raise the national consciousness. Sporting success increases national pride and makes people feel better about themselves. Rowe says national governments have invested heavily in sport and sports television (through national, public broadcasters) because of the highly effective way in which sport can contribute to nation building.35

What transforms some elite Australian athletes into heroes and heroines has been linked to the type of sport, the extent of its development and following by the Australian public (both male and female), the era, the athlete’s gender, age and circumstances of death, and their socio-economic and establishment or anti-establishment status.36 Another factor, closely tied to a sport’s public following, must be the attention its athletes receive in the mass media of the day.

In Australia, the history of women’s participation in sport is a chronicle of exclusion and inequality. As Summers writes, “Virtually all writers about Australian society and history use the terms ‘Australian’ and ‘male’ synonymously.”37

Jobling says this view of Australian society – where it is written about by men as if it consisted only of men – explains why no one should be surprised that very few Australian sportswomen have achieved heroine status.38 In terms of social access according to gender, sport has been called “one of the major sites for structured and ongoing inequality for

35 Rowe, 1999, pp.21-22.
38 Jobling, 1987, p.98.
women", while for girls "part of their indoctrination into the sporting way of life will include the knowledge that this is a male preserve".

Much of Australia's sporting heritage, as well as the actual types of sports played, has been directly imported from Britain. But, according to Stell, the cultural exclusion of women's sport has occurred independently of other countries. "This would not be so important if sport could be dismissed as a mere pastime," she says. Stell argues an understanding of the rules of the game (through sport) is intrinsic to our society, providing discipline, leadership, co-operation, confidence, self-esteem and relaxation not readily available through any other medium.

Women in Australia began by being unable to join sports organisations, bet, ride or own horses. Stoddart says when they did get joining rights they frequently were given unequal status, such as associate membership of golf and bowls clubs. Women struggled to participate in certain sports or in particular events, such as athletics.

Battles to gain equal funding and/or media coverage in the late twentieth century proved just as difficult as did the initial access in the late nineteenth. Women have given Australia vast success in athletics and swimming, vast numbers in netball and bowls and vast service in administration yet their playing field is still uneven. This is one area in which old practice remains persistently pronounced and symbolic of a deeper social stubbornness in the Australian cultural psyche.

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40 Summers, 1994, p.132.
Australia's elite sportswomen have competed, successfully, in the highest levels of sport while encouragement, resources, facilities and sponsorship have been directed elsewhere. Australian women have won the most prestigious titles in the world including Wimbledon, the USA Open Golf Championship and the British Squash Championship.

Women's teams have been world champions in netball, hockey, cricket, softball, lacrosse and water polo. Australian women's names appear in the record books of sport throughout the world. At the Commonwealth and Olympic Games generations of Australian women have stood on the victory dais. In Olympic competition from 1948 to 2000, Australian women have won 41 gold medals at 14 Games.

But after the golden girl hype has died down and the gold dust has settled, women's sport is ultimately awarded a bronze medal in our national identity, a cultural third place behind sportsmen and racehorses.

In a country with an unenviable reputation for sexual bias and where sport has always been male dominated and conservative, how do we explain the apparent contradiction of the extraordinary contribution of women to Australian Olympic achievement? Phillips attributes it in part to Australian women's sexual estrangement from a society dominated by men, and the extent to which that very alienation motivated them to resist, press on and succeed.

Alienation theory, widely applied to explain the sporting success of minority groups such as blacks in America and Aborigines in Australia, also explains,

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43 For an overview of Australian women's gold medal achievements at the Olympic Games since 1948, see Appendix A, Table 1.1.
46 Tables 1.2 and 1.3 in Appendix A detail respectively the number of events available to women athletes and the total number of medals won, according to gender, by Australian athletes at the Olympics since 1948.
at least in part the incredible record of Australian women at the Olympic Games.  

1.6 Sport and the Mass Media

History shows sport and fitness are critical to the media revenue base. By the mid-nineteenth century, North American print entrepreneurs were aggressively promoting sports in their publications. The strategy primed public interest in sports, attracting readers and, in turn, advertisers.

In Britain, *Bell's Life in London*, founded in 1822, saw its circulation rise when it included sports reports. Sports were hardly news, at least not in the hardest sense of the word, but reports of them had the desired effect and sales continued to rise. The paper held a monopoly until 1865 when it was challenged by *Sporting Life*. The success of *Sporting Life* prompted other publications to dedicate sections to sports coverage. From the 1880s *Sporting Life*, the *Sportsman* and the *Sporting Chronicle* were all selling 300,000 copies a day.

Elite spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and golf came of age in Britain during the Edwardian era. Like sport, journalism was predominantly a male controlled and defined domain. Horne says the sport pages served to transmit and reproduce the dominance of those sporting institutions established by the public and Oxbridge-educated male Victorian bourgeoisie.

Today, around the world newspapers continue to publish sports pages and sports supplements and, increasingly, we have specialist sports magazines and sports Web sites. We see an abundance of dedicated

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49 Cashmore, 2000, p.276.
sports channels and sports programmes. Television sport is often viewed in the public space of bars, cafes and lounges and these venues have become sites of communal consumption of sport.

The appeal of both sport and pubs, separately, has always been predominantly male. The combining of two forms in one constructs a public space that is highly gendered – viewing sport in pubs is a heavily male-defined ritual and the sports bar, while a public space, is a masculine space. This rapid growth of a cultural form ... is a noteworthy example of the combined impact of television’s technology, scheduling and financial deals [and] gender relations ... upon what is sometimes described as ‘free leisure time’. 52

And, televised sport consumption, whether communal or domestic, attracts advertisers. In Australia, Carlton & United Breweries spends about $25 million a year on TV advertising. An estimated 60 per cent of that sum is spent on sport. McGuire sees an easy logic in the commercial match-up of sport and beer because, “... blokes love beer and blokes love sport. Put the two together and we’re talking dream date material.”53

Scholars argue the mass media’s production and distribution of reports, information and commentary on sports have been integral to two of the most important sporting developments of the twentieth century. Kidd says they were the triumph of sports over all other approaches to physical activity, and the interrelated triumph of the Olympics over other modern Games.

If members of all classes, both genders, and virtually every national community in the world now play sports and compete in the Coubertin Olympics, the mass media have greatly contributed to the result. To be sure, other factors must be considered ... But the

51 Ibid.
52 Ibid. p.165.
commodity production of sports information by the mass media has been crucial.  

On the flip side are the current and future costs of the commodification of sport. A characteristic of modern mass media ownership is its lack of content diversity. Concentration of ownership of the media increased in the last half of the twentieth century. By 1992 only 20 national and international corporations dominated the mass communications industry in the United States. Media integration in these conglomerates has seen ownership of production of multiple types of media as well as concentrated distribution structures.

Bagdikian asserts the level of wealth, ownership, and experience of individuals who run these conglomerates results in a high degree of shared values. These corporate decision makers become primary shapers of how we see the world and interpret its meaning. Their shared values translate into an ideology that is consistently conveyed in the media. So, the power to "treat some subjects briefly and obscurely but others repetitively and in depth" is where the power of concentrated ownership is most apparent. And, as in social learning theory, "Continuous repetition and emphasis create high priorities in the public mind and in government ..."

Critics also blame the concentration of ownership and control by corporate interests, called the "media-sports complex", for narrowing the field of sports coverage. The problem with ownership concentration, they say, is that most people depend upon the media for their information about and interpretation of sports.

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54 Kidd, 1987, pp.1.3-1.4.
56 Ibid.
Kidd says the mass media have fashioned their sports coverage to promote their own programming, to attract the audiences advertisers have most desired – usually waged males between the ages of 18 and 35 – and to reproduce the social relations of state monopoly capitalism.

The result has been coverage which heavily favours male team sports and only certain Olympic sports. It is highly patriarchal, at times gladiatorial and nationalistic, and confirms existing hierarchies and inequalities.\(^5\) \(^7\) \(^58\)

1.7 The Mass Media in Australia and its Journalists

If concentration of ownership and control of the media limits the scope of sports coverage (and thus sustains, as Kidd asserts, bias towards male events), it is interesting to explore, briefly, who owns what in Australia’s media. The Broadcasting Services Act (1992) bars cross-media ownership, that is, single ownership or aggregation of commercial television, commercial radio and daily newspapers in the same market.\(^59\) It also restricts foreign ownership.

Yet, the ownership of Australian media is concentrated. Two powerful players, one foreign and the other Australian, dominate the private or commercial print and broadcast sectors.\(^60\)

\(^{60}\) U.S. citizen Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation Limited publishes 59 per cent of capital city newspapers, Monday-Friday; 49 per cent of capital city Saturday
Australia also has different types of public broadcasting, including the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and community broadcasters. But the primary provider, and for most of Australia's broadcast history the only public broadcaster, is the ABC. It began as a public corporation in 1932 and was called the Australian Broadcasting Commission. It broadcast its first independent news service in 1946. In 1982 the ABC was restructured by the Fraser government and had a change of name, to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It remains a statutory corporation responsible, under the ABC Act (1983), for providing public-funded radio, television and online broadcasting throughout Australia.61

One contentious issue, associated with ownership debates, is the public purpose of the media. It is as a social agent that Home argues the media are most likely to have an impact.62 Journalists provide most of the information the general public gets about contemporary events. They are also responsible for most of the interpretation and contextualisation of events and trends that will be accessed by the public.63 These social responsibilities raise questions about the nature of those on whom the Australian public relies for an understanding of their world. How close to or different from their audiences are Australian journalists in their characteristics, attitudes and values?

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The typical Australian journalist is young, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class and male, and with political views a little to the left of centre. About 55 per cent of contemporary Australian journalists have studied at a university or equivalent tertiary institutions, but the proportion of tertiary graduates (35 per cent) is much higher than that of the general Australian workforce (14 per cent). The median age of 32, though, is the same as for the general workforce. Females comprise one-third of the journalism profession, the same as the proportion of full-time employees in the general population.

Australian journalists are similar to other journalists in developed western economies – "in a word, yuppies". A survey of U.S. journalists paints a clear picture of people who live lives differently than their customers but exert a "considerable influence on American perceptions of reality". Brown found an elitist gap in salaries, lifestyles, age, and social connection between readers and the journalists who gather and interpret the news for them.

U.S. journalists are now paid well enough in most markets that their peers are no longer police officers or teachers, but lawyers and politicians. "They shake few calloused hands in the off hours," Brown says, "and they don’t have enough contact with their audience when they are working. All that gives them a poor feel for the mass of Americans."
Rivers also contends the media tend to reflect the worldviews of the mostly white, mostly male journalists in charge. News is shaped by the “cultural myths” and stereotypes men have built up over centuries, and stories take form from the templates that pop into male minds as they confront various news situations. She says the male vantage point is so strong a norm that everything else is treated as a deviation. Stepp says while this is not a new proposition, the consequences are clear. “To the degree media thinking is dominated by middle-aged white men, the media audience will be, too,” he says.

The media’s greatest power then is in their capacity to shape agendas through defining (or not, as the case may be) events and issues worthy of coverage. One of the tests of the liberality of a society, Home says, is the extent to which a diversity of ideas is available to its citizens.

As an example, he criticises the narrow selection of political issues presented to the Australian public by its politicians and, in turn, the National Press Gallery. Home says unless an issue is in the public arena or on the political agenda it is out of the public game altogether. Horne’s comments may also be applied to the selection of sports presented to Australian audiences in the public and commercial mass media.

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Rivers says men are perceived as neutral, value-free observers when they put men at the centre of the universe. But when a woman sees a female at the centre of the drama, she is attacked as feminist and biased. This is an important issue journalistically because “the sense of threat experienced by white men ... creates certain frameworks around many current stories.” As an example, she says the press readily promotes the notion that boys are naturally superior to girls at maths. But seldom does it take the same approach to girls’ supposed superiority in writing (pp. 2-3).

70 Ibid, p.3.

One of the potent sources of power in our society are the news editors’ diaries, which provide the categories that are seen as ‘news’... The significance of this is... that the media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but they can be stunningly successful in telling people what to think about. How news editors decide what is ‘news’ becomes a matter of habit; reinforced by the incestuous imitativeness (or, as it is also called, ‘competition’) of the media...

If sports editors also practise these news decision-making habits, it is inevitable that they will be accused of inadequate, narrow or biased coverage of the sports events and issues they present to their audiences. Although the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is self-regulated (subject to the control of its board of directors who are appointed for fixed terms by the incumbent Federal Government), it is subject to the budget set by the Federal Government. Under the ABC Act, the Corporation has particular responsibilities, for example the provision of an independent news service.

The Act guarantees the Corporation’s editorial independence and, therefore, its assumed freedom from commercial imperatives. So, of all Australia’s media, is the ABC least likely to exhibit those highly patriarchal, at times gladiatorial and nationalistic traits of sports reportage, condemned by Kidd as evident in the mass media and confirming of existing hierarchies and inequalities?

1.8 Sport and Australian Government Policy

The twin issues of women and sport and women’s sports’ treatment by the media have a history spanning almost two decades in Australia. In

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72 Ibid, p.71.
1985 the National Working Group on Women in Sport released its report entitled *Women, Sport and the Media*.

Reflecting on the second-class status of women, both in society and as sporting citizens, the report addressed the powerful socialising influences of sport and the media in Australian society:

>[Sport and the media] provide evidence of, and an opportunity to emulate, role models on which people, especially young people, base their attitudes and behaviour ... [T]he subconscious 'message' from the way in which women in sport are presented is that their activity is not intrinsically as worthy or as important as men's sport ... What does not appear in those forums can end up being trivialised, ignored or rendered unable to compete with other 'normal' activities ... for resources or general attention and concern. [W]omen's sport in Australia ... has suffered the consequences of a long tradition of prejudice and lack of concern ... both reflected and to a large extent caused by the inadequate coverage of women's sport in the media.\(^74\)

Menzies has noted the significance of the problems summarised in the above report. She says in Australia, where sport is so important, and where the media do decide attitudes, the value of women's sport winning a place in the media cannot be overemphasised. "Getting women's sport into the media is war," she says.\(^75\)

A 1992 study of the quantity and quality of women's sports coverage in Australia also notes how a high sports media profile creates and sustains very powerful role models, through the extent of air time and column space given to athletes and their achievements. For women, a low sports media profile:


\(^75\) Ibid, p.221.
- makes it extremely difficult to attract sponsorship; and
- denies the Australian public the opportunity to follow Australian women in an area where their achievements are among the greatest.76

In a similar vein, Phillips contends the media are critically important to sport. She says there are too many examples of sports which have been made popular among the young to ignore or deny the direct link between media coverage and the popularity of particular sports. Consistent media coverage can help provide a sport with a profile, positive role models, increased spectator appeal and lucrative sponsorship opportunities. How the media portrays sports or athletes can also affect the credibility of those sports or athletes.77

In September 1999, the Federal Government released a new policy document, entitled *Active Women: National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity, 1999-2002*. Its aim was to align Australia with international initiatives to increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels.78 *Active Women* acknowledges Australia must foster a culture that encourages and supports the full involvement of all women and girls in every aspect of sport. The report stresses the social and economic benefits to Australia of a healthy community.

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78 These initiatives are the 1994 *Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport* and the *Windhoek Call for Action*. Australia is a signatory to the *Brighton Declaration*. The *Windhoek Call for Action* acknowledges the need for greater cooperation and coordination between agencies and organisations responsible for women's and girls' issues, and seeks further development of equal opportunities for women and girls to participate fully in sport, recreation and physical activity.
More men than women play sport in Australia. There are significant
gender disparities in both the numbers of people who participate in
sport and participation rates. From 1995 to 1998, of the 13 million
Australians aged 18 and above, just over 3.6 million people
participated in organised sports and physical activities. In contrast to
the total population over the age of 18, where females slightly
outnumbered males, there were clearly more males participating in
organised sport. Fifty-five per cent of participants were male and 45
per cent (1.6 million) were female.\(^79\)

By 1999-2000, the number of participants was four million, of whom
1.7 million were females. The male participation rate also remained
higher than that for females. The gap in gender participation rates has
been growing wider since 1997-1998 when the difference was 6.1
percentage points (31.4 per cent for males and 25.3 per cent for
females). In 1999-2000, the male participation rate (33.3 per cent) was
8.7 percentage points higher than the rate for females (24.6 per cent).\(^80\)

Personal motivation could account for these gender differences. The
Australian Sports Commission says competition and competence are
strong incentives for males to participate, whereas females place
greater emphasis on body-related and social factors. Also, social
stereotyping may be a factor. For example, more women than men
participate in aquarobics, netball, dancing and aerobics. Activities high
in male participation rates are Australian rules, outdoor cricket, rugby
league and motor sports. The Commission says, “Arguably these

\(^79\) Australian Sports Commission, *The Numbers Game: A Description of Organised
Sport and Physical Activity Participants in Australia* (Australian Sports Commission,
March, 2000), cited December 5 2000; available from

\(^80\) Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities:
See Appendix A, Table 1.4 for Australian sports participation figures, 1996-2000.
activities could conform to what society values as being appropriate
behaviour for males and females.”81

To counter the effects of social stereotyping, Active Women says the
government must encourage and support women and girls by
improving their status and public recognition. Projected benefits of
these improvements include more opportunities for women and girls to
participate in a wider range of sport and physical activities, greater
ability to attract sponsorship and media coverage, and greater status
and recognition within the sport community. Wider community
benefits include a higher national sporting profile through the success
and recognition of elite female athletes; and Australia’s recognition as
a world leader in gender equity in sport, recreation and physical
activity.

Aside from low participation rates, other indicators of the inequitable
status of female participation in sport are:
• under-representation in all areas of leadership, management and
decision-making;
• under-representation in all areas of coaching, especially at the elite
level;
• inadequate and inappropriate media coverage;
• greater drop-out rates than men and boys; and
• less sponsorship and funding than men and boys.82

Active Women calls on those responsible for the recognition and
portrayal of women in sport to ensure that they portray women and
girls in positive and active roles; and encourage the media to positively

82 Australian Sports Commission, "Active Women: National Policy on Women and
Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity, 1999-2002", (Belconnen: Australian
portray and significantly cover the breadth, depth, quality and benefits of female involvement in sport.  

1.9 New Media
1.9.1 Sport in Cyberspace
As noted, the popularity of sports today has been linked in part to the commodification of sports information by the mass media. Researchers also relate the popularity of sports to the development of communication technology.

For example, the expansion of professional baseball in the United States in the 1870s has been linked to the speed of the telegraph and the new rotary press newspapers. Both allowed sports fans to keep up with the daily scores.

The telegraph allowed the results of sports events to be transmitted almost instantly. Newspapers and magazines, which had followed the attitude of upper-class America and looked down on sports activities, began paying more attention to readers' interests in sports activities and results.

In the 1920s, radio brought a new dimension to spectating. As radio seized upon sport as an entertainment feature, fans were able to follow the drama of a game or fight live, without leaving home. Radio provided immediacy but newsreels provided movement. When sound arrived in U.K. cinemas at the end of the 1920s the newsreel was already an important element in the programme. Every newsreel had its sport section and audiences got their first glimpses of recorded, moving action from major events such as the Cup Final or Derby

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83 Ibid.  
Day. The sports experience was further transformed with the diffusion of television in the 1950s, and the advent of cable networks and direct broadcast satellites in the 1980s, and then the World Wide Web in the 1990s.

Today the World Wide Web offers sports audiences more than scores and stories, through sports discussion groups, and interactive sports sites offering fantasy games, sports software and player statistics. Likewise, sports fans can see photographs and video clips, and read news and feature stories on their favourite teams and athletes.

The Web is relatively accessible to sports audiences and commercial sports organisations. McDaniel and Sullivan note its popularity can be seen in the extension of traditional sports media, such as publishing houses and broadcast media, onto the Web.

With the advent of real-time audio and video over the Web, the sports fan may come to rely more heavily on the Internet for sports news and coverage of games ... Not surprisingly entertainment content (like sports) is expected to become one of the fastest growing aspects of the Internet in the future.

1.9.2 ABC Online

In 1995, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation moved into cyberspace and officially launched ABC Online. The site was, from the beginning, intricately enmeshed with the ABC's free-to-air radio and television and carried with it an ethic of public service.

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88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
Burns says many ABC Online users are still intimately connected with the twentieth century technology of radio and television, and trust the ABC brand on its online content. The need for editorial reliability and accuracy, she says, is particularly heightened in the undifferentiated content pool of the Internet.\(^91\)

In 1996 the ABC’s Web site ran a news service of the political campaign leading up to the federal election. The service put ABC Online at the forefront of dynamic content delivery at that time – well ahead of the BBC and CNN. Because of its success, a news text service began, using the resources of the combined ABC News and Current Affairs departments.\(^92\) The service now delivers breaking news, a high rotation of news reports including sport, and specialist sites.

The availability of quality, reliable information from a number of sources (such as radio news and sports departments) is of enormous benefit to ABC Online. Burns notes the news site learnt to play to its strengths in the market. While other news Web sites had print histories of daily deadlines, ABC radio journalists were accustomed to working to an hourly deadline, so they adapted well to producing breaking news stories for the Web. And their focus could remain on the content of stories rather than on the technological means by which they were produced.\(^93\)

1.9.3 News Online’s Audience

Who are ABC Online’s users and, specifically, its News Online audience? The Corporation understands it has a diverse audience. It says high quality Australian online content is a significant benefit to

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\(^91\) Ibid.

\(^92\) Ibid, p.100.

\(^93\) Ibid.
the Australian public and particularly valuable in an online world dominated by American content. ABC Online has developed different types of audiences who are "generally underserved by the ABC (such as 15-34 year olds who previously benefitted mainly from Triple J and now form the biggest group of users of ABC Online)". Users also view ABC News Online through external, third party sites licensed to carry its content.94

ABC Online ranks among the most visited Web sites in Australia. In 2000-2001, there was an average of 6.6 million page visits each month by about 785,000 individual users. AC Nielsen says this equates to an 11 per cent share of all active Internet users in Australia.95 Weekly accesses to News Online regularly passed one million during major news events in 1999-2000,96 and in 2000-2001 increased to 1.7 million.97

From the ABC’s perspective, ABC Online attracts users who have not previously taken advantage of ABC services as well as particular constituencies who are extensions of its regular audience. These include young audiences to whom it is a familiar and convenient medium; and people living in regional and rural Australia who only receive a limited number of television channels, and often find it easier to connect to the Internet and receive news and information online.98

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98 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2000, pp.36-37.
In an interview with Alysen, ABC News Online editor Bob Johnston says peak traffic times for the site are around 8 to 9 in the morning, 11.30 to noon, 4.30 in the afternoon and again at 9 o’clock at night.

What we suspect is happening is that people arriving at work find themselves with some spare time, and then again around lunchtime. Then they seem to be turning to us for a news update before they go home. What’s clearly happening is that people are using their work-related arrangements to access to the Web predominantly.99

A slightly clearer picture of News Online’s potential audience emerges from a national survey of Internet access. By November 2000, almost three million or 37 per cent of all Australian households were connected to the Internet. Half of the adults in Australia, or 6.9 million people, used the Internet from their homes or at work.100 Brand and Pearson’s 2001 report on sources of news and current affairs for Australians found the Net was most used by 11.3 per cent of the population.101

The likelihood of Internet use decreases as age increases. People aged 18 to 24 years are the heaviest users (74 per cent). Males surf the Net more than females (53 per cent compared with 47 per cent). Employed adults with incomes of $40,000 or over are more than twice as likely to use the Internet than unemployed adults or those with incomes under $40,000.102

1.10 Social Learning, Priming, Cultivation Theory and the Mass Media

We are not born members of a society. We must learn how to become members. Edgar says each individual learns the ways of a society and how to function within it by an interactive experience, at first with parents, siblings, friends, teachers, and later with work colleagues, spouses and so on. Individuals can also learn the ways and values of their society through its mass media. There are a number of theoretical positions that would suggest exposure to sports media content could be influential on the behaviour and attitudes of sports media audiences.

Comstock and Paik note the influence of the mass media is more than just time allocation. According to these writers, the mass media can have significant effects on socialisation by providing role models who may be emulated or by cultivating beliefs about the world that may later serve as the basis for behaviour. Donnerstein and Smith say the modelling effect can best be explained by social learning theory, as spelled out by Bandura.

This theory holds that direct experience and/or observation (vicarious experience or modelling) can fashion human nature. It explains human behaviour in terms of a continuous, reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences. Key elements in social learning theory are:

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105 Donnerstein and Smith, 2001, p.298.
(1) attention (including the distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence and functional value of modelled events) and observer characteristics;

(2) retention (including symbolic coding, cognitive organisation, symbolic rehearsal and motor rehearsal);

(3) motor reproduction (including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction and accuracy of feedback); and

(4) motivation (including external, vicarious and self reinforcement).\textsuperscript{108}

Much social learning then occurs from casual or directed observation and modelling of other peoples’ behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions in everyday situations.\textsuperscript{109}

Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.\textsuperscript{110}

Researchers, noting the significance of books, newspapers, magazines, film and television in shaping behaviour and social attitudes,\textsuperscript{111} have shown both children and adults can acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct from the abundant and varied

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, p.23.

Note: According to Bandura, attention to an event is influenced by characteristics of the event and by characteristics of the observer. For example, repeated observation of an event by a person who has been paying close attention should increase learning. Retention refers to how well an individual remembers behaviours that have been observed. Motor reproduction is the actual behavioural enactment of the observed event. For example, some people can accurately imitate a behaviour after merely observing it, but others need to experiment. The motivational component of the theory depends on the reinforcement or punishment that accompanies performance of the observed behaviour (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.383).

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, p.39.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, p.22.

\textsuperscript{111} Edgar, 1973, p.4.
symbolic modelling provided by television, films, and other visual media. Bandura asserts developments in communication technology (such as computers and the Internet) will allow people to observe on request almost any desired activity and, with increasing use of symbolic modelling, parents, teachers and other traditional role models may occupy less prominent roles in social learning.112

Based on its increasing pervasiveness, some scholars are now calling the World Wide Web a mass medium.113 In 2001, with 99 per cent of countries online, worldwide Internet users numbered 407 million, although, as Sussman points out, only 6.7 per cent of the world’s population uses the Web and growth areas are in predominantly industrialised countries.114

Young and old alike "gather" via email, newsgroups, the Web and other Internet pipelines to discuss issues, share thoughts and opinions, and receive news and information. According to Robertson, mass communication on the Net "clearly has the potential to either reinforce or desist traditional socialisation messages".115

112 Bandura, 1977, p.39.
Note: McQuail says scholars attempting to conceptualise the Internet as a mass medium (from the point of view of the audience) have encountered difficulties because the Net is very fragmented, offering quite different kinds of communication experience. He says the Net is thus neither clearly distinct from ordinary mass media, nor itself a mass medium as usually defined (2000, p.128).
Note: For example, the United States with 154 million users beats the combined total for Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America (126.95 million). Europe has 113.4 million people online, Canada 13.28 million and Australia 8.42 million.
Even against the reality of non-ubiquitous access and social disadvantage around access, online media offer a real alternative to traditional media. And the World Wide Web may be a potential source of both abundant and varied symbolic modelling.

Bandura says symbolic modelling has tremendous multiplicative power. Unlike learning by doing (where actions are shaped by repeated experience), in observational learning new behaviour patterns can be transmitted, simultaneously, to vast numbers of people in widely dispersed locations. And because people have daily, direct contact with only a small sector of the environment (family, friends, colleagues), their perceptions of social reality are heavily influenced by direct and second-hand experiences, such as what they see, hear, and read in the mass media.

The more peoples’ images of reality derive from the media’s symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact ... [and the potential for] ... biased conceptions ... [to develop] ... observationally by overgeneralising from exposure to a restricted range of the activities and experiences of others.

So, social learning theory provides a particularly useful framework for guiding research on media effects in various areas. As discussed, a central tenet of Bandura’s theory is that both children and adults are often influenced by observing other humans, both by direct observations and second-hand, via the media.

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With respect to studying the effects of sexually explicit media on children, Malamuth and Impett argue social learning theory suggests both what is portrayed in the media and what may be left out may affect children's interpretations, perceptions, attitudes, perceived norms, and other cognitive or emotional processes.\textsuperscript{120}

Similar predictions may be applied to studying the effects of sports media on young audiences, since various scholars have reported that female athletes are consistently underreported, trivialised and stereotyped in portrayals in the sports media.\textsuperscript{121} Social learning theory contends individuals are more likely to adopt a modelled behaviour if it results in outcomes they value.\textsuperscript{122}

An example of a social learning situation occurs in sport, where young athletes take elite athletes as role models and imitate their behaviour. If young girls have little contact with their sports heroines in their personal lives and there is little or no information about sports options for girls provided in their home, peer or school environment, images of sportswomen in the media may become more powerful.

In seeking to explain violent aggression in sports, social learning theory has received "the most empirical verification" and maintains that young athletes' aggressive behaviour is learned through modelling and reinforced by rewards and punishments.\textsuperscript{123} Even vicarious experiences of reinforcement or punishment, such as those provided by

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{121} A detailed discussion of these findings appears in Chapter 2. \\
\textsuperscript{122} Bandura, 1977, p.54. \\
the media, may promote the tendency to behave or not to behave in similar or related ways.\textsuperscript{124}

Of course, other models including parents, coaches and teammates may also demonstrate support for violent aggression in sport. But, as Leonard points out, “the media affords ample exposure to sport-related violence, thus providing numerous examples to children who may imitate such behaviour”.\textsuperscript{125}

So, while there is no clear evidence that the media directly changes or influences social behaviour, scholars have suggested the media may reinforce acts of violence in sport when the absence of negative consequences for aggressive play may be regarded as suggesting positive consequences.\textsuperscript{126} Or, as Bandura asserts, “[b]ecause consequences derive their value relationally, the omission of anticipated negative outcomes is indeed a significant consequence”.\textsuperscript{127}

Just as vicarious reinforcement for violent aggression may be derived from “seeing professional players lionized [in the sports media] and paid huge salaries, in spite of, or because of, their aggressive style of play”,\textsuperscript{128} vicarious reinforcement for girls not to play sport or not to aspire to elite levels may be derived from not seeing female athlete role models lionised or even reported in the media, or seeing only trivialised or stereotyped portrayals of these sportswomen.


\textsuperscript{126} Abdal-Haqq, 1989, p.2.

\textsuperscript{127} Bandura, 1997, p.119.

\textsuperscript{128} Abdal-Haqq, 1989, p.2.
Social learning theory has been criticised for its simplistic "imitative model [that] assumes that people are made of unimprinted wax and stamped with whatever messages role models present". Malamuth and Impett say the criticism is largely unwarranted. They argue social learning theory is not simply a "monkey see, monkey do" theory.

Bandura has emphasized that learning through modeling others is not simply a matter of copying or mimicking what others do but involves abstracting rules concerning appropriate behaviour and the likely consequences of various types of actions. The circumstances and the actual actions that an individual might engage in do not have to be identical to those depicted in the media for the modeling to occur via the learning of a symbolic rule or message.

But researchers have taken issue with the idea that social learning theory alone gives "a full account of the effects of exposure to the mass media". Berkowitz says if observational learning refers to the lasting acquisition of novel behaviour or new knowledge, many media influences cannot be attributed to such learning. Many media effects appear to be transient and are subject to a "time decay".

Berkowitz and Rogers offer an alternative explanation for media effects. When people witness an event through the mass media, ideas are activated that, for a short period of time, tend to "prime" or evoke other semantically related thoughts (events that are similar to those being depicted). After a concept is activated, there is a greater likelihood that it and associated thought elements will come to mind again (individuals are now thinking of the events they have viewed and

130 Ibid.
relating them to their own experiences), thus creating the priming effect – the process of thought activation resulting in a higher probability of behaving in a manner similar to that portrayed in the media. For example, if the viewer observes someone on television being insulted and then this person acts aggressively, the observer may remember a time when they were insulted, bringing back into memory feelings of anger. Once these additional thoughts have come to mind, they influence aggressive responding in a variety of ways. There is reason to expect that stereotypical content in sports media, such as portrayals of defeated women athletes who then dissolve into tears, could act accordingly.

Donnerstein and Smith argue priming effect unifies several tangents of mass media research via one relatively simple explanation. The observer’s identification with the media character (rather than the outcomes experienced by the model, as is the case in social learning) influences the extent to which the observer will mimic observed behaviour. This explanation suggests viewers who identify with certain actors may be vividly imagining themselves as these media characters and may be thinking of themselves as carrying out those depicted actions.

Rather than learning a lesson, observers who witness the consequences of another’s actions recall other occasions when the same outcome occurred. With this outcome now in mind, viewers may overestimate the frequency and probability of the same type of consequence actually occurring for them. So, observing desirable consequences for a given

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132 Ibid.
133 Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.384.
134 Donnerstein and Smith, 2001, p.299.
135 Ibid.
behaviour may increase viewers' willingness to perform that kind of behaviour themselves.  

As will be seen in Chapter 2, an emphasis on positive outcomes (winning) for male athletes or stereotypically feminine sportswomen are quite often the norm in traditional sports coverage. From either the modelling or the cognitive theoretical perspective, these behaviours, particularly when performed by models young audiences can identify with, have a high likelihood of being emulated. And, by extension, there is less likelihood of emulation of positive behaviour by sportswomen who do not fit the stereotypically female athlete model and so are either under-represented in or omitted from sports coverage.

Another approach used to account for the media's effect on audience perceptions of the real world is cultivation theory. Underlying Gerbner's cultivation approach is the assumption that repeated exposures to consistent media portrayals and themes influence our perceptions of these items in the direction of the media portrayals. Research by Gerbner and his associates has shown heavy viewers tend to have a perception of social reality that "matches" or reflects the one presented on television: that is, heavy viewers of television tend to overestimate the prevalence of violence in society and their own chances of being involved in violence.  

Cultivation theory has also been used to explain our perceptions and stereotypes about gender, race, and other conceptions that are often presented in a stereotypical manner on television. Based on these

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136 Ibid.
137 Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.395.
138 Donnerstein and Smith, 2001, p.300.

Note: According to Wimmer and Dominick (p.396), not all researchers have accepted the cultivation hypothesis. Critics assert cultivation is less dependent on the total amount of TV viewing than on the specific types of programmes watched; the
trends, heavy sports readers’ perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about gender in sport may also be strongly influenced by media portrayals of female and male athletes and gender-appropriate sports.

In sum, together, the above theories suggest exposure to sport depictions in the mass media may have an impact on young audiences. Social learning asserts mass media characters serve as potent role models for learning about sport. Priming provides a cognitive explanation of the short-term impact of sporting images on young audiences. Finally, cultivation theory focuses on the long-term influence that heavy viewing/reading of sport content may have on young peoples’ beliefs about sporting (social) reality.

1.11 Study Rationale
Social learning theory, priming and cultivation theory and criticisms of their applications have provided the framework for this study of Australian sports media. The research expands on previous studies of gender representation in sports coverage by focusing on online cultivation effect is more pronounced among active than low-involvement viewers; and the personal experience of crime is an important mediating variable that affects the impact of television programmes on cultivating an attitude of vulnerability to crime.

139 The field is not universally strong in theory. There are writers who, while holding strong views on the relationship between media content and real world events, appear to be content with assertions that are weak or not theorised. In the latter category are studies by Mikosza (1997), Hallmark and Armstrong (1999) and Tuggle and Owen (1999). Wann and Schrader (1998) merely assert that “the media can affect attitudes and beliefs”, while Alston contends that the media “create and reinforce stereotypes which influence and condition our experiences” (1996). However, there are useful theoretical frameworks to be found in several writings. Mack (2000) draws upon communication theories by Chaffee and McLeod (1968, cited in Mack, 2000, p.93) and work by Culbertson (1976, cited in Mack, p.93) which has shown that two viewpoints affect journalists’ news judgements. Journalists consider their own beliefs and values, and they consider what they believe are their audience’s values. This phenomenon has been called “co-orientation”. In addition, Mack cites the media theory of social responsibility: that one of the most critical responsibilities of the media is to lead the audience, not merely to follow it, as a part of its obligation to report news in a way that gives it meaning (p.94). The theory of media logic underpins studies of television sports coverage by Higgs and Weiller (1994) and Koivula (1999).
Altheide and Snow (1979, cited in McQuail, 2000, p.296) first used the term "media logic" to capture the systematic nature of pre-existing definitions of what a given type of media content – news, sports, drama, entertainment, advertising – should be like. Higgs and Weiller (p.234) contend that mass media often influence their audiences through biased accounts that are premised on a distorted construction of reality.

Following this theory, researchers have argued that televised narrative accounts of sporting events shape our interpretations about sport in a way that meets the needs of the medium. They do so in a way that affects our sensemaking not only about sport but about its competitors and their relative social power (p.235).

Three central features have been identified in the televised sports narrative: interchangeable stock characters, repeatable formulaic plots and themes stressing competition and conflict. Duncan and Brummett (1987, cited in Higgs and Weiller, p.235) say these contribute to a media logic that allows featured athletes to be viewed as consistent and stable in their caricature, yet allows them to be cast often into agonistic forms ... of competition and conflict.

According to Kinkema and Harris (1992, cited in Higgs and Weiller, p.235), messages about competition in these narratives often reinforce inequities in power and gender relations. These inequities, seen in both television imagery and narrative, help construct a hegemonic masculinity, legitimising the reproduction of patriarchal gender relations in society.

Duncan et al (1990) and Tuggle et al (2002) investigated how women athletes and their sports were “framed” in television sports coverage. Framing theory or framing analysis addresses one aspect of media agenda setting research – how information is presented or framed, or how the media choose to portray the issues they cover (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.391). It has been called the second level of agenda setting (2000, p.392).

A weakness of agenda-setting, according to McQuail (2000, p.455), is that while data shows a correspondence between the order of importance given in the media to “issues” and the order of significance attached to those same issues by the public, such evidence is insufficient to show a causal connection between the various issue “agendas”. He says: “The further one moves from the general notion that media direct attention and shape cognitions and towards examining actual cases, the more uncertain it becomes whether such an effect actually occurs.” (p.455)

Goffman (1974, cited in McQuail, p.343) is credited with the idea that a frame is needed to organise otherwise fragmentary items of experience or information. Framing involves “selection and salience”. Framing analysis recognises that the media can impart a certain perspective or “spin” to the events they cover and this, in turn, may influence public attitudes on an issue (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.391).

Writers have observed the power of both “presence and absence” in framing, with the effect of priming values differentially, establishing the salience of one or the other (Tuggle, Huffman and Rosengard, 2002, p.363). Tuggle et al argue that reality is thus presented and reinforced through framing, specifically in the context of their study, network coverage of the 2000 Olympics.

Kachgal (2001), who investigated sports media Web sites, adopted two frameworks – framing theory and cultural hegemony theory – to examine the representation of female athletes. (The concept of hegemony is discussed in section 1.14 of this chapter and in detail in Chapter 2.)

Kachgal argues hegemony is helpful because it focuses on patriarchal ideology (that is, the subordination of women to men) as “an all-encompassing influence on content which supports the reality presented and reinforced through framing” (2001, p.162).

Gerbner’s cultivation theory (as discussed in section 1.10 of this chapter) underpins studies by Bryant (1980), Lumpkin and Williams (1991), Pringle and Gordon (1995) and Rintala and Birrell (1984).
reports about Australian Olympic athletes, published by Australia’s national public broadcaster.

Kachgal suggests “perhaps no single force has had a greater impact on the sports media marketplace in recent years than the World Wide Web”. Features such as asynchrony, non-linearity, non-hierarchical organisation, dynamism and interactivity make the Web unlike traditional sports media in many ways.\(^\text{140}\)

As Kinnick notes, little research has focused on gender in media coverage of the Olympic Games.\(^\text{141}\) A review of literature has revealed no previous content analyses or other quantitative studies examining gender bias in online Olympic sports coverage. So it is not known to what extent “the gender-stereotyped messages, inherent in the print media geared toward young audiences”, are replicated by their cyberspace counterparts.\(^\text{142}\)

Because of the Internet’s growing relevance, and the extent to which the mass media’s gender-stereotyped messages affect adolescent girls’ perceptions of their roles in society, researchers must begin to compare and examine the messages of this new electronic medium.\(^\text{143}\)

The focus on the ABC is warranted because of its prestige, reach and influence. The ABC’s television and radio news arms, with radio newsrooms positioned in all capitals and major regional centres across the country, are recognised for journalistic excellence.

\(^{140}\) Kachgal, 2001, p.162.
\(^{141}\) Kinnick, 1998.
\(^{142}\) Robertson, 1997, p.103.
\(^{143}\) Ibid.
The ABC consistently provides the benchmark for other media to meet in news and current affairs. Stories by ABC journalists regularly win coveted industry awards, including Australia’s most prestigious journalism awards, the Walkleys. Print and broadcast media often take their cue from the ABC as to which issues should receive coverage. Stories from the ABC’s radio newsrooms are regularly re-packaged for publication on *News Online*.

Typical of the ABC’s community standing is its affectionate nickname of “Auntie”. The Corporation has the publicly funded resources to employ top people to deliver quality programmes. A loyal audience, the ABC’s own staff and other media jealously guard its independence and regularly take incumbent governments to task over perceived funding inadequacies or threats to “Auntie’s” independence. The Corporation is, in its own promotional lingo, “Everyone’s ABC”.  

Through its radio and television presence the ABC reaches an annual average audience of 19.6 million people. In September/October 2000, while Sydney hosted the Olympics, ABC *Online* site accesses peaked at more than seven million. *News Online* is the ABC’s most popular Web site, receiving 29 per cent of weekly page visits (or 1.7 million accesses) in 2000-2001.  

Thus the ABC was a significant source of information about the Olympic Games for its audiences. Its stature as a provider of quality, independent information across a broad spectrum of interests, and its legislated requirement to provide these services, suggests the ABC

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144 Christopher Warren, "Message from the Alliance", *The Alliance*, Spring, 1996, p.3.
145 Previous promotions have touted the organisation as “Your ABC”.
would exhibit less gender bias in reporting than the private-sector, commercial operators.

1.12 Research Questions
This study examines the current status of women's sports coverage in Australia through an analysis of ABC News Online from September to October 2000. News Online's treatment of Australian women athletes and women's sports and men athletes and men's sports at the 2000 Olympic Games is compared across the Games.

One year before the Sydney Olympics, the Active Women report criticised the media's coverage of sportswomen as reported in a series of Australian Sports Commission-sponsored studies, from 1988 to 1996. The report expressed an expectation of positive trends in future studies of sports media.

At the time of writing there appeared to be no published studies of sports reporting by Australian online news media – let alone the performance of our national public broadcaster in this arena. The 2000 Games marked the centenary of women's participation at the modern Olympics, with more women (38.2 per cent of athletes) taking part than ever before. Women competed in 25 of the 28 sports, as boxing, wrestling and baseball remained out of bounds. Of the 39 world records set at the Sydney Olympics, 23 were by women. Women athletes comprised 45.2 per cent of the Australian team.

As noted, researchers have cited the lack of female role models as a major factor retarding the growth of girls' and women's involvement in sport. The mass media, according to Rintala and Birrell, routinely expand the social horizons of their audiences. The media clearly have the potential to distribute images and information pertinent to numerous social phenomena, such as sport, to a vast audience, and thus
to provide a variety of role models who may be unavailable in the immediate environment\textsuperscript{147} of parents, siblings, friends, teachers, work colleagues, spouses and so on.

The Sydney Games, with a record representation of women, provided a ripe opportunity for the achievements of female athletes to be exposed to a vast media audience. In view of ABC Online's acknowledged audience of 15 to 34 year-olds, its news site may act as a socialising agent by presenting new images of Australian women in sport or by reinforcing old images.

It seems logical to investigate the content of \textit{News Online} and to evaluate the images the Web site presents to its audience. Since the news site functions under an ethos of public service and the goals of accurate, impartial and objective journalism, we may ask whether \textit{News Online}’s treatment of Australian females in sport makes it an agent of social change or merely a preserver of the status quo.

One purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is a positive trend in the coverage of women's sport, since the Australian Sports Commission-sponsored studies up to 1996, in a new sector of the Australian media. To achieve this, a content analysis of ABC \textit{News Online} will be undertaken.\textsuperscript{148}


\textsuperscript{148} The foundation for conducting a content analysis draws from Rintala and Birrell's 1984 investigation of the content of \textit{Young Athlete} magazine. Noting the controversy in academic circles over the use of content analysis in media research, the authors say they accept "the prevailing understanding of media effects" in the relationship between the media and the audience. That is: “The media serve more to reinforce previously existing attitudes and behaviors than to introduce new ones.” Rintala and Birrell’s research (and attempts to interpret the data collected with respect to the concerns of current structuralist assumptions) is based on the premise that the content of \textit{Young Athlete} is important because of the effect the image it portrays about sport will have on its readers, who are primarily between 12 and 22 years of age.
Australia’s national public broadcaster will be examined to determine whether it reflects gender bias in Web sports reports about Australia’s Olympic athletes. To achieve this, the following research questions, some of which are modelled on previous studies, relate to representation of (the quantitative presence) and respect for (the status given to) Australian female athletes, in Olympic sports reports published during the Sydney 2000 Games on ABC News Online.

1.12.1 RQ1 – Representation

Are Australian female and male athletes treated differently?

(a) What was the level of coverage (total words) given to female and male athletes?

(b) What was the level of coverage (total pictures) given to female and male athletes?

(c) Did reports about male athletes contain more hyperlinks than reports about female athletes?

(d) Did report placement on News Online’s summary page give male athletes more prominence than female athletes?

(e) Did combined reports favour one gender? That is, in reports about both female and male athletes, who was covered first?

(f) Did the level of coverage identified in (a) and (b) correlate with the number of medals won by Australian female and male athletes?

(g) Did the level of coverage identified in (a) and (b) accurately reflect the gender composition of the Australian Olympic team?

(h) Which sports received the most coverage (total words) for female athletes? That is, did female athletes competing in female-appropriate sports receive more coverage than those competing in inappropriate sports?

\[149\] Questions 1.12.1(a) to (e) are addressed by Hypothesis 1 (see section 1.13); question 1.12.1(f) by Hypothesis 2; question 1.12.1(g) by Hypothesis 3; and question 1.12.1(h) by Hypothesis 4.
1.12.2 RQ2 – Respect

Are portrayals of Australian female and male athletes reflective of gender bias as identified by Kinnick’s and other studies?

(a) Did reports comment on one gender’s appearance more than the others’?
(b) Did reports comment on one gender’s relationships more than the others’?
(c) Did reports comment on one gender’s emotions more than the others’?
(d) Did reports mention successes and failures of both genders?
(e) Did reports on female and male athletes contain linguistic sexism (hierarchical naming, martial metaphors, trivialising language, and gender marking)?
(f) Did pictures depict female athletes as passive rather than active?

1.13 Hypotheses

Five hypotheses are proposed for this study:

1. Australian female and male athletes and women’s and men’s sports will receive differential coverage on ABC News Online during the 2000 Olympics; that is, females will receive less coverage than males.

2. The profile of coverage afforded Australian sportswomen on News Online will stem from their success at the Games but, compared with medals won, females will be under-represented and males will be over-represented.

3. Compared with participation (the gender make-up of the Australian Olympic team), females will be under-represented and males will be over-represented in Olympic sports coverage on News Online.

[150 Questions 1.12.2(a) to (f) are addressed by Hypothesis 5 (see section 1.13).]
4. Australian female athletes competing in so-called “female-appropriate” sports will receive more coverage on News Online than those who compete in inappropriate sports.

5. Given the ABC’s editorial guidelines, the portrayal of Australian female athletes on News Online will not reflect previously identified forms of gender bias.

1.14 The Olympic Games and Nationalism

This study does not examine the role of nationalism as a catalyst for sports coverage. But it is worth noting, briefly, the potential for an international event of the size and elite nature of the Olympics, combined with its conduct on Australian soil, to foster an intensity of national interest and pride in the media of the host nation.

During the Olympics, the media concentrate on the male and female athletes of their own country and on the medals they win. Much Olympic sports journalism routinely resembles a form guide. The media appraise the chances of their home country athletes – based on their performances, including results and/or experience; prevailing conditions such as the athlete’s physical and emotional wellbeing, the track, and even the weather – against those of their competitors (not only as personal rivals but as instruments of ideological rivalry between nations).

Rowe says national and, especially, international sports have a symbolically unifying power, and global media mega sports events such as the Olympics and the soccer World Cup have become “orgies

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of nationalism".  

Could nationalism spark an increase in the amount of coverage given to Australia's women Olympians? No, according to Hargreaves. Although he argues the media are the most important institution reproducing national identity today, Hargreaves says when sport is politicised at events such as the Olympic Games, the media confirm a hegemonic system:

> [It] is then that media sport is deployed in support of dominant groups' interests, and that it amplifies, rather than simply reinforces social forces.

Hargreaves' case for exaggerated hegemony suggests Australian women athletes will get less coverage during the 2000 Olympics than in a non-Olympic period. But are women just as likely to receive less coverage because there are fewer Olympic events in which they can compete? In Sydney in 2000, there were 300 events: 168 were for men and only 132 were for women.

Tuggle and Owen, on the other hand, argue that for nearly 40 years the spotlight has shone more brightly on women during the Olympics than at other times. Yet, in the same period, non-Olympic coverage of sportswomen has lagged far behind that given to their male counterparts.

Theberge and Cronk also point to comparatively better treatment of women in media coverage of the Olympics in recent years. They credit it to the resources invested by commercial sports in obtaining media

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152 Rowe, 1999, p.23.
coverage during such events.\textsuperscript{156} So women receive comparatively more coverage during the Olympics as a de facto benefit of their brief inclusion in the commercial sports arena.

Daddario notes women athletes in almost all sports receive a fraction of the coverage given to men athletes. She says the only exceptions may be gymnastics “where females enjoy extended coverage for two weeks every four years at the summer Olympics, and professional tennis, where heavily sponsored coverage of women’s tennis can rival men’s coverage”.\textsuperscript{157} In view of these disparate arguments, it is not suggested ABC \textit{News Online}'s coverage of Australian women and men at the 2000 Games is typical, either in quantity or quality, of its sports reportage in a non-Olympic period.

\textbf{1.15 Limitations of the Study}

The time frame of sports coverage analysed for the 2000 Olympic Games is from September 13 until October 2, 2000. Soccer matches were held on September 13 and 14, ahead of the official start of the Games on September 15, and the results of events such as the men’s marathon were reported on October 2. Only Olympic competition is of interest, so reports of both the opening and closing ceremonies were excluded.

Only Australian athletes are of interest. This is because, under its Charter, the ABC’s functions include the provision of programmes that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{157}] Gina Daddario, \textit{Women's Sport and Spectacle: Gendered Television Coverage and the Olympic Games} (Westport: Praeger, 1998), pp.16-17.
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\end{footnotesize}
reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community. So a focus on how the ABC portrays Australian athletes is warranted.

The context units are the Tier One pages of the Web site, ABC News Online (at www.abc.net.au/news and www.abc.net.au/olympics/news), and the Tier Two pages connected to them.

Sampling of events from the population recognises and is governed by the idiosyncrasies of online media. First, in quantitative analysis, the traditional print media measure of story or article size (in square centimetres) means little in online page layouts, where a report’s dimensions vary according to the size of the viewer’s monitor and features such as the occurrence of hyperlinks.

Nor is a story count necessarily indicative of the coverage received by a target group. For example, four reports about mice may run to a total of 200 words. One report about a cat may be 500 words long. Yet, a story count suggests mice were well represented compared with cats. For this reason, this study uses word counts, rather than report counts or measures of report space.

Second, ABC News Online writing style is a hybrid of broadcast and print styles. News Online reports are written, in the first instance, for broadcast and then “repurposed” for the Web. They are, by virtue of their roots, brief. Irrespective of their ranking on a Web page, reports can be as short as 150 words. So the word count for the sample from ABC News Online’s coverage of the 2000 Olympics is diminished by (a) the timeframe of Olympic competition; (b) the brevity of the reports sampled; (c) the study’s focus on reports about Australian

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The study measures (a) the selection of athletes only; and (d) the selection of one bulletin each day, representing a prime time for page views.

Third, hyperlinks are a unique structural feature of the Web. In online news reporting, hyperlinks within a particular level of the report can indicate the multifaceted contexts of the report, thus displaying its prominence or significance in relation to other reports. So the frequency of hyperlinks in News Online sports reports will be counted. A report’s prominence also relates to its placement on the Web site’s Tier One summary or splash page and this study will count the number of reports about female athletes and the number of reports about male athletes which make the summary list.

In common with traditional print media, online sports coverage often features combined reports, where the achievements of athletes of both genders are covered. This study will count the number of times combined reports give priority to one gender over the other.

Also of interest are the types of sports covered. Word counts will be used to determine whether female athletes receive more coverage if they compete in so-called gender-appropriate sports.

Language and photographic choices also determine how athletes are portrayed in the sports media. The number of times gender descriptive language (referring to appearance, personal relationships, emotions, and successes and failures) is used in reports about athletes of each gender will be counted. So, too, will the number of instances of linguistic sexism (hierarchical naming, trivialising language, martial metaphors and gender marking) in reports about female and male athletes, and the number of photographs depicting female athletes in active poses and passive poses.
Descriptive statistics will be used to compare category measures with each other and, in the case of words and pictures, with two representation indices: Australian medal wins and Australian athlete participation at the 2000 Games.

The results obtained from this Olympics sample cannot be generalised to ABC News Online's everyday sports coverage or to that of any other Web-based or traditional sports media. Nor can claims be made about the impact of News Online's Olympic sports content in the absence of a study which examines the audience. It is not the purpose of this study to do so. However, results showing substantial differences in representation and respect for one gender over another would be important. These results could reflect on the Web site's performance against the ABC's policy of balance in news coverage. They could also lend support to the idea that new media have the potential to present a new view of sportswomen and sportsmen to their audiences.

Further discussion of the above methodology and its rationale appears in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.16 Summary and Preview

Sport is a vital part of Australian popular culture. As this chapter has demonstrated, sport should not be dismissed as a mere pastime or seen as separate and distinct from society.

Sport offers its participants more than an understanding of the rules of the game. It can teach important life skills such as self-discipline, leadership and co-operation, while promoting health and wellbeing. On an economic level, sport in Australia is a multi-billion dollar industry and a significant employer. Quick to recognise a money-spinner when
they see one, the mass media and advertisers have invested heavily in sports coverage and sponsorship. Governments are well aware of the powerful connection between sport and national pride and identity.

Yet sport in Australia remains a zone of exclusion and inequality. Despite millions of dollars in government funding for programmes, facilities, coaching, administration and promotion, female participation rates in sport and physical activities remain well below those for males.

This gender imbalance has been attributed, in part, to the images presented by the mass media which, scholars argue, provide symbolic models for social learning. Studies of media sports coverage, however, suggest the portrayal of female athletes and their sports offers few positive role models for girls and women.

Do new media treat sportswomen differently? In terms of representation and respect, does the online coverage of sport on Australia's national public broadcaster give female athletes “a fair go”? The spectacle of the 2000 Olympic Games is the setting against which ABC News Online's coverage of sport will be examined.

Chapter 2 examines the results of research on media coverage given to sportswomen, both in traditional overseas and Australian media, and new media. It further discusses the concept of hegemony, its application by researchers to help explain the status of women in sport, and its manifestation in media sports reports. The legislated obligations of Australia's national public broadcaster are also examined in the context of their implications for sports reporting on ABC News Online.

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Chapter 3 explains how the chosen methodology for this research evaluates the performance of an online news publication in terms of gender representation in its sports reportage. It explains research procedures and how performance will be measured through quantitative methods.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings. It discusses and interprets these findings in relation to the research questions (Chapter 1), and the results of previous research in the field (Chapter 2).

Chapter 5 presents issues arising from this study and the wider implications of the research.

The work ends with a list of references and three appendices.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Rarely is women’s sport evaluated as something worthwhile in its own right without the illegitimate and irrelevant comparisons to the qualitatively different achievements of males. Very few people understand this and when we read about sport, there is only one standard, one criterion, and it is the male’s.

... [T]he same ideological, legal, and institutional barriers which [women] battle in society are also present in sport and perhaps more so. I sometimes wonder if sport does not represent the perfect microcosm of society.\textsuperscript{160}

2.1 Introduction

For several decades scholars have reported that the media’s coverage of sportswomen portrays them as fundamentally different from their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{161} Against various standards for equity, the sports media have been examined to see whether female athletes receive a disproportionate share of attention.

Scholars have asserted media sports coverage supports the interests of dominant social groups.\textsuperscript{162} This chapter provides a review of studies on how the media have represented female athletes and their sports, and whether due respect was accorded. The literature review also highlights the service obligation of Australia’s national public

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broadcaster, the ABC, as stated in its Charter, which is relevant to my thesis on gendered sports reporting by ABC News Online.

2.2 Hegemony and Sport
The Italian social theorist Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony to describe how certain social groups exert their leadership and values on the majority,\textsuperscript{163} to the extent that the consensus makes the power of the dominant social groups seem legitimate. The hegemonic image sees political-economic-cultural domination and intellectual and moral leadership carried out, not by a single elite or ruling class but by a complex of powerful and wealthy groups of historically privileged white-skin males.\textsuperscript{164}

Successful hegemony means the dominant groups’ ways of life and versions of culture and civilisation are accepted by the other classes of society through coercion and consent; that is, it is mostly a silent domination.\textsuperscript{165} One way this is achieved is by shaping the awareness of the masses through the media such as newspapers.\textsuperscript{166}

Researchers have applied Gramsci’s concept to help explain the status of women in sport.\textsuperscript{167} But Hargreaves says male hegemony is not a simple male versus female opposition, which is how it is often presented. And male hegemony in sport has never been static and absolute. It is a constantly shifting process. Some men and some


\textsuperscript{164} George Harvey Sage, \textit{Power and Ideology in American Sport: A Critical Perspective}, 2nd ed. (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1998), p.22. Note: Sage (p.20) says hegemony literally means dominance, but when it is used to refer to the social relations that tend to exist in modern capitalist societies, it has a less direct, autocratic meaning.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.

women support, accommodate or collude in existing patterns of
discrimination in sport, while other men and women oppose them and
struggle for change.\textsuperscript{168}

Nor, Hargreaves asserts, is sport an “all-or-nothing” phenomenon. It
contains numerous contradictions. Male hegemony is incomplete and
there is never an absolute incorporation of individuals into stereotyped
gender roles or total rejection of them. Hargreaves says hegemony
theory may provide a better framework for understanding how, in
sport, gender relations are part of a complex process specific to
capitalist social relations.\textsuperscript{169}

Contemporary institutional sport actually plays a role in advancing
hegemony.\textsuperscript{170} Schell and Rodriguez argue hegemony presides over the
institution of sport in capitalist society to the extent that men control its
major factions – economic, political and cultural. Culturally, sport
reflects men’s dominant values and ideals about, for example, who can
play and the ideal athlete. So sport is a domain for white, able-bodied,
heterosexual males where women are often relegated to second class
status.\textsuperscript{171}

In an effort to dissuade women’s participation in sport, female athletes
are often pejoratively labelled as lesbians, or their athletic participation
is interpreted as a source of gender role conflict.\textsuperscript{172} Through the media

\textsuperscript{167} For example: Kachgal, 2001; Schell and Rodriguez, 2000; and K. Toohey,
"Australian Television, Gender and the Olympic Games", \textit{International Review for
\textsuperscript{168} Jennifer A. Hargreaves, "Gender on the Sports Agenda", in \textit{Sport in Social
Development: Traditions, Transitions and Transformations}, ed. Allan G. Ingham and
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Schell and Rodriguez, 2000, p.17.
\textsuperscript{172} S. Cahn, "Crushes, Competition, and Closets: The Emergence of Homophobia in
Women's Physical Education", in \textit{Women, Sport and Culture}, ed. Susan Birrell and
Cheryl L. Cole (Chicago: Human Kinetics Books, 1994); quoted in Schell and
Rodriguez, 2000, p.17.
society receives notice that certain sports are for men and others, if they must compete, are for women. The messages of male hegemony in sport are served up, according to Bryson, through extensive media coverage of men’s athletic events while simultaneously trivialising or limiting attention given to women’s sport.173

2.3 Gender Representation in the Sports Media

In 1996, Kane wrote of the overwhelming evidence of differential patterns of media coverage given to female and males athletes. That this difference in coverage exists, she says, is based on two observations:

(a) in spite of increases in participation rates for women, sportswomen have been grossly under-represented in terms of overall coverage; and

(b) males are consistently presented in ways that emphasise their athletic strength and competence, whereas females are presented in ways that highlight their physical attractiveness and femininity.174

Coincidentally, in 1996 the Australian Sports Commission funded another study of the treatment of female athletes in the Australian media. As noted in Chapter 1, the Commission has since expressed the hope of seeing positive trends in future research data on the rate of media coverage of women’s sport.175

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173 Bryson, 1987; and Schell and Rodriguez, 2000, p.18.

Note: The Commission has not defined “positive trends”. Presumably it is looking for improvements on previous Commission-sponsored, comparative coverage of sport by gender. From 1988-1996 Australian television and newspapers gave women between 1.2 per cent and 10.7 per cent of their coverage. For men the range was between 56.2 per cent and 96.2 per cent. Radio coverage of women’s sport in 1996 peaked at 3.4 per cent. In the same period, men’s sport received up to 98.4 per cent of air time.
Like other scholars examining gender bias in media sports content, Kane has focused on two primary criteria: recognition, or the quantitative presence of the group of interest (in this case female athletes in comparison with their representation in the population); and respect, the treatment and status given to these women.¹⁷⁶

These primary criteria also provide the backbone, along with the research questions listed in Chapter 1, for my examination of gender representation in sports reporting on ABC News Online. Thus, it is important to clarify what constitutes recognition and respect.

2.3.1 Definitions
Recognition refers to how much coverage or representation (for example, in the total number of words and pictures) female athletes receive compared with male athletes; and how much coverage sportswomen receive in sex-typed sports (categorised as female-appropriate, male-appropriate and neutral). Lack of respect is when the media trivialise (or downgrade) the seriousness and importance of female athletes, devaluing them and what they do. Sources of this bias are a focus on appearance (in descriptions and in pictures), characterisations of weakness (in words, and in passive, non-athletic poses in pictures), and linguistic sexism (such as gender marking, hierarchical naming and martial metaphors).¹⁷⁷

2.3.2 The Literature Pool
Kane’s criticism of gross underreporting of the activities and accomplishments of sportswomen simply provides a base from which to look back and forward. This literature review necessarily includes pre-1996 studies not examined by Kane, and so may reveal different conclusions about the state of play for female athletes in the sports

¹⁷⁶ See also Kinnick, 1998, p.214.
media. And what, if anything, has changed since 1996? How does the media’s coverage of female athletes rate, in terms of the air time, or the number of words, or pictures, or the prominence of stories devoted to them? Are post-1996 female athletes portrayed, in narratives and images, as different from their male counterparts?

Online media is a relatively new environment for research, so studies of the traditional media’s sports coverage must be the primary focus. Although increasing, Australia-specific studies will be augmented by examining literature from North America, Europe and the United Kingdom. Studies of both Olympic and non-Olympic timeframes are included.

2.4 Representation

2.4.1 The Numbers Game – Words, Paragraphs, Articles, Space and Air Time

A number of empirical studies support the view that women have been the subject of both overt and covert discrimination in the sporting press.\(^{178}\)

Bryant studied sports reporting in selected U.S. newspapers and sports magazines, examining coverage by gender, including the amount of space and number of articles allocated to sportswomen. The study timeframe is short – only four days in consecutive years – and he does not define a standard for fair, representative or equal coverage of female athletes. When Bryant says it is crucial that females be treated

\(^{177}\) Ibid, pp. 214-15.


For example: J Bryant, 1980; J Mikosza, 1997; and B Stoddart, 1994.

The results of these and other studies appear in Appendix A, Table 2.1. However, since different research methods and media were examined, caution is required when comparing percentages of coverage.
equally to males in sports reporting,\textsuperscript{179} we may assume he means female athletes deserve close to 50 per cent of coverage.

Also, there is no indication of the sports calendar at the time of the study. So it is not known whether coverage for each gender could have been affected by the number of sporting events available for female and male athletes.

Bryant found female athletes were denied “even a semblance of equality”, receiving only 7 per cent of newspaper coverage space in 1979 and even less in 1980 (1.4 per cent). Sportswomen were also under-represented in magazines. In 1979, 87 per cent of articles were male-oriented while, in 1980, males received 83 per cent of all articles. One edition of \textit{Sports Illustrated} provided the most graphic illustration of ignoring the female in sport, with 700 inches of male space to 1 inch of female space.\textsuperscript{180}

Eight years after the passage of the Title IX anti-discrimination legislation in the United States, Bryant observed little evidence of the law touching the paper news media. There were few articles about sportswomen, little space was given to them, and only in rare circumstances were readers provided with a fair, equal view of the female in sport.\textsuperscript{181}

A study, commissioned by the Amateur Athletic Foundation, based in Los Angeles, found newspaper sports stories about men’s sports outnumbered stories focusing on women’s sports by a ratio of 23 to 1.

\textsuperscript{179} Bryant, 1980, p.32.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid, p.39.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
Men-only stories accounted for 81 per cent of articles while only 3.5 per cent of stories were about women.\textsuperscript{182}

Higgs and Weiller measured NBC television’s coverage of sports with events for both women and men at the 1992 Summer Olympic Games. Less than half of the coverage (44 per cent of same-sport air time) went to female athletes but Higgs and Weiller concluded women were relatively well represented. Other than noting an historical lack of media representation of women in worldwide sporting events,\textsuperscript{183} they provided no standard for assessing fairness or equity in coverage such as a comparison with sport participation rates, or gender make-up of the U.S. Olympic team, or the number of events for females.

Australian television gave far more coverage to sportswomen during the 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympic Games than during normal programming. Toohey compared air time for females with Olympic events open to them, and with the number of females and males in the Australian Olympic team. She also warned against condoning existing inequities in these areas.

Approximately one-third of coverage went to women, despite the large proportion of medals won by Australian women.\textsuperscript{184} In 1988, 36 per cent of Olympic events were open to women. The Australian team comprised 73 female athletes (27.4 per cent) who won 36 per cent of Australia’s gold medals. In 1992, 37 per cent (108 members) of the Australian team were female. They won 41 per cent of Australia’s gold


\textsuperscript{184} Toohey, 1997, pp.24-26.
medals from the 98 events (38 per cent) in which they could compete.  

Australian newspapers too gave women’s sports greater coverage during the 1992 Olympics than at other times. The total Olympic coverage devoted to females reached 32 per cent, 30 per cent and 27 per cent — well ahead of the 4.5 per cent found in Stoddart’s 1992 non-Olympic study, but comparable to the 29.7 per cent of total Australian newspaper coverage given to sportswomen at the 1995 Commonwealth Games.

Women’s sport received relatively high levels of newspaper coverage during the 1996 Summer Olympics (41 per cent) when the space devoted to women in mixed sports was added to the total. Yet in 1997, in the same newspapers, coverage of women’s sport dropped by over 33 per cent.

The 1996 Games were held in an environment of unprecedented emphasis on the female athlete, and the female consumer of Olympic news in the United States. At 34.4 per cent of all athletes, women made up a larger proportion of athletes than ever in history. Kinnick’s analysis of athlete profiles in American newspapers found no bias in the quantity of coverage received by women. Kinnick limited her assessment of the quantitative presence of female athletes to the number of profile stories about them (77 out of 170, or 45.2 per cent).

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185 See Appendix A, Tables 1.2 and 1.3.
187 Stoddart, 1994, p.3.
She did not examine coverage by gender in terms of total words or space.

Mack’s content analysis of Olympic articles from 1960 to 1996 in *Sports Illustrated* found that, quantitatively, the magazine provided “fairly, but not entirely, representative” coverage of U.S. female and minority athletes. He dealt with United States athletes only and the total number of U.S. medal winners for race and gender divisions (that is, the number of athletes who won medals rather than the number of medals won). The totals were compared with the number of references to U.S. athletes in Olympic articles. Female athletes, especially black female athletes, were under-represented in print coverage, although the differences in percentages were not large (8.4 per cent of medal winners to 6 per cent of references for black females).  

What and who are covered at the Olympics matter because “many female athletes and the sports in which they participate receive very little coverage beyond Olympic competition”. On NBC telecasts of the 2000 Games, America’s female athletes garnered 44.8 per cent of air time and men received 55.2 per cent of overall coverage. Against their medal success of 41.2 per cent and their participation rate of 41.7 per cent, women appeared to have received more than their fair share of coverage. Tuggle et al argue, however, that for U.S. female athletes to get coverage, they had to be involved in socially acceptable individual sports.  

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Recent studies of sports reporting in a non-Olympic environment document continuing gender disparity in sports coverage. A comparison of BBC television coverage of the 1995 World Athletics Championships showed men's sports were given greater air time.\(^{194}\)

Shifflett and Revelle examined the coverage of female athletes in the *NCAA News*, a newspaper distributed to members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association in the United States. They expected to find gender balanced sports coverage because, among other things, the institutions covered are required under Title IX laws to have a similar number of men's and women's sports. Instead they reported a pattern of under-representation for female athletes similar to that found in other print media.\(^{195}\)

Shifflett and Revelle’s content analysis of a limited sample of newspapers (eight issues selected at random over two years) found women athletes received less than half the written coverage of male athletes.\(^{196}\) The researchers do not provide a working definition of gender balance – a point raised by Malec, who also questions their finding of under-representation. Malec frames his definition of gender balance according to the proportion of women and men athletes who participated in NCAA-sanctioned events.\(^{197}\)

Wann et al studied sports sections from three U.S. university-sponsored newspapers. They note Malec's model but used a three-pronged standard: comparing percentages of coverage to the


\(^{196}\) Ibid.

universities’ enrolment totals, the number of athletes participating in varsity sports, and the number of varsity sports.

Wann et al. found male athletics received greater levels of coverage than did female athletics. The percentages of female coverage (37 per cent of articles and 34 per cent of lines) were also less than the percentage of female students enrolled (49 per cent), and the percentage of female varsity sports (50 per cent), but greater than the number of female varsity athletes (33 per cent) at the target institutions. 198

Flatten and Matheson placed gender equity in the context of participation rates in their longitudinal study of sports reporting. They measured the number of articles and square centimetres of text given to women’s, men’s and mixed sports in six British national and Sunday newspapers. 199

In the study period, the same two weeks in 1984 and 1994, the overall quantity of newspaper sports coverage almost doubled. Women’s sport participation at elite and recreational levels also rose, by 7 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. Yet the researchers found inequity and unfairness increased over the decade, as the proportion of women’s sport coverage dropped by 5.2 per cent. In 1984, women received almost 12 per cent of broadsheet and 10 per cent of tabloid sports articles each day. By 1994, their share of articles had fallen to 6 per cent and 7 per cent. 200

Sportswomen received a slightly better deal in the British press in 1995/96. Still, only one-third or 28 per cent of standard newspaper lines and 24 per cent of headlines were given over to their performances at the 1995 World Championships. George et al’s cross-media content analysis defines unfair reporting as quantitatively less coverage of female athletes. As with print, they found British television also heavily favoured male athletes. In 1996, men’s sports received 58 times the air time of women’s sports (30 minutes).\(^{201}\)

As noted, not everyone has an equal chance of being represented in sports media coverage in Australia.\(^ {202}\) A series of studies, from 1980 through to 1997, shows media coverage of women’s sport is only a tiny proportion of that devoted to men;\(^ {203}\) most of the major sports in the media, particularly the football codes, are played mainly by men; even where women do play a media sport in large numbers, such as tennis, golf and cricket, their activities are treated as secondary;\(^ {204}\) and sports dominated by women and with very extensive grass roots popularity, such as netball, are grossly under-represented in the media.\(^ {205}\)

Nor has women’s sports’ coverage matched participation rates. Four surveys (cited by Menzies) reported unequivocally that the mass media under-represented women’s sport. In 1980, women’s sport received 2 per cent of total sports report space in Australian capital city newspapers, 1.3 per cent in 1984, 2.5 per cent in 1988, and 4.5 per cent in 1992.\(^ {206}\) In 1992, the news was worse in other media sampled.

\(^ {200}\) Ibid, p.7.  
\(^ {203}\) Menzies, 1989.  
\(^ {204}\) Brown, 1995.  
\(^ {205}\) Alston, 1996.  
\(^ {206}\) Menzies, 1989, p.222.  
Note: These figures do not include mixed sport coverage.
Television ignored women’s sport, giving it 1.2 per cent of total sports’ time.\textsuperscript{207}

Women accounted for 45 per cent of players in organised sport in Australia in 1995-1996. Despite a five-fold increase from 1980 in newspaper space devoted to women’s sport, in 1996 there was still six times more space given to men’s sport than to women’s sport. Women received only 10.7 per cent of coverage and 13.8 per cent when mixed sports were added.\textsuperscript{208}

The bad news for sportswomen continued in the electronic media. Commercial television remained almost devoid of women’s sport, giving it 2 per cent of total sports broadcasting.\textsuperscript{209}

In July-August 1996, there was a dramatic (and short-lived) jump in women’s sport coverage in those same newspapers sampled by Stoddart in 1992 and Phillips in 1996 (late June-early July). The Atlanta Olympics saw women’s sports coverage reach 40.9 per cent of space, only to drop away again in 1997 to 7.5 per cent.\textsuperscript{210}

Low coverage of women’s sport is not restricted to Australia’s metropolitan media. Rural media, both electronic and print, have also failed to match coverage of women’s sport with participation rates.

In rural New South Wales in 1995-96, 40 per cent of sport participants were female. Given this figure, Alston proposed sportswomen might receive at least 40 per cent of coverage in their rural media. Instead

\textsuperscript{207} Stoddart, 1994.  
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid, p.12.  
\textsuperscript{210} Mikosza, 1997, pp.6-12.
they received 4.6 per cent of summer and 5.8 per cent of winter newspaper sports space in 1995; 13.9 per cent of television coverage; 9.5 per cent of ABC radio coverage; and 3.6 per cent of commercial radio sport’s air time.\(^{211}\)

Most of the above empirical research is limited to short periods of time or event-driven sports coverage. To see how female athletes were portrayed over time in the Australian print media, Brown looked at sports reporting in the *Newcastle Herald*, from 1890 to 1990.

He concluded that a disproportionate share of coverage was given to elite, professional male sports. While there was increased coverage of women’s sports (from 1.2 per cent of space in 1890 to 17.2 per cent in 1990), it declined as a proportion of overall sports coverage (from 9 per cent to 7.7 per cent between 1965 and 1990). So women got more reportage, not at the expense of men, but because more sports news was reported.\(^{212}\)

Even at times when major women’s sporting events might be expected to “peak in newsworthiness”, Eastman and Billings found men athletes continued to be favoured over women. At times, the gap between men’s and women’s coverage was as wide as 90 per cent.\(^{213}\)

The researchers studied gender bias over five months in 1998, taking in major men’s, women’s and mixed tournaments and championships (hence the proposition that these women’s sporting events would be more newsworthy than women’s events staged in a non-Olympic period). But, since coverage of 21 events for men was compared with

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\(^{211}\) Alston, 1996, pp.7-16.

\(^{212}\) Brown, 1995, p.27.

coverage of only 9 events for women, it is perhaps not surprising that the study found a “high degree of embedded favoritism” toward men’s sports and male athletes. The researchers also concluded that week-by-week, cross-media comparisons revealed much greater marginalisation of women’s sports in the U.S. electronic media. On ESPN and CNN, men’s sports dominated coverage by a ratio of 15 to 1. About 5 per cent of television sports broadcast time and 13 per cent of newspaper space went to women’s events.\(^\text{214}\)

Lumpkin and Williams studied *Sports Illustrated* feature articles, from 1954 to 1987. They found the magazine reinforced traditional attitudes towards females in sport by providing a limited number of articles about female athletes (8 per cent compared with 91 per cent of total coverage given to male athletes).\(^\text{215}\)

The underreporting (and thus under-representation) of female athletes, and especially black females who featured in only 16 out of 3723 articles examined in *Sports Illustrated*, led the writers to conclude, “[B]ased on this publication’s selection of people to feature, sports are still viewed as primarily for males.”\(^\text{216}\)

Kane and Greendorfer take this theme further. They say the lack of coverage or absence of women from sports articles can easily result in the “symbolic annihilation” of the female athlete.

In short, the media reflect who and what has value and prestige in this culture. By their symbolic annihilation of the female athlete, the media tell us that sportswomen have little, if any, value in this

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\(^{214}\) Ibid.


\(^{216}\) Ibid, p.29.
society, particularly in relationship to male athletes.\textsuperscript{217}

Male athletes also dominate sports coverage on Swedish television. Koivula's study across three years found less than 10 per cent of coverage in sports news went to female athletes. She says this percentage of representation of sportswomen is out of parity with their national sports participation of 14 per cent. Compared with male national sports participation (22 per cent), sportsmen received three times as much television sports air time.\textsuperscript{218}

Olympic participation rates provided the comparative index for Urquhart and Crossman's longitudinal study of Winter Olympics coverage in Canada's \textit{The Globe and Mail}. The writers list two sets of comparison criteria: numbers of female and male athletes to coverage by gender, and numbers of Canadian female and male athletes to coverage for them. But the study does not report how Canadian athletes fared. Instead, it focuses on all Olympic competitors.\textsuperscript{219}

From 1924 to 1992, when 18 per cent of all Winter Olympic competitors were women, female athletes were represented at rates consistent with their participation. But the researchers concluded there was "gross disparity" of coverage in several Olympics. For example, in 1928 and 1936, women did not receive any coverage. Although figures are not provided, the study also found women received "extremely


If women are often hard to find in sports reports, those in team sports traditionally get even less coverage. Rintala and Birrell found females were vastly under-represented in team sports. Higgs and Weiller note the coverage of women’s team sports is important because “it helps break stereotypes of women holding ancillary positions by showing them in active leadership and decision-making roles”. 

The television time women’s team sports receive can infer they are less exciting (not as much action) or less worthy than men’s team sports. Hallmark and Armstrong reported variations in production methods affected the equitable coverage of NCAA championship basketball games. The women’s games were broadcast in a less interesting manner, for example, the use of full-screen graphics took the focus away from the action. But smaller, on-screen graphics in the men’s games conveyed additional information without leaving the “more exciting” action.

Total television broadcast time for the United States men’s basketball team at the 1992 Olympics was almost three times longer than that for the women’s team (4 hours and 47 minutes). NBC’s intense focus on the men’s “Dream Team” saw each of their six games broadcast in its entirety. The women’s games were shown for an average of 32 minutes each. Of the three hours devoted to volleyball, the U.S. women’s team received only 25 per cent of the coverage.

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221 Rintala and Birrell, p.243.
222 Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.2
223 Hallmark and Armstrong, 1999, pp.6-8.
224 Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.245.
One simple explanation for a lack of coverage of women who play team sports could be the number of team events staged for them. For example, only 29 team events were open to women at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

On American television, female athletes competing at the 1996 Games received almost as much air time as males. But less than half of this air time went to women’s team sports. More revealing is a direct comparison of basketball coverage, where both the U.S. men’s and women’s teams won gold medals. The men’s squad received nearly 2.5 times as much prime-time coverage as its female counterpart. At the 2000 Olympics, American television again devoted more air time to men’s team sports (56.3 per cent) than to women’s team sports (43.7 per cent), even though there was only a slight difference in the number of team events open to each gender.

The amount of overall air time devoted to women is only one gauge of their equitable treatment in sports. Neither how women were described, nor the visual images presented of them was examined in either of the above studies.

2.4.2 Pictures
When readers turn to the sports section of their newspaper, studies show they are more likely to see a picture of a male athlete. Women account for 40 per cent of participants in sport in regional and rural Australia yet they have been denied a matching photographic profile in their local press. Alston found women received up to 29 per cent of

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Note: According to IOC figures, there were 84 team events in Sydney with 52 per cent of these events open to women (when mixed team events are included).
pictures, less than half the number of photographs of men.\textsuperscript{227} 
Australian capital city dailies have also exhibited a male bias in their choice of sports pictures, publishing 12 times as many photographs of men’s sports than of women’s sports; and giving women only 7.5 per cent of all sports pictures.\textsuperscript{228}

The news is far better for women when they compete at international events. Pringle and Gordon’s study of newspaper coverage of the 1990 Commonwealth Games weighed athletes’ percentages of sports pictures against the percentage of Australian female and male competitors and the medals they won. The writers do not explain why, when their data included athletes of all Commonwealth nations, their equity index focused on Australian competitors only. The study found pictorial coverage for sportswomen (37.1 per cent) reflected the proportion of Australian women athletes at the Games (37.5 per cent), but lagged in coverage warranted by Australian female medal wins (45.1 per cent).\textsuperscript{229}

For every picture of a female athlete in British broadsheets, Flatten and Matheson reported male athletes received 17 pictures. In the tabloid press, pictures of male athletes outnumbered those of females by 12 to 1. In both cases the results for women failed to reflect increased sports participation rates for females in Britain, both at elite (Olympic) and recreational levels.\textsuperscript{230} U.K. press sports photographs in 1995-1996 also favoured males over females, giving men 79 per cent of the total area of photographs and women 21 per cent.\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{228} Menzies, 1989, pp.222-23.
\textsuperscript{229} Pringle and Gordon, 1995, p.6.
\textsuperscript{230} Flatten and Matheson, 2001, p.7.
\textsuperscript{231} George, Hartley, and Paris, 2001, p.96.
Photographs of males in U.S. newspapers and magazines outnumbered those of female athletes by 10 to 1 in 1979, and by 15 to 1 in 1980.\textsuperscript{232} Duncan et al observed similar disproportionate coverage in 1990, with male athletes getting 13 times as many newspaper pictures as women.\textsuperscript{233}

White men were heavily favoured (496 pictures) over white women (123 pictures) when Lumpkin and Williams examined sports photos of Olympic athletes in \textit{Sports Illustrated}. This was despite featured white females receiving an average of 3.1 pictures per article.\textsuperscript{234}

Mack’s study of \textit{Sports Illustrated}, over a longer time span, showed improved representation for black female athletes. When compared with the number of black female Olympic medallists, these women were slightly under-represented in pictures.\textsuperscript{235}

Compared with student enrolments, female athletes were under-represented in pictures published in U.S. university-sponsored newspapers. Wann et al found 36 per cent of photographs were of sportswomen, against the 49 per cent of students who were female. But in terms of the number of female varsity athletes (33 per cent), they were marginally over-represented in pictures.\textsuperscript{236}

Women got a slightly better show in pictures than in words in Eastman and Billings’ cross-media analysis of sports coverage. Eleven per cent of photographs and 11 per cent of articles on \textit{The New York Times} sports pages featured women. \textit{USA Today}’s coverage was marginally better. Women appeared in 19 per cent of its sports photographs and in

\textsuperscript{232} Bryant, 1980, p.39.
\textsuperscript{233} Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990, p.3.
\textsuperscript{234} Lumpkin and Williams, 1991, pp.24-28.
\textsuperscript{235} Mack, 2000, p.106.
\textsuperscript{236} Wann et al., 1998, pp.79-87.
14 per cent of all articles. Rather than take heart, the researchers saw a bias in using pictures to attract attention without consistently providing accompanying information about women's sports.\(^{237}\)

Shifflett and Revelle's content analysis of *NCAA News* also found seemingly encouraging news for women collegiate athletes. They received 49 pictures, just over half of the pictorial coverage for male athletes. But, when separated into years, the proportion of picture space for women fell to 12 per cent.\(^{238}\) Rintala and Birrell's content analysis of *Young Athlete* magazine, a publication the researchers chose for its potential to feature female athlete role models for young readers, found less than one-third of photographs depicted females.\(^{239}\)

Online media have been accused of marginalising women athletes in the same way as traditional sports media. Kachgal found male athletes dominated pictorial coverage on three leading U.S. sports Web sites. Compared with 140 pictures of men, women received just 22.\(^{240}\)

Media images have traditionally shown athletes competing in individual rather than team sports. This was again the case with U.S. newspaper coverage of men and women at the 2000 Olympics. Compared with the U.S. Olympic team's demographics (45 per cent females, and 55 per cent males), women received favourable pictorial coverage (48 per cent of images). Women's team sports, too, were well represented compared with male team sports. Women in team sports were more likely to appear in an Olympic photo than were men. This reflects, arguably, the greater number of team sports available to

\(^{237}\) Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.7.

\(^{238}\) Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.147.

\(^{239}\) Rintala and Birrell, 1984, p.231.

\(^{240}\) Tara M. Kachgal, "Home Court Disadvantage? Examining the Coverage of Female Athletes on Leading Sports Websites - A Pilot Study" (paper presented at the
women in Sydney, or the U.S. team medal count. U.S. women’s teams won more gold medals than did men’s teams during the Games.\textsuperscript{241}

2.4.3 Hyperlinks

When examining the media, researchers who use content analysis are attempting to produce “an objective, measurable, verifiable account of the manifest content of the media’s messages”.\textsuperscript{242} Spratt says the epistemological approach of objective measurement is generally associated with quantitative data collection and analysis.\textsuperscript{243} When examining print media, he advises paying attention to the special characteristics of the print medium. These include characteristics which can be measured as medium variables, such as typography and layout.\textsuperscript{244}

This study analyses a collection of data showing a set of relationships between variables at a particular time and in a particular place,\textsuperscript{245} so the content of the online “text” must be examined in a systematic way. To achieve this, a set of well defined content units has been constructed for analysis.

As McMillan notes, there are potential problems for users of content analysis in the dynamic communication environment of the Web. She says researchers applying content analysis to this new medium must consider carefully each of the primary research steps, including formulating research questions and/ or hypotheses.

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid, p.13.
For the first step, formulating the research questions and/or hypotheses, content analysis of the Web is both similar to and different from traditional media. Content analysis of traditional media, such as newspapers and broadcast, assumes some linearity or at least commonly accepted sequencing of messages. Hypertext, a defining characteristic of the Web, defies this assumption. Each individual may interact with content on a Web site in different ways. Furthermore, the Web is both ‘like’ and ‘unlike’ print and broadcast as it combines text, audio, still images, animation, and video. These unique characteristics of the medium may suggest unique research questions.246

Hyperlinks help online journalists tell their stories. They mesh with Berelson’s first purpose of content analysis, that is, describing the characteristics of communication by studying both the substance of the manifest content and its form.247 So including hyperlinks in my research questions is appropriate for an early study in an emerging medium.

This thesis asserts that the occurrence of hyperlinks within a particular level of the online report is one indicator of the variable “report prominence” which the study is attempting to measure. It will examine the frequency of hyperlinks in ABC News Online sports reports about Australian female and male athletes during the 2000 Olympics.

Journalism educators stress the differences and similarities in writing news reports for the Web and traditional media. On the air, time is more precious than space on the printed page. So ideas must be kept simple. Lanson and Fought say online reporters also think in short takes – a computer screenful. But they have all the space in the world

245 Ibid, p.17.
to link audiences to everything from related stories and original
documents to places where audiences can talk back.\textsuperscript{248}

Online journalism, like print, can offer more layers of a story through
side bars, graphics and fact boxes to audiences who may already know
the news but don’t fully understand its context or know its details.\textsuperscript{249}
But online journalism by definition is non-linear and interactive.
Stories online don’t have “beginnings and endings as much as they
have layers of depth”. They go beyond words to words, pictures,
graphics and sound working together.\textsuperscript{250}

De Wolk describes three basic levels for packaging a multimedia story.
Beginning with a brief summary that is more than a headline, the story
then opens up, and finally delivers an in-depth perspective.\textsuperscript{251}

Tier One is the immediate news hook to the story. It explains to the
audience that this is the story, through the headline, the type of
illustrations and the text. Tier One also gives the audience an
opportunity and incentive to go to Tier Two, which is accessed by a
link. In good storytelling, these tools (links) invite the audience to go
on.\textsuperscript{252}

Tier Two fully explores the story. The story’s words can be
supplemented with pictures, audio recordings of interviews or natural
sound, graphics and video. In Tier Three comes the in-depth version of
the story. It can be full text and sound from interviews, video to

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid, p.97.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, p.112.
\textsuperscript{251} Roland De Wolk, \textit{Introduction to Online Journalism: Publishing News and Information} (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), p.15.
download, a reader chatroom or message board and even online discussion with sources. Tier Three also establishes links that can take the audience away from the story and its parent publication. These links serve as an appendix for further explorations outside the disciplined framework of this particular multimedia story.\footnote{253}

One of the most powerful features of the Web is the ability to create hyperlinks between associated content. Links create a site (and page) environment and context, usability, and provide users with a conceptual map of the information space.\footnote{254} Little wonder the hyperlink has been called "one of the most elegant, powerful and far-reaching tools of mass communication since the telephone".\footnote{255} With video, sound, hypertext links and limitless bandwidth, online journalism has at hand the best devices of the novel, and the movie, and the radio, and the CD-ROM, and networked communications to tell stories.\footnote{256}

Why all the fuss over hyperlinks? The page layout of a newspaper conveys messages to its readers about the type of publication they have selected. For example, and as De Wolk points out, when people pick up the \textit{New York Times}, they know they are picking up news from a serious organisation. "The Times' publishers and editors want this message conveyed," he says, "and the readers understand it instantly from the paper's classic clean and spare lines."\footnote{257}

\footnote{252} Ibid.  
\footnote{253} Ibid, p.16.  
\footnote{255} De Wolk, 2001, p.28.  
\footnote{257} De Wolk, 2001, p.112.
When people go online, they also get visual information about what to expect. Texts on Web page design stress the importance of having a clear visual hierarchy because the human eye will naturally scout the page looking for a place to land.

Reading patterns differ for print and on-screen users. People scan newspapers from the bottom left diagonally while Web audiences scan the online page from top left to right.258 Just as newspapers use big headlines, usually on the upper right hand-side of the page to draw readers to the big story of the day, online audiences must also quickly see what are considered to be the most interesting and important stories on a Web page.

One of the storytelling or production tools for achieving a clear visual hierarchy on a Web page is the hyperlink.259 Depending on the publication’s design standards, hyperlinks may be text only, graphics only or a combination of the two.

Research shows electronic links that include words are far more effective than links that use only graphics. According to a cooperative study by Stanford University and the Poynter Institute, a news Web site’s first and best chance to engage the reader is through text. By tracking readers’ eye movements and matching them against the pages being read, researchers found visitors to news sites focused on text first, not photos or graphics.260

259 De Wolk, 2001, p.115.
More often than not, briefs or captions got the initial eye fixations when the first or splash page came up. Then the eyes came back to photos or graphics, sometimes after readers had clicked away to a full article before returning to the first page.\textsuperscript{261} And audiences are willing to click away. CNN and MSNBC are America's most-trafficked news sites, with each attracting more than nine million users each month. Up to 10 per cent of those users clicked on audio or video links.\textsuperscript{262}

Journalism educators are also examining the wider implications of multimedia publishing. After studying work practices at an online newspaper Keshvani concluded student journalists would need new skills. These included identifying quality interactive material such as image, audio and video bites to accompany copy. Instead of just writing news pieces to tight deadlines, Keshvani says students should be assigned to file "a full-length news piece complete with audio, visual grabs and with hyperlinks ... upon return to the newsroom".\textsuperscript{263}

Not all news sites on the Internet are equal. Pavlik says news content has been evolving through three stages. In Stage One, which still dominates most news sites, journalists mostly "repurpose" content from their mothership.

In Stage Two, which characterises the better news sites, journalists write original stories and augment them with additives such as hyperlinks, interactive features such as search engines, and a degree of


\textsuperscript{262} Martha Stone, \textit{Whole Media} (Netmediareporter, 2000), cited August 2 2000; available from www.net-media.co.uk/nmrepo...000/talk/online/stone/tsld004.htm, p.1.

customisation which gives audiences the ability to choose what categories of news and information they receive.

A characteristic of Stage Three is the willingness to experiment with “immersive” storytelling. Audiences can enter and navigate through a news report in different ways from just reading it. They can enter a live or recorded news event, or see a still or moving picture in three dimensions.²⁶⁴

The ABC News Online site appears to straddle the first and second stages of Pavlik’s model. Broadcast stories, with minimal changes including the addition of hyperlinks connecting to stories of greater depth, are “shovelled” onto the news site.

Why count hyperlinks? When they count article space in newspapers and magazines for female and male athletes, researchers focus on a unique tool of print journalism to help quantify the presence or absence of each gender in sports coverage. A similar rationale applies to counting air time in television sports reports.

When links appear in the second tier of an online news report they become more than mere navigation tools. Are the publishers simply showcasing their resources? Arguably a serious news organisation such as the ABC should not be susceptible to shallow displays of vanity. Are producers providing variety in storytelling as a ploy to sustain audience interest? Perhaps. But hyperlinks, like grabs in radio news, can also indicate a report’s producers see it either as important enough or so complex that it warrants more context or explanation.

Researchers have begun to apply content analysis to the Web, adapting this stable research technique to suit a dynamic communication environment.\textsuperscript{265} Kachgal’s content analysis of three leading sports Web sites (ESPN.com, CBS SportsLine.com and CNNSI.com) looked at coverage of female athletes in three sports. The unit of analysis was the Top Story on each sports page. Hypertext links, embedded in lead-in paragraphs, were used to access the leading news item’s continuation.\textsuperscript{266}

A review of 19, mainly descriptive content analyses of the World Wide Web found a common coding unit was “structural features” of the Web site (links, animation, video and sound).\textsuperscript{267} For example, Gibson and Ward included hyperlinks to other sites in their study of the Internet’s effect on political parties in the U.K.\textsuperscript{268} Li’s coding units for analysing Internet newspaper publishing included news links,\textsuperscript{269} while hot links were counted on Web sites in McMillan’s study of interactive media.\textsuperscript{270}

The above studies support the contention that hyperlinks should be considered a valid online medium variable. Thus, measuring the frequency of hyperlinks in the second tier of an online news report provides a coding unit for analysing the importance or prominence the publishers have given that report. Under the data category Hyperlinks,

\textsuperscript{265} McMillan, 2000, p.80.
\textsuperscript{266} Kachgal, 2001, p.177.
Note: Kachgal acknowledges the Web’s unique features such as non-linearity (a user can access information in a sequence she/he determines) and interactivity (a user can affect the output of information). Hyperlinks make these features possible yet Kachgal does not include them or other descriptive indicators, such as story length, in her exploratory study.
\textsuperscript{267} McMillan, 2000, pp.85-88.
this study will record the number of times level two hyperlinks appear with ABC News Online reports about female and male athletes.

2.4.4 Where Do We Find Sportswomen?

Hargreaves says sport constitutes the most male-dominated sector of the media.\textsuperscript{271} The average newspaper sports section, according to Townsend, relegates “perhaps a quarter of a page to women’s sports coverage”.\textsuperscript{272} As well as their invisibility, it has been argued that when women do get press coverage they are not integrated into mainstream sports news. Australian metropolitan and regional newspapers rarely give women’s stories the prime, back page location. Stories about sportswomen are often positioned on the inner pages of the sports section, and at the bottom of pages.\textsuperscript{273}

For sportswomen in America and Australia the front page is more often out of bounds than in. Duncan et al found stories on women’s sports comprised 3.2 per cent of page one articles, compared with 5.3 per cent devoted exclusively to men’s coverage.\textsuperscript{274} Hindson reported articles about male athletes appeared on the front page of The Australian 3.75 times more often than articles about female athletes during the 1984 Olympics. In the same newspaper in 1988, the gap closed to twice as many front page articles for males as females.\textsuperscript{275} In the NCAA News, stories about women were most often located in the body of the issue. They appeared infrequently in the prime (top) position on a page.\textsuperscript{276}

\textsuperscript{271} Hargreaves, 1986, p.151.
\textsuperscript{274} Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990, p.3.
\textsuperscript{276} Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.146.
Kachgal reported a similar trend in her study of online sports sites. The prime location online is the splash page, often called the Top Stories page, where reports are typically ranked horizontally in order of importance. Females were the subjects of far fewer Top Stories than were males on CBSSportsLine, CNNSI and ESPN. They accounted for 18 per cent of 284 articles about female and male athletes.  

Another way to marginalise female sports is to confine them to special women’s columns appearing in midweek editions. In the Newcastle Herald in 1990, female athletes were four times more likely to appear in the midweek editions of the newspaper than on Mondays (after the bulk of their sport was played) and Saturdays (in previews).

Women’s sports are also given less prominence than men’s events when they appear in combined reports. For example, it is common for outstanding female athletic achievements to follow major stories on male sports losses. British print media coverage of the finals of the 1989 Women’s World Snooker Championships placed it at the end of a report of the Rothman’s Grand Prix men’s snooker competition. During the Seoul Olympics The Times placed accounts of all female swimming competitions after those of the men.

In The Australian’s coverage of the 1984 and 1988 summer Olympics, males were first mentioned in two-thirds of combined gender articles (from a total of 110 articles in 1984, and 202 articles in 1988). Pringle and Gordon found a better deal for female athletes in West Australian newspaper coverage of the 1990 Commonwealth Games.

277 Kachgal, 2001, p.182.
281 Hindson, 1989, pp.63-64.
Male competitors were first referenced in 51.3 per cent of articles compared with 48.7 per cent for female competitors.\textsuperscript{282}

On British television, most sports viewing hours are filled by men's sports. Sometimes, for days at a time, no women's sports are televised. Hargreaves says the reverse is never the case. It is also men's sports that are shown at peak viewing times. Only during popular mixed competitions, such as the Commonwealth and the Olympic Games, are more female sports on television than at other times.\textsuperscript{283}

In the United States most women's sport is bundled into weekend television packages. Weekday coverage is improving but Duncan et al found just 3 per cent of 251 local news programmes featured a lead story about women's sports.\textsuperscript{284}

\subsection*{2.4.5 Coverage Indices}

Many content analyses are "reality checks in which the portrayal of a certain group ... is assessed against a standard taken from real life. The congruence of the media presentation and the actual situation is then discussed".\textsuperscript{285} It is the case with this study. However, one problem for researchers examining media sports reporting, and for those wishing to compare the results of these studies, is the lack of a universal index for fairness or equity in coverage.

To date scholars have evaluated gender equity in sports reporting against the real world of national, or institutional, or event participation rates, or combinations of these standards.\textsuperscript{286} Others prefer the context

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Pringle and Gordon, 1995, p.5.
\item Hargreaves, 1994, p.194.
\item Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, p.137.
\item See: Mack, 2000; and Hardin et al, 2002.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
of national recreation participation rates.\textsuperscript{287} Another gauge is the success of athletes against their event population by gender and nationality.\textsuperscript{288} Running parallel to this problem is Toohey's argument that, when using indices such as Olympic participation rates, researchers are sanctioning inequities in these areas.

In his content analysis of television news coverage, Dominick tabulated the amount of network news time devoted to various states in the U.S. To aid in interpretation of his figures, Dominick compared each state's news time with its population. He created an "attention index" to provide a listing of states that were either "over-covered" or "under-covered".\textsuperscript{289} In their replication of Dominick's study, Whitney et al added a more sophisticated "attention ratio".\textsuperscript{290}

This study's benchmark for comparing coverage by gender replicates Dominick's and Whitney et al's methods. Using a "representation index" and a "representation ratio", ABC News Online's coverage of Australian female and male athletes at the 2000 Olympics will be compared with the number of medals won by each gender and with the gender composition of the Australian team.\textsuperscript{291}

2.4.6 Gender-Appropriate Sports

The sex-appropriateness of particular sports has received considerable attention, for two reasons. Studies have shown sport involvement is considered either socially acceptable or unacceptable for females, based on how each sport conforms to traditional images of appropriate

\textsuperscript{287} See: Flatten and Matheson, 2001.
\textsuperscript{288} See: Toohey, 1997.
\textsuperscript{291} Further discussion of the "representation index" and "representation ratio" appears in Chapter 3.
female behaviour; and beliefs regarding the sex-typing of sports are likely to be reflected in the popular media’s portrayal (description) of female athletes.²⁹²

Sex-typing puts sports into three categories: male-appropriate (such as basketball, soccer, and football), female-appropriate (such as gymnastics, ice skating, and ballet), and neutral (such as golf, tennis, and volleyball). Male-appropriate sports emphasise physical strength (power), stamina and contact through active, aggressive and autonomous behaviour. Female-appropriate sports emphasise aesthetics and beauty but discourage physicality.²⁹³

The lines between categories are often blurred. In the above examples, tennis, volleyball and golf are called neutral sports. Daddario, on the other hand, says tennis and golf are feminine sports, along with gymnastics, ice skating and swimming.²⁹⁴

In the following discussion, even though sports tend to gender-hop there is a constant. The bulk of studies support the argument that sport has been a major site for reinforcing gender stereotypes: by restricting media coverage to appropriate female sports, and by portraying women athletes according to the sex-appropriateness of their sports.

From 1890 to 1990 in the *Newcastle Herald*, tennis, golf and swimming together, “long accepted as ‘women’s sports’ in Australia”, accounted for almost half of the sports coverage for women.²⁹⁵ In television coverage of the 1992 Olympics women were most featured

²⁹⁵ Brown, 1995, p.28.
in gymnastics and other female-appropriate, individual sports.\textsuperscript{296} Individual female competitors at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics were more likely to receive television attention if they competed in physically attractive sports (diving, swimming and gymnastics) rather than hard contact sports (judo) and sports involving explosive strength and physical power (discus).\textsuperscript{297}

Kinnick's study of 1996 Olympic athlete profiles in American newspapers found the most represented women's sports were swimming (15.6 per cent of all profiles), track and field (14.3 per cent), gymnastics and basketball (10.4 per cent each).\textsuperscript{298} Swimming and gymnastics have been identified as sex-appropriate sports for women.\textsuperscript{299} Track and field and basketball are not considered to be feminine sports. For men, Kinnick says "macho" sports were in favour and those most profiled were boxing, track and field, weightlifting and wrestling.\textsuperscript{300} In contrast, Vincent's comparison of how six newspapers from the U.S., Canada and Britain covered the Atlanta Games reported "a similar amount of coverage devoted to females competing in female-appropriate and female-inappropriate sports".\textsuperscript{301}

The difference in U.S. television's coverage of men and women at the 2000 Games was particularly noticeable in power sports. In rowing, U.S. women won two medals to the one for U.S. men, yet received less than one third as much coverage. NBC broadcast nearly 24 minutes of men's weightlifting, although no U.S. men gained a medal. By

\textsuperscript{296} Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.235.
\textsuperscript{297} Tuggle and Owen, 1999, p.5.
\textsuperscript{298} Kinnick, 1998, p.225.
\textsuperscript{299} Daddario, 1998, pp.11-12.
\textsuperscript{300} Kinnick, 1998, p.225.
\textsuperscript{301} John Vincent, Cross National Comparisons of Print Media Coverage of Female/Male Athletes in the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta 1996 (Georgia) (Dissertation Abstracts Online, 2000), cited May 8, 2002; available from http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org, p.2.
comparison, two U.S. women weightlifters won a gold and a bronze medal, but their success warranted no prime time coverage.\textsuperscript{302}

Hargreaves also notes the omission, from British television, of women who compete in inappropriate sports. Popular female-appropriate sports such as gymnastics and figure skating are highlighted and given approximately equal viewing time when compared with men’s events. Women who play traditional male sports such as cricket, football, rugby and snooker are seldom seen on television.\textsuperscript{303} In Sweden, women who compete in sports categorised as masculine receive less than one-fifth of the news time given to female sports.\textsuperscript{304}

As a result of beliefs about the sex-appropriateness of particular sports, Theberge says women who participate in male-appropriate sports must challenge traditional sex role stereotypes. They must combat the belief that their participation is less valuable than men’s involvement.\textsuperscript{305}

2.5 Respect
2.5.1 Appearance – “12-Car Pileup Gorgeous”
Studies show the media see appearance (and marriage and emotions) as relevant in descriptions of female athletes. Articles about female athletes inevitably focus more on their looks than on their accomplishments or abilities.\textsuperscript{306} The particular favourites of the media, according to Hargreaves, tend to be the conventionally pretty or more sexually attractive sportswomen.\textsuperscript{307}

\textsuperscript{302} Tuggle, Huffman, and Rosengard, 2002, p.372.
\textsuperscript{303} Hargreaves, 1994, pp.195-96.
\textsuperscript{304} Koivula, 1999, p.1.
\textsuperscript{305} Quoted in Jones, Murrell, and Jackson, 1999.
\textsuperscript{306} Bridge, 1994, p.22.
\textsuperscript{307} Hargreaves, 1986, p.152.
Both the Australian Sports Commission and Womensport Australia note that, in the years since women began competing in the modern Olympics, media coverage of sportswomen has ranged from initial disinterest, to derision, to desire.\textsuperscript{308} Pfister's study of German press coverage of the Olympics, from 1952 to 1980, found appearance was of central importance in stories about female athletes. In 54.8 per cent of women's sports reports appearance was mentioned, with the press praising blonde hair, a model's waist and long legs. Female athletes who did not live up to ideals of beauty were publicly criticised and even accused of "lacking in radiance and feminine charm".\textsuperscript{309}

Exactly half of the newspaper articles on female athletes at the 1996 Olympics commented on appearance. Kinnick did not find any bias though, since more than half of the male athlete profiles also mentioned their appearance. She reported male athletes received more uncomplimentary remarks about their appearance than female athletes. But stories were four times more likely to mention the "good looks", "cuteness" or "beauty" of female athletes than they were likely to mention the general good looks of male athletes.\textsuperscript{310}

Jones et al examined coverage of the gold medal winning performances of U.S women's teams in the 1996 and 1998 Olympics. Their content analysis of gender-appropriate sports found a heavy load of stereotypical female comments. Females in male sports were "powerful". They were depicted using frequent male-to-female comparisons and comments that had little to do with sport or the athlete's performance. Coverage of female athletes in female sports

\textsuperscript{309} Pfister, 1987, p.11.29.
focused on performance but reinforced stereotypes of “pretty” females.\textsuperscript{311}

Eastman and Billings could find no instances of men being compared with women in television sports commentary in their 1998 study. Yet women’s tennis star Venus Williams was praised by being compared with Pete Sampras, as if Sampras (as a male) was the model athlete.\textsuperscript{312}

An interpretive analysis of U.S. magazine articles compared the narrative images of male and female athletes in the same or similar sports – in this case, tennis. Hilliard found comments trivialised women’s athletic performance, and pointedly evaluated them in terms of traditional standards of feminine beauty (appearance mattered), or according to their age. There were no analogues in the articles on the men.\textsuperscript{313}

Similarly, Eastman and Billings found sportscasters often focused on the age of women athletes but rarely described men by age.\textsuperscript{314} Phillips also reported women were frequently portrayed as girls, no matter what their age.\textsuperscript{315}

Bryant’s 1980 study concluded newspapers and popular sports magazines used sexist commentary by referring to women’s revenue-producing ability, and their hair or eye colour, or by comparing them with male athletes, or by using female stereotypes. Examples included

\textsuperscript{311} Jones, Murrell, and Jackson, 1999, pp.1-8.
\textsuperscript{312} Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.9.
\textsuperscript{313} Dan C Hilliard, “Media Images of Male and Female Professional Athletes: An Interpretive Analysis of Magazine Articles”, \textit{Sociology of Sport Journal}, 1, no. 3 (1984), pp.253-60.
\textsuperscript{314} Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.8.
\textsuperscript{315} Phillips, 1996, p.2.
“golf’s first pin up”, and “the sex appeal of Palmer, the charisma of Trevino”.316

Eleven years later, Lumpkin and Williams reported *Sports Illustrated* (reviewed by Bryant) still characterised females in blatantly sexist terms. There were prevalent references in articles, written by males, to women’s body dimensions and attractiveness.

Women were “luscious”, or had a “beautiful face with a beautiful body”, or were “12-car pileup gorgeous”. In contrast, body references for males seldom referred to anything other than good looks or well-developed physiques. Males were most often described as having “all-American features”, “a magnificent physique”, and “a well-proportioned body”.317

### 2.5.2 Relationships

The media also tend to define female athletes by their relationships. A loaded tactic is to refer to their dating habits,318 or their marital or family status, for example “is also a wife” and “heavy with child”.319 Kinnick says marital status was revealed for 35 per cent of female and 20 per cent of male athletes profiled in newspapers. In contrast, parental status was mentioned more frequently for male athletes. Female athletes were much more likely to be characterised as struggling to balance career and family.320

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316 Bryant, 1980, pp.32-34.
318 Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.9.
319 Bryant, 1980, pp.32-34.
2.5.3 Emotions

British and Australian media often describe women athletes in ways that stress emotional weakness, such as "dissolving into tears".\textsuperscript{321} But when men confront stressful situations, they are applauded for their toughness.\textsuperscript{322} Kinnick found U.S. newspaper profiles of Olympic athletes were more likely to comment on females' emotions (57.1 per cent) than males' emotions (52.7 per cent).

Hilliard's study of magazine articles about tennis players reported "disturbing" major themes. Reporters emphasised women's character flaws, such as emotional vulnerability, as a critical part of their performance. Men were flawed too, but with the masculine traits of independence and self-reliance. Hilliard says such character portrayals reinforce the notion that professional sport is a male preserve.\textsuperscript{323}

These media portrayals of women athletes are also ambivalent - a term used to explain how descriptions contain mixed or contradictory messages. As noted, while female athletes are seen as powerful, skilful and courageous, they are also characterised as vulnerable ("little" or "waif-like"),\textsuperscript{324} cute, dependent and anxious. Only females are subjected to these conflicting, contradictory and demeaning messages about their physical abilities and accomplishments as serious sportswomen.\textsuperscript{325}

So when the media describe female athletes, they often portray them as feminised and sexualised "others". Kane and Greendorfer argue sportswomen are painted not only as other than but also less than their male counterparts, and their athletic achievements are trivialised, and

\textsuperscript{322} Phillips, 1996, p.2.
\textsuperscript{323} Hilliard, 1984, pp.253-60.
\textsuperscript{324} Mikosza, 1997, p.8.
\textsuperscript{325} Kane and Greendorfer, 1994, pp.38-39.
thus undermined. This type of media portrayal constructs female athleticism as less important than male athleticism.\textsuperscript{326}

\textbf{2.5.4 Successes and Failures}

Media explanations for success or failure can also contain bias, when they highlight women’s failures and men’s achievements. Eastman and Billings found American sports broadcasts treated women and men athletes differently. When men failed, commentators more often attributed it to a lack of athletic skill. When women failed, more often it was attributed to a lack of commitment. Men were clearly placed above women through comparisons to Superman and Jesus Christ, and comments such as “He is THE MAN”.\textsuperscript{327}

\textbf{2.6 Linguistic Sexism – Our Girl Jan, Can \textit{She} Play Women’s Golf?}

Another way to set women’s sport and sportswomen apart from the normal and present them as anomalies is through linguistic sexism. Here, language devalues members of one gender, usually through defining women as secondary citizens or ignoring them. In sports coverage, linguistic sexism includes gender marking, hierarchical naming practices and martial metaphors.\textsuperscript{328}

\textbf{2.6.1 Gender Marking}

One-way or asymmetrical gender marking marginalises women athletes. Their contests are labelled as “women’s events” (inferior). Men’s events are simply athletic events (the universal or norm). In television coverage of NCAA basketball games, men’s games were called the “national championship”. The women’s contest was called

\textsuperscript{326} Ibid, pp.28-31.
\textsuperscript{327} Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.8.
\textsuperscript{328} Kinnick, 1998, p.218.
the “women’s national championship”\textsuperscript{329} Sports news on Swedish television gender marked sports with women participants to a higher degree than sports with men\textsuperscript{330}.

### 2.6.2 Hierarchical Naming – First Names and Infantilisation

Such practices also imply a lower status for women than men. It has been suggested “dominants” are more often referred to formally by their last names, and “subordinates” are referred to more informally by their first names.

American television commentary has used, exclusively, only last names for white, male tennis players; suggesting they are not only privileged over women but also over men of colour. The same programmes used first names for women seven times more often than for black men\textsuperscript{331}. Koivula found Swedish television sports news referred to women athletes by their first names about four times as often as men. Men were referred to by their last names almost twice as often as women\textsuperscript{332}.

Maturity infers social status. Women are infantilised when they are called “girl”, “young lady” or “young woman”\textsuperscript{333} but men are given adult status when referred to as “man”, “old fellow” or “old man”\textsuperscript{334}.

### 2.6.3 Martial Metaphors

Often the imagery of war is applied to sport. Scholars argue sport-war metaphors valourise strength and aggression, and these characteristics


\textsuperscript{330} Koivula, 1999, p.8.

\textsuperscript{331} Duncan et al., 1990, p.7.

\textsuperscript{332} Koivula, 1999, p.9.


\textsuperscript{334} Koivula, 1999, p.9.
are inconsistent with femininity. Because war is masculine activity, martial metaphors are used more frequently to describe men’s sports.335

Duncan et al found twice as many martial metaphors were used for men’s tennis and three times as many for men’s basketball than women’s. For example, instead of one who “attacks” the hoop, a female would “go to” the hoop. Where men “misfire”, women simply “miss”.

Verbal attributions of strength and weakness for men and women athletes also contrasted sharply. Where a man’s play was “aggressive”, a woman’s was “active”. Men “crash through” the defence, women “move against” it. In tennis, the ratio of strength to weakness descriptors was 6 to 1 for men players, and 2 to 1 for women.336

2.7 Playing with Images of Female Athletes

Still photographs, graphics and video clips, the tools of the traditional media, are also in the kit of online media. Rowe notes the epic moments of sport are most memorably captured by still photography, but sports photographs are not innocent, objective or neutral records of events. Far from it. Photographs, like texts, can serve to under­represent and misrepresent sport subjects but they are arguably more potent than texts because of their readability and impact.337 The number of photos (discussed in section 2.4.2), camera angles and activity of photograph subjects are ways that photos can frame gender.338

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336 Duncan et al., 1990, p.3.
337 Rowe, 1999, p.120.
338 Hardin et al., 2002, p.66.
Rowe says the most important object in sports photography is sport's prime instrument, the human body. The powerful, imaged bodies of sportspeople are not islands. They are connected to wider social issues and identities. "Hence the body in sports photography is always invested with a wider representational role as sexualized, gendered, racialized, and so on."  

Sports photos then are as much interpretations of reality as any other visual medium. Through artificial processes such as selection, composition and manipulation (by cropping, air brushing, reducing, enlarging and retouching) sports photos offer up an account of how the world is (or how the photographer or editor thinks it should be).

In a similar vein, Duncan says photographic images tell stories. They are so much a part of our daily lives we rarely think about how they influence us, or what the influence is. But Duncan says photographs, like other mass media images, are politically motivated. Hegemonic groups use the naturalness of photographs to legitimate their own interests, so photos serve to shape consensus or consent to existing social arrangements. Duncan says their message gets passed off as objective and unmotivated at the same time as it serves some interests more than others.

One way photographs can convey meaning is through what is in them. Duncan analysed 186 pictures of Olympic athletes. Her interpretive analysis found the content or discourse of the photographs suggested

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339 Rowe, 1999, pp.120-21.
341 Rowe, 1999, p.120.
sexual difference in a variety of ways. There was an excessive focus on:

(a) women’s physical appearance – the most glamorous female athletes were pictured most often;
(b) poses with sexual connotations – showing “forbidden” sights and resembling soft-core pornography;
(c) emotional displays – where pictures of tearful female athletes outnumbered males by 12 to 1; and
(d) photographic angles or groupings implying a subordinate position – such as pictures of women taken from below eye-level, and pictures of active males juxtaposed with those of passive females.

Kinnick found little evidence of bias in newspaper pictures of Olympic athletes. Females were more likely to be depicted engaging in sport than males (58.4 per cent of images vs. 52.7 per cent), and slightly less likely to be depicted in passive positions. However, other research on sports photography has shown it is heavily gender biased. Male athletes were favoured (pictured more often) and women’s sports were separated from men’s sports. Sexual difference was perpetuated through portrayals of women as passive participants in sports considered “feminine”.

Studies also report heavy domination of sports pages by male action shots through to the publication of action shots of male athletes.

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343 Methodologies such as rhetorical or interpretive analysis lend themselves to critical analysis of “the most biased passages and images” (Kinnick, 1998, p.234). Duncan intentionally selected images that suggested sexual difference; photos that did not suggest bias were not analysed.
346 See: Eastman and Billings, 2000; and Alston, 1996.
347 Duncan, 1990.
348 Hardin et al., 2002, p.66.
349 Bridge, 1994, p.22.
only.\textsuperscript{350} Lumpkin and Williams found the most frequently pictured females in \textit{Sports Illustrated} were in sex-appropriate sports (ice skating and gymnastics), accentuating the traditional definition of femininity.\textsuperscript{351} Shifflett and Revelle found women were depreciated through the use of stereotyped images of them hugging tearfully after a victory.\textsuperscript{352}

Sportswomen in posed or inactive portraits, relationship shots, and display photos or fashion spreads are frequently reported.\textsuperscript{353} George et al, for example, found only 22 per cent of 127 male sports photographs in U.K. newspapers showed passive depictions, against 21 out of 44 female sports photographs.\textsuperscript{354} In West Australian newspaper coverage of the Commonwealth Games, passive depictions of females (72.3 per cent) outnumbered passive images of males (56.7 per cent). Males were 1.5 times as likely as females to be shown in action shots.\textsuperscript{355}

Such photographic portrayals result in a type of coverage Kane and Greendorfer call "caricaturized femininity".\textsuperscript{356} And this emphasis on the otherness of women in sports photography may, Duncan warns, legitimate patriarchal relations:

\begin{quote}

The issue, at bottom, is one of power. \textit{Focusing on female difference is a political strategy that places women in a position of weakness}. Sport photographs that emphasize the otherness of women enable patriarchal ends.\textsuperscript{357}

\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{350} Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.147; and Alston, 1996, p.18.
\textsuperscript{351} Lumpkin and Williams, 1991, p.28.
\textsuperscript{352} Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.147.
\textsuperscript{355} Pringle and Gordon, 1995, p.5.
\textsuperscript{356} Kane and Greendorfer, 1994, pp.36-37.
\textsuperscript{357} Duncan, 1990, p.40.
Not everyone agrees sportswomen get a raw deal in the media. The gulf between perceptions of the messages conveyed by sports photographs can be seen in the fall-out over a nude pose by U.S. champion swimmer, Jenny Thompson, in *Sports Illustrated*.

The Women's Sports Foundation and others complained about the five-time Olympic gold medallist taking off her clothes. The Thompson picture, they said, sent young girls a message that, "Women achieve empowerment through sexuality."358

The magazine's Rick Reilly was dumbfounded, but soon recovered.

Reilly did not see sex in the topless, hands-covering-breasts picture. Instead, he saw, "a nice pair of massive, firm, perfectly shaped, killer thighs that could crush anvils. Calves sharp enough to slice tomato. Biceps that ought to be on a box of baking soda."359

No bad messages here for Reilly – rather a picture that tells him about the kind of dedication it takes to be an Olympian. To Reilly the Thompson picture, and those of other women athletes who have posed in the nude for sports magazines and calendars, sends young girls a "terrific" message, "Fit is sexy. Muscles are sexy. Sport is sexy. Give it a try sometime."360

Not all those who try it and do it very well, at elite level, are seen in the nude sports spreads. Absent are the women who excel in the male-appropriate sports of explosive power and physical strength. Where are January's shot putter, May's discus thrower, and July's weightlifter? Certainly not in the 1995 and 1996 *Golden Girls of Sport* calendars

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358 Rick Reilly, "Bare in Mind", *Sports Illustrated*, April 9 2000, p.112.
359 Ibid.
360 Ibid.
published, according to their supporters, to raise the profile of women's sport in Australia. You will not find a "Big May" clutching her discus in either calendar because large sportswomen do not fit the image of the ideal female athlete.

The golden girls are toned, strong and lean. Their long hair, cosmetics, skimpy costumes and passive posing signify femininity. 361 Mikosza and Phillips say the presentation of these women in the calendars ensures the focus is on their femininity, not their athletic ability. Those visible are white, heterosexual, young and able-bodied women who possess very specific body types. They are athletic, lean and small framed. This is the ideal female athlete 362 whose soft porn image, associating femininity with passivity, serves to reinforce sexualised hegemonic power relations.

2.8 What Causes Bias?
Several explanations have been advanced for the under-representation of women's sports in the media. They include society's views about appropriate female behaviour, and male domination of sports culture at every level 363 which gives men's sports longer histories and traditions to write and talk about. 364

Others are market forces such as how much money is tied up in team ownership, sponsorship, advertising and telecast rights, 365 and

362 Ibid, p.11.
365 As discussed in Chapter 1 (1.4), in Australia advertisers spend $210 million a year on TV sport advertising. But the estimate may be conservative. McGuire says it could be as high as $400 million, equating to about 15 per cent of the total advertising market. The Seven network's advertising revenue from the Sydney Olympics has been put at about $100 million (2002, p.4).
presumed audience disinterest in women’s sports.\textsuperscript{366} Also cited is
domination of the journalism profession, especially sports journalism,
by men,\textsuperscript{367} and newsroom cultures or practices favouring men’s sports
(including reliance on wire service copy which traditionally focuses on
men’s sports).\textsuperscript{368}

\subsection*{2.8.1 Women Sports Journalists – A Rare Commodity}

Some, including former sportswriter and now journalism educator
Bruce Garrison, say sports reporting in the United States has been
forced to mature and has come a long way. The days of blatant
cheerleading of local teams and fawning over sports events, as
stingingly documented by Surface, may be gone.\textsuperscript{369} In 1987 Garrison
observed an increased professionalism. The signs included
participation in sports reporting by women, both in print and on the air;
increased sports newsmaking by women; and reduction of bias against
coverage of women’s sports.\textsuperscript{370}

The view from the sidelines is a little different. \textit{Sports Illustrated}
journalist Sally Jenkins says, “Sports remain a bunch of boys
observing what a bunch of boys do together.”\textsuperscript{371}

When Claire Smith left the U.S. national baseball beat in 1998, after 17
years covering major-league games, her departure brought “the number
of women holding that job to zero”. Smith notes, though, that women

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{366} Theberge and Cronk, 1986, p.291. \\
\textsuperscript{367} Ibid, p.290. \\
\textsuperscript{368} Mark Douglas Lowes, \textit{Inside the Sports Pages: Work Routines, Professional
Ideologies, and the Manufacture of Sports News} (Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 1999), pp.33-47. \\
\textsuperscript{369} Bill Surface, “The Shame of the Sports Beat”, \textit{Columbia Journalism Review},
Jan-Feb (1972), p.49. \\
\textsuperscript{370} Bruce Garrison, "The Evolution of Professionalism in Sports Reporting" (paper
presented at The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media: Past, Present and Future
Issues, Calgary, February 1987), pp.3.23-24. \\
\textsuperscript{371} Judith A Cramer, "Conversations with Women Sports Journalists", in \textit{Women,
Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values}, ed. Pamela J Creedon (Thousand
\end{flushleft}
in increasing numbers are covering Olympic sports, college athletics, tennis and basketball. And each year in the U.S. hundreds attend the national convention of the Association for Women in Sports Media, founded in 1987.\textsuperscript{372}

Spanish sports journalist Natalia Arriaga, writing in \textit{Olympic Review}, maintains the typical sports journalist is a man. “Just pay a visit to the press stand at any international competition and you will readily understand that women do not play anything near the same role as men in sport journalism,” she says.\textsuperscript{373}

A rosy overview for women sports journalists does not fit with contemporary research. Myers found female sportswriters made up only 10 per cent of all sportswriters at 60 of America’s largest daily newspapers. Not only did these women feel they were a minority in their profession, they said women’s sports coverage was very poor.\textsuperscript{374} And in 1994, Bridge wrote that newspaper sports sections were still bastions of maleness – in bylines, quotes, references and photos.\textsuperscript{375}

Salwen and Garrison’s survey of U.S. sports journalists found they were overwhelmingly white (92 per cent) and male (94 per cent), not much different from 10 years earlier when only 2 per cent were females.\textsuperscript{376} And similar to the former Federal Republic of Germany where, in 1984, only 3.6 per cent of sports journalists were female.\textsuperscript{377}

\textsuperscript{375} Bridge, 1994, p.22.
\textsuperscript{377} Pfister, 1987, p.11.32.
Sport is the biggest single specialty in mainstream Australian journalism, employing more than 10 per cent of journalists. Henningham’s national survey did not count those sports journalists who work for specialist publications in print, radio and television, but it confirms sports journalism here is essentially a Caucasian male domain. Only 11 per cent of sports journalists are women. In mainstream journalism, women account for one-third of journalists.378

Of the media examined in regional and rural Australia, where print and broadcast coverage shows overt bias against women’s sports, none employed female sports reporters, or journalists who specialised in women’s sports.379 Alston notes a 1991 report on equity for Australian women in sport, which concludes, “Media operators and journalists, most of whom are men, determine not ‘what the people want’ but ‘what the people get’.”380

2.8.2 Newsroom Practices – Rounds
Cramer says institutional factors have led to under-representation of women in American sports reportage. One of these is the beat system (called rounds in Australia) where reporters are assigned to topical and geographical areas where news is most likely to happen. This makes it more difficult for women athletes and women’s sports to obtain coverage, because “sports media organizations traditionally have determined that women’s sports are an area where news is least likely to be made”.381

The MEAA, the union representing Australia’s journalists, says women journalists are still pigeon-holed in traditionally female areas such as women’s issues and fashion. These areas are invariably seen as less important in the organisation in comparison to the “highly valued” rounds of politics and sport.\(^{382}\) Cann and Mohr’s study of Australian television news also found female journalists were shut out of reporting of higher-ranked subjects such as politics and male sport.\(^{383}\)

More than half of the Australian female sports journalists surveyed by Baird agreed their sports assignments were based on (or because of) their sex. Although they believed women were beginning to infiltrate male-dominated sports, most of the respondents were assigned to women’s sports rounds.\(^{384}\)

### 2.8.3 Newsroom Practices – News Values

Another observation says the limited coverage of female sports is not attributable solely to bias. Theberge and Cronk assert newsroom work routines read women out of the news by defining sports news as news about men’s sports.\(^{385}\)

Cramer agrees. She says sports reporters, editors and directors base news value decisions on their perceived audience and that audience’s presumed interests. In America and Australia, as noted, sports reporters, editors and directors by and large are white men.


they are most comfortable ... then they project those values onto their audience. Women's sports coverage, as a result, is badly neglected.386

2.9 The ABC's Service Obligations

Australia's national public broadcaster is funded by and accountable to Federal Parliament. Under the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act, 1983, the ABC has particular responsibilities, for example the provision of an independent news service.

The Act also guarantees the Corporation's editorial independence and, therefore, its assumed freedom from commercial imperatives. Specifically, section 2.4.3 of the ABC's Charter recognises the organisation's distinctive place in Australia's broadcasting system because of its unique responsibilities; its range of services; its funding by the taxpayers of Australia, and the exclusion of advertising and sponsorship; and its national coverage.387

Through its radio, television and online services the ABC is one of the major publishers in Australia of news, information and entertainment. The ABC Code of Practice sets out general principles for programme content, stressing context as the guiding principle.

The following is a summary of sections from the Act, Code of Practice and Editorial Policies which are relevant to this study.

1. Specific guidelines for the presentation of news, current affairs and information programmes include the goals of accurate, impartial,

and objective journalism. The pursuit of impartiality, for example, should not mean merely an endorsement of the status quo.  

2. It is not intended to ban certain types of language or images or exclude such references from legitimate reportage.  

3. Balance will be sought through the presentation as far as possible of principal relevant viewpoints on matters of importance. This requirement may not always be reached within a single programme or news bulletin, but will be achieved within a reasonable period.  

4. Impartiality does not require editorial staff to be unquestioning, or the Corporation to give all sides of an issue the same amount of time. News values and news judgements will prevail in reaching decisions, consistent with these standards.  

5. In serving the public’s right to know, editorial staff will be enterprising in perceiving, pursuing and presenting issues which affect society and the individual.  

6. Authority for editorial directions and decisions will be vested in editorial staff.  

7. Editorial staff will ensure that coverage of newsworthy activity within the Australian community is comprehensive and non-discriminatory.  

8. The ABC is committed to providing programmes of great diversity which reflect a wide range of audiences’ interests, beliefs and perspectives.  

Section 9.4 of the ABC’s Editorial Policies refers to discrimination and stereotypes, and the Corporation’s recognition of the importance of television, radio and online services as sources of ideas and information that reflect and influence community values. It says:  

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9.4.1 The ABC has a responsibility to treat all sections of society with respect and to avoid the use of prejudicial language and images. For example: ABC programs should not include language or images that are likely to encourage denigration or discrimination against any person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, disability or illness, social or occupational status, sexual preference or the holding of any religious, cultural or political belief. The use of language and images that perpetuate myths or reinforce stereotypes based on any of the above groups should be avoided ...

Programs should not make demeaning or gratuitous references to, for example, people's physical characteristics, cultural practices or religious beliefs ...

The ABC recognises that women are still under-represented in many respects. Program makers should ensure that there are opportunities for viewpoints to be presented by women. Program makers should not use language and images which convey outdated and often discriminatory assumptions about the social and domestic roles of men and women. For example, irrelevant references to women's physical appearance, age, marital status or maternity can be offensive and should not be made.

9.4.2 These requirements are not intended to prevent the broadcast of material which is factual or the expression of genuinely-held opinion in a news or current affairs program or presented in the legitimate context of a humorous, satirical or dramatic work.391

2.10 Conclusion

When we look to pre- and post-1996 media coverage of sportswomen, in the main the body of empirical evidence supports Kane's criticism that female athletes and their sports are grossly under-represented in the sports media. An overview of literature reveals female athletes remain second-class citizens who are trivialised, sexualised and demeaned in one of the most powerful institutions in western culture.

391 Ibid, p.23.
Table 2.1 (Appendix A) demonstrates the gulf between women and men athletes' profiles in the traditional and new media. Although research methods and media vary, all results are reported as percentage of coverage. For this reason, as Flatten and Matheson warn, caution is needed in interpreting the table.\textsuperscript{392}

Also, no standards were adopted for research in this area. In print studies, for example, sometimes the data were reported as percentages of the number of articles. At other times, the data were reported as percentages of space. Thus, five per cent in one study may not be equivalent to five per cent in another study.

2.11 Summary and Preview
As the preceding literature demonstrates, the mass media play a prominent role in reinforcing so-called natural gender differences. This has been achieved in a number of ways, by: excluding women from coverage; giving very little coverage to female athletes and their sports; covering more frequently those events that reinforce stereotypical feminine images of female athletes; and minimising women's achievements through sports commentaries.

So, as Elueze and Jones note, the problem for sportswomen is more than one of simple numerical under-representation in sports coverage. When female athletes do receive media coverage, it is often presented in a manner that trivialises their performances, and creates and reaffirms patriarchal ideologies, and promotes the perpetuation of masculine hegemony.\textsuperscript{393} Or, as Sage asserts:

\begin{quote}
Because the media are effective and powerful organisations for promoting hegemonic ideology
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{392} Flatten and Matheson, 1996, p.72.
\textsuperscript{393} Elueze and Jones, 1998, p.48.
media sport is also an arena for the advancement and reproduction of dominant interests.\textsuperscript{394}

This chapter has revealed the dearth of knowledge about how sportswomen are treated in both new media and by Australia's public broadcaster. It has argued for the inclusion of an online specific characteristic, the hyperlink, as a medium variable in content analysis of ABC \textit{News Online}'s coverage of the 2000 Games. Also discussed were standards for assessing equity or fairness in sports media coverage.

Chapter 3 explains how the methodology for this research evaluates ABC \textit{News Online}'s performance in terms of gender portrayal in its Olympic sports coverage. It explains research procedures, the chosen indices for coverage equity, and how \textit{News Online}'s performance will be measured through quantitative methods.

\textsuperscript{394} Sage, 1998, p.186.
CHAPTER 3 MATERIALS and METHODS

Is the computer culture immune to traditional gender-socialization messages that are reinforced by every other form of media? The academic research to date suggests not. 'In many ways, the online world ... has its own culture, morals and expectations, but in just as many ways it replicates the biases, contradictions and prejudices of our society.'395

3.1 Introduction

The evidence presented in Chapter 2 shows new media are not yet significant sites for studies of Olympic sports coverage and gender representation. Consequently this study enters new territory by focusing on the Web. Also, relatively few studies of traditional media have addressed gender bias in Olympic sports reporting, and there has been little research on the treatment of female athletes by Australia’s national public broadcaster.

This chapter outlines the methods employed to investigate gender representation in ABC News Online's coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games.

3.2 The Present Research and Precedents

To a certain extent, the empirical work of several scholars has close ties with the present study. Noting the importance of the mass media as a socialising agent, Rintala and Birrell examined the availability of female role models in magazine images presented to young readers, and also compared coverage with sports participation figures.396 The researchers counted articles, according to the gender of the author, but did not report what percentage of articles was devoted to female and male athletes. They chose

Young Athlete, a leading American sports magazine with a target audience of 12 to 24 year-olds. A quite similar agegroup (15 to 34 year-olds) has been identified as ABC Online’s audience.397

Eastman and Billings conducted their cross-media analysis of sports coverage in the United States in a non-Olympic period. They looked beyond gross counts of coverage to examine how sportswomen were described. The sampled media have national and international audiences and thus provide important models for local sports journalists.398 A similar rationale underpins this study’s sampling of sports coverage on Australia’s national public broadcaster.

Content analyses of Australian media (for example, by Alston,399 Phillips400 and Mikosza401) have been conducted against a background of marked differences in national sports participation rates for females and males. Alston included ABC radio and television broadcasts in her study of regional and rural media during a non-Olympic period.402

ABC metropolitan radio and television sports reports were examined in Phillips’ 1996 cross-media study but he too avoided the Olympic Games.403 His findings, and those of earlier Australian Sports Commission-sponsored studies, have prompted the Commission to call for improved media coverage of sportswomen.

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396 Rintala and Birrell, 1984.
397 See Chapter 1, section 1.9.3.
399 Alston, 1996.
402 Alston, 1996.
Mikosza examined press coverage only during the 1996 Olympics and again in 1997. At the time of writing, Womensport Australia announced it had commissioned a survey of media coverage of women’s sport in the period leading up to, during and after the 2000 Olympics. It said the 2000 survey would allow comparisons to be made with the results of other surveys (sponsored by the Australian Sports Commission) since 1980. There is, however, no indication that this new study will include online media.

Other research has investigated the sports media as sites of gender exclusion and reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Kinnick studied feature articles about Olympic athletes in U.S. newspapers and found no gender bias in the quantity of coverage devoted to women. Her study has limitations since it was based on the number of stories (irrespective of their length) rather than percentages of total space or words about female athletes.

The ABC was one of the first traditional media organisations in Australia to move into the new space of the Web. Sports media research has paid scant attention to the performance of our national publicly funded, free-to-air broadcaster in its old stomping ground. Less is known about its message content and message handling in cyberspace. Little research has focused on gender in media coverage of the Olympic Games. No known published research has examined online coverage of the 2000 Olympics.

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This study expands on previous research by examining the profile of Australian female and male athletes in Olympic sports coverage on the ABC’s Web site. In doing so it provides a model for further research, into: (a) gender representation in online sports media, and (b) News Online’s compliance with ABC editorial policies.

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Sample Size and Sampling Plan

Previous research outcomes and the ABC’s legislated obligations guided the formulation of original hypotheses and research questions for this content analysis. The research questions were narrowed according to the context of social learning theory.

Sample size was determined by a unique goal of the study – to investigate how Australian female and male athletes only were represented on the sports site during Olympic competition – and by its definition of sports reports.

Sports reports are those reports whose topics or themes are contests, achievements, or issues affecting individual Australian Olympic athletes or teams. The study excluded reports about the opening (on September 15) and closing (on October 1) ceremonies and focused on Olympic sports reports about Australian athletes only. That is, unless a particular Australian athlete or team was mentioned, they did not include reports about economic, political or social conditions affecting sport; or reports about coaches, venues, athlete payments or sponsorships and sports administration; or reports about performance enhancing drugs, drug-testing procedures and outcomes.

The requirement for rigour in drawing a sample provided a challenge in the dynamic environment of the Web. The ABC news site has a high rotation of bulletins. As with broadcast news, bulletins evolve during
the day. Rather than posting bulletins at hourly intervals, News Online’s 24-hour service produces about 10 bulletins per day with “a few hundred story updates” to the Web site throughout the day.407

Research on ABC site accesses revealed optimum viewing times and a schedule for Olympic events was also consulted. As noted in Chapter 1, News Online’s editor says there is a pattern of visits to the site, with peaks of activity around 4.30pm and 9pm. So, News Online staff are obviously aware of times when the site has, potentially, its biggest news audience. Also, early bulletins often carry over sports news reported the previous day, while later bulletins are progressively composed of more of that day’s top reports. Starting times varied across the Games. Depending on the sport, competition could last for several hours before there was a result (and a report filed).

An original sampling plan was then devised with the aim of assuring that each unit had the same chance of being represented in the collection of sampling units. Consequently, each day from September 13 to October 2, 2000 one bulletin was selected from between 2pm and 10pm.

No amount of planning could overcome the problem of an all-day power failure on September 23, 2000. I elected not to retrieve these reports from the site archive since it does not provide an indication of a report’s location within the splash page hierarchy and only the main reports are on record.

3.3.2 Context and Coding Units and Definitions
Defining context units (or units of analysis) and coding units is also a unique challenge in online research because no standard for either

measurement seems to have emerged for the Web.\textsuperscript{408} Two splash pages (abc.net.au/news and abc.net.au/olympics/news) and the Tier Two reports linked to them were deemed to be ideal context units.

The splash pages offered easy, one click access to Olympic sports news. Presumably, viewers looking for Olympic reports would decide whether or not to continue based on the content of these splash pages.

The idea of using words and images as coding units is not new. However, this study has used an original methodology by incorporating a Web-specific structural feature, the Tier Two hyperlink, as one coding unit for the variable of story prominence.

The problem of checking intercoder reliability for changing content on the Web site was addressed by old technology. To ensure that coders would be cross-coding faithful and identical data, hard copies were printed of each bulletin’s splash and main report pages.\textsuperscript{409}

3.3.3 Coding Categories
It was intended that by using content analysis certain trends would emerge to answer the original questions of whether Australian female and male athletes were treated differently, and whether the portrayals of Australian female and male athletes were reflective of previously identified forms of gender bias.

A primary goal of content analysis is to describe characteristics of the content of the mass media's messages. Berelson, for example, defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of

\textsuperscript{408} McMillan, 2000.

\textsuperscript{409} Examples of ABC News Online's summary and main sports report pages appear in Appendix B, Figures 3.1 to 3.4.
communication”. Berelson also advises researchers to study both the substance of the manifest content (what is said) and its form (how it is said).410

So, and after Kinnick, variables relating to both form and substance were observed when constructing coding categories.411 Coding units relating to form included placement or prominence of reports in the Web site’s Top Stories summary section; use of elements indicating visual hierarchy on the site’s second-level or main sport report page (Tier Two); and internal order of coverage in combined gender reports.

Report substance was examined for forms of bias identified in previous studies of sports reporting. These included gender of the athlete written about, and gender of the athlete pictured, mention of appearance, marital and parental status, emotions and dependence on others, and successes and failures. Accompanying pictures of female athletes were also examined for the frequency of depictions of sportswomen in certain poses.

A coding sheet was constructed to evaluate each online report.412

In terms of representation (RQ1 – addressed by Hypotheses 1 to 4), each report about Australian athletes at the 2000 Games from the Top Stories, Sport and Olympics summary pages (hereafter

412 Examples of the coding sheet (Figure 3.5) and the coder instruction sheet (Figure 3.6) appear in Appendix C.
413 The Sport splash page, accessed from a sidebar on the News home page, was used to examine Olympic sports reports on September 14 and 15. See point 4(a) for further explanation.
called the Tier One page), and the report's Tier Two or main page, was analysed as follows:

1. (a) Reports were categorised as being about one gender only, or about both genders (combined), or as being gender-neutral. In the latter category were reports referring to, for example, the "Australian team", "the athletes" and "Australia's Olympic athletes".

1. (b) The number of words referring to female athletes and their sports, or to male athletes and their sports was counted. For single-gender reports, the word count reflected the total number of words in the report.

For combined reports, where both genders were referred to, the number of words devoted to each gender was counted and included in the corresponding gender categories. Often, single gender and combined reports also contained gender-neutral language, such as "Australia has won gold in the pool". Although categorised, these neutral words were not counted.

Headlines, for Tier One summaries and Tier Two main reports, were included in the word count and classified according to the above procedure. Since the font size of headlines for News Online stories was uniform, regardless of report position in the rundown, this traditional print prominence-measure was discounted. Captions for pictures were not counted as, generally, they named the featured athlete, for example "Cathy Freeman". No hyperlink text was counted.
Bylines were not used on *News Online* so it was not possible to determine the gender of the journalist. For this reason, bylines were not considered when formulating the research questions.

Story space, a traditional measure in print studies, was not measured for online reports for two reasons. First, there was no indication on the Tier One page of the Tier Two main report’s length – that is, whether the whole report could be read on a single screen, irrespective of the size of the viewer’s monitor, or whether the viewer had to scroll (to read a longer report). Thus, the audience did not receive a visual clue about a report’s length until they connected to the Tier Two page. Second, hyperlinks, as previously discussed, served to add layers and depth to reports. Such Tier Three layers consisted of more text, or audio reports, or video images, or tables, or graphics etc or combinations of these additions. It was not practical to pursue these links or measure the dissimilar additions.

Thus, for Tier One and Tier Two pages, the number of words referring to female athletes and their sports, or to male athletes and their sports was counted.

2. (a) Pictures showing individual Australian athletes or more than one Australian athlete were categorised as being of one gender only. There were no pictures where athletes of both genders were depicted together. If a team was the dominant visual element the picture was classified according to the gender of the team.

2. (b) The number of images depicting female athletes only and male athletes only was counted. The number of athletes appearing in the picture was not counted. Although the size of
pictures varied across Tier One and Tier Two pages, there was no apparent connection between the picture’s proportions and the tier in which it appeared, or the picture’s proportions and the accompanying report’s position in the rundown. So this traditional, print prominence-measure was discounted.

Pictures were also incorporated in a standard side bar on the Tier Two page, accessed from the Top Stories summary page. These landscape images were slightly smaller than the Tier One and Tier Two pictures described above, but their size remained constant across the Games. For this reason, they were categorised and counted in the same manner as the pictures accompanying individual and combined gender reports.

Thus, for Tier One and Tier Two pages, the number of pictures of female athletes and the number of pictures of male athletes was counted.

3. (a) Hyperlinks accompanying Tier Two reports were categorised as links for one gender only, or as gender-neutral. In the latter category were links with combined gender reports, where there was no obvious attachment to one gender, and the side bar hyperlinks described above.

3. (b) The number of Tier Two hyperlinks accompanying main reports referring to female athletes and their sports, or to male athletes and their sports was counted. Although categorised, the number of hyperlinks deemed gender-neutral was not counted.

414 For example, the largest picture in the portrait format was published on September 22 and measured 42mm x 64mm. It accompanied a Tier Two report, ranked at number eight out of the eight summaries on the Olympic News page. The smallest landscape image was 42mm x 31mm and appeared with the lead summary on the Top Stories page on September 30.
For single-gender reports, the hyperlink count reflected the total number of links in or with main reports about that gender. For combined reports, where both genders were referred to in the same story, the number of links devoted to each gender was counted and included in the corresponding gender categories. If a link was not obviously associated with one gender it was classified as gender-neutral. The hyperlink’s destination (Tier Three), for example a table showing the Olympic medal tally, was not considered in the classification process.

4. (a) A report’s ranking or prominence on *News Online* is indicated by its position on the Tier One summary pages, titled Top Stories, Sport and Olympics. In the case of the Top Stories page, sports reports were generally located towards the end of the rundown as per radio and television news bulletins, and under the link Sport News. Occasionally, sports reports would break out of this traditional placement and appear in the general news section.

After the Games got underway, *News Online* changed its Top Stories page. The Sport News section was discontinued on September 14. Consequently, the Sport link in a sidebar on the News home page was used to examine Olympic sports reports on September 14 and 15. By September 16, all news about the Games was packaged under the Olympics link. So the Olympics hyperlink was used from September 16 to October 2, 2000 to examine Tier One and Tier Two pages.

Often, highlighted Olympics sports reports still appeared in the Top Stories summary. This subtle change in page layout did not compromise the measure of report prominence according to gender. All Olympic sports summaries in the Tier One Top
Stories and Sport sections were linked to main reports in which several sports and athletes of both genders were covered. Often, the Tier One summary did not mention an Australian athlete or team, yet the subsequent Tier Two main report revealed a round-up format where considerable coverage was given to Australian athletes.

When an Olympics report appeared in the Tier One Top Stories summaries it was categorised solely according to whether the summary mentioned Australian female athletes or male athletes.

4. (b) The number of Games sports summaries, appearing on the Tier One Top Stories page, and referring to Australian female athletes and their sports, or to Australian male athletes and their sports, was counted. A Top Stories summary, on Thursday, September 28, 2000, mentioned Australia’s female and male sailors.\(^{415}\) It was examined for the first mentioned gender and classified as being about males. Gender-neutral summaries, for example “Golden night in pool for Australia” where the summary reported on “the host nation” winning its fourth gold medal, were not counted.\(^{416}\)

5. (a) In Tier Two combined reports, the order of appearance of text about each gender was determined for each report.

5. (b) In Tier Two combined reports, (and irrespective of whether the report first mentioned athletes from other nations) the number of reports that mentioned Australian female athletes


first was counted, as was the number of reports that mentioned
Australian male athletes first. If the report mentioned
Australian athletes in a gender-neutral manner, for example
“our team”, it was then examined for the first mention of
Australian athletes by gender.

6. (a) To aid interpretation of the coverage received by each
gender on News Online, the researcher created a
“representation index” and a “representation ratio”, replicating
the methods used by Dominick\textsuperscript{417} and by Whitney et al.\textsuperscript{418} First, each gender’s relative coverage in report words and pictures
(categorised in 1a and 2a) was compared with its medal tally.
Official Olympic medal counts were consulted for Australian
results by gender. Second, each gender’s relative coverage was
compared with the gender make-up of the Australian Olympic
team.

6. (b) The percentage of medals won by Australian female and
male athletes was subtracted from each gender’s percentage of
coverage to compute a “representation index”. Second, a
“representation ratio” was calculated which indexed coverage
divided by medals won by gender.

\textsuperscript{417} Dominick, 1977, p.96.
Dominick studied the amount of network news time devoted to individual American
states. To aid interpretation of the significance of his findings, he created an
“attention index” – by subtracting the ratio of each state’s population to the national
population from its percentage of news coverage. This provided a listing of states that
were either “over-covered” or “under-covered”.

\textsuperscript{418} Whitney et al., 1989, p.166.
Whitney et al’s “attention ratio” indexed the percentage of news coverage divided by
population. They argued that the latter measure might be expressed as a percentage of
over- or under-coverage; that it offered “a less biased estimate” since it corrected for
wide variations of population by state and region; and thus it was “more
standardized”.
These methods were repeated to compute a "representation index" and a "representation ratio" where the percentage of Australian female and male athletes in the national team replaced the percentage of medals won in the above calculation.

Finally, an overall "representation index", computed by summing the words and pictures indices for each gender, provided an indication of whether each gender was over- or under-represented on *News Online*.

7. (a) Tier Two main reports, categorised (in 1a) as being about females, were also categorised according to the sport being contested, and its gender-appropriateness. There were no reports of sports contested by Australian teams of mixed gender. In equestrian competition, Australia’s three-day event team was all-male, so reports about the three-day event competition were classified as male reports and were not counted. However, in the individual dressage, *News Online’s* report of one Australian female competitor’s progress was categorised as a female report. Sports contested by females were categorised as female-appropriate, male-appropriate and gender-neutral.419

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419 I have devised a system for classifying sports by traditional standards of gender appropriateness. As Rintala and Birrell note, such implicit classifications underlie many studies in the field but few explicit systems for classification actually exist (1984, pp.239-240). Table 3.1 in Appendix A lists the Olympic sports covered by *News Online* in which Australian female athletes were featured, and their classification according to Daddario’s (1998) guidelines. Daddario says, “Inappropriate sports [for women] are those requiring bodily contact, conflict, or face-to-face opposition, or those requiring heavy equipment, padded uniforms, or protective armor. [F]eminine sports … include those that depict females in aesthetically pleasing motions and poses, often emphasizing the erotic physicality of the female body [and include] gymnastics, swimming, tennis, golf and diving. Unlike sex-inappropriate sports, these also give the appearance of posing little physical risk and being unlikely to cause bodily injury to the athlete. [S]ex-differentiated sports [have been identified] not only according to their required levels of strength, risk, and aggression, but according to their
7. (b) The number of words in Tier Two main reports about female-appropriate, male-appropriate or gender-neutral sports, and in which female athletes competed, was counted.

In terms of respect (RQ2 – addressed by Hypothesis 5), each report about Australian athletes at the 2000 Games, from the Tier One and Tier Two pages, was analysed as follows:

8. (a) All text was analysed to identify sources of bias along gender lines in sports reports.

8. (b) The number of times each of the following themes appeared was counted: (i) appearance, (ii) relationships, (iii) emotions, and (iv) successes and failures. Any word or adjacent group of words, phrase, sentence or paragraph concerning the same theme was counted as one appearance of that theme, and sorted separately for women and men.

Direct quotations from the athlete, their coach, family or other relevant sources were examined for expressions of emotion or emotional dependence, humility, confidence, and explanations of competitive strategy or performance outcome. Direct quotations were included because, even though they were not the journalist’s words, the journalist used them in their report. Neutral or factual descriptors, for example, “disqualified for an illegal baton change” when referring to a track relay team, were not counted.

competitive orientation. Masculine sports tend to be team-oriented, with athletes competing directly against others in a challenge for power and control. By contrast, feminine sports tend to be individual-oriented, where an athlete competes against herself or a pre-set standard of excellence, such as a personal best, world record, or an opponent’s score” (pp.11-12).
9. (a) Language use was examined along gender lines for the method of naming the athlete, martial language, and trivialising language. Reports were also examined for the presence of gender marking.

9. (b) The number of times the athlete was described by last name, first name or both was counted. The number of times martial language, such as "stunning", "rampant", "charged through", "powered", "battered" etc, was used was counted. The number of times trivialising language, such as "girl", "young lady", "boy" or "kid", was used to refer to adult athletes was counted. The number of times sports were gender marked, for example "women's hockey" and "men's 400", was counted.

10. (a) All pictures accompanying reports about female athletes were examined for depictions of passive versus active poses.

10. (b) The number of times a female athlete was depicted doing nothing (passive) or doing something (active) was counted. A female subject was defined as passive when she was either clearly posed for the camera, or was motionless (for example, recovering after exertion), or appeared only from the neck up (mug shots), or appeared celebrating rather than actively competing in her sport.

3.3.4 Coding Procedure, Reliability and Counts
Content coding was performed by a post-graduate student who was instructed, in general terms, on the purpose of the study and the

420 For examples of descriptors relating to (i) appearance, (ii) relationships, (iii) emotions, and (iv) successes and failures, see Table 3.2 in Appendix A.
classification procedure as outlined above. The following two-step process was used to code the sports reports. First, the researcher and the independent coder each coded separately a subsample of 47 per cent of the bulletins, for the purpose of determining intercoder reliability. Since, as previously discussed, bulletin word counts are not large, a subsample of 9 out of 19 bulletins was deemed to be a fair and accurate representation of the main body of data. Odd number bulletins were selected for the subsample.

After Reinard, intercoder reliability for each variable was computed using Scott’s pi. The overall proportion of intercoder agreement was .85. The proportion of agreement on the most used categories was 1.0 for words, pictures, order of appearance in combined reports and descriptive statements by gender, .72 for female-appropriate sports, .78 for male-appropriate sports, and .60 for gender-neutral sports.

Next, the researcher coded all News Online Olympic sports reports about Australian athletes, from September 13 to October 2, 2000. The sample yielded 44,010 words, 93 pictures and 27 hyperlinks.

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421 The independent coder was not aware of the researcher’s hypotheses or research questions.
422 Reinard, 1997, p.73.
423 Five sports were categorised as gender-neutral. The .60 proportion of agreement reflects the sensitivity of a small subsample. It resulted from a difference of only eight words in the count for beach volleyball (300 words counted by the independent coder, 292 by the researcher). For linguistic sexism, the proportion of agreement was .61. This was due to: (a) a difference of one observation for females called by their last name only (128 counted by the independent coder, 127 by the researcher) and a difference of nine observations for males called by their last name only (103 by the independent coder and 112 by the researcher); and (b) a difference of nine observations for gender marked sports (77 v. 68 for females, and 63 v. 54 for males). These differences were attributed to the tedious nature of the manual task (human error), rather than concerns about the coding rules for content categories. Coder certification appears in Appendix C, Figure 3.7.
3.3.5 Data Analysis

For item 1, a total measure according to gender was calculated over all reports. For item 2, a total measure according to gender was calculated over all pictures. The measures for each gender category in items 1 and 2 were then converted to percentages and descriptive statistics were used to compare the above variables with each other. For items 3, 4 and 5, a total measure was calculated over all reports. The measures were then converted to percentages. Descriptive statistics were used to compare these variables according to gender as outlined in items 3(a), 4(a) and 5(a).

For item 6, the number of medals won by Australian female and male athletes at the 2000 Olympics and the number of female and male athletes in the Australian team were each compared with the percentages of coverage for each gender to create a “representation index” and a “representation ratio”.

For item 7, a total measure was calculated for each Tier Two sport contested by females. The measures were then converted to percentages and descriptive statistics were used to determine whether female athletes competing in female-appropriate sports received more coverage than those females competing in inappropriate sports.

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424 As noted in Chapter 2, researchers studying gender representation have adopted various indices for assessing fairness or equity of coverage. In constructing my “representation index” and “representation ratio” (see item 6b) I have used a two-pronged standard, after Toohey (1997), whose indices included the number of females and males in the Australian Olympic team; and after Flatten and Matheson (1996), who used elite sports participation rates, and national participation in only those sports covered in sport newsprint. National sports participation in Australia was not considered a valid index for this study since these figures, summarised in Table 1.4, Appendix A, include jogging (the highest ranked activity) and other non-Olympic activities.
The thematic data (item 8) were also examined from a quantitative perspective, and sources of bias (items 9 to 10) \(^{425}\) were discussed.

### 3.4 Summary and Preview

This chapter has explained how the sample size was determined and how the sampling plan was devised. It has detailed the context and coding units used to evaluate ABC News Online's performance in relation to the study's five hypotheses listed in Chapter 1. Terms and definitions have been explained. The effectiveness of content analysis, both in previous studies and with regard to the aims of the present research, has been discussed. So too have the indices against which the study has evaluated gender equity in sports coverage. The chapter has provided guidance for future researchers in this field.

Chapter 4 will present the research findings. It will discuss and interpret these findings in relation to the research questions and the study's theoretical framework (Chapter 1), the ABC's editorial policies and previous research on sports media (Chapter 2).

\(^{425}\) See Appendix A, Table 3.2 for examples of verbal descriptors.
Despite the impressive performances of female athletes this century, women continue to see their athletic accomplishments distorted by the sporting press ... Study after study during the past 20 years has shown a clear pattern of underreporting and trivialization of women's sport by both print and electronic media.\footnote{Anita DeFrantz, "The Changing Role of Women in the Olympic Games", \textit{Olympic Review}, XXVI, no. 15 (1997), p.20.}

4.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the extent to which data gathered support or find untenable five hypotheses in relation to gender representation of Australian athletes in 2000 Olympic Games sports coverage, on ABC \textit{News Online}:

1. Australian female and male athletes and women's and men's sports will receive differential coverage on ABC \textit{News Online} during the 2000 Olympics; that is, females will receive less coverage than males.

2. The profile of coverage afforded Australian sportswomen on \textit{News Online} will stem from their success at the Games but, compared with medals won, females will be under-represented and males will be over-represented.

3. Compared with participation (the gender make-up of the Australian Olympic team), females will be under-represented and males will be over-represented in Olympic sports coverage on \textit{News Online}. 
4. Australian female athletes competing in so-called "female-appropriate" sports will receive more coverage on *News Online* than those who compete in inappropriate sports.

5. Given the ABC's editorial guidelines, the portrayal of Australian female athletes on *News Online* will not reflect previously identified forms of gender bias.

4.2 Results

A content analysis of ABC *News Online*, from September 13 to October 2, 2000 yielded a total of 44,010 words and 93 pictures featuring Australian Olympic athletes.\(^{427}\)

4.2.1 Representation

4.2.1(a) Words

In terms of total coverage, female athletes received 21,781 words and 22,229 words were written about males.\(^{428}\) This information is presented in Tables 4.2.1a and 4.2.1aa.

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\(^{427}\) This study's focus on Australian athletes resulted in a small sample for one item. I anticipated that Olympic sports would appear frequently on *News Online*’s Top Stories summary page. This was correct, except only 9 of the 19 bulletins featured Top Stories referring to specific Australian athletes. The chi-square test has been used in analysis of several variables in this study, including Top Stories by gender. The test is deemed inappropriate when observations produce expected frequencies of less than five in more than 20 per cent of cells. However, I have reported both the frequencies for the Top Stories variable, and the results of chi-square analysis (in Table 4.2.1dd) because the sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.

\(^{428}\) There was no coverage of mixed gender team sports. Three men represented Australia in the equestrian three-day team event, so reports were classified as male sports coverage. In sailing, teams consisting of women and men competed together or
Table 4.2.1a

Coverage by gender of Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,781</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>22,229</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1aa

Chi-square for coverage by gender of Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,781*</td>
<td>(22,005)</td>
<td>22,229</td>
<td>(22,005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Obs indicates observed value; exp indicates expected value. * p = .05. \(X^2 (1, n = 44,010) = 4.56, p = .033.\)

4.2.1(b) Pictures

Of the 93 pictures of Australian athletes published on News Online, none showed athletes of both genders together. Tables 4.2.1b and 4.2.1bb show the gender breakdown of athletes depicted. The level of coverage given to female athletes was 35 pictures, while male athletes received 58 pictures.
Table 4.2.1b

Pictures by gender of Australian athletes on ABC *News Online*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1bb

Chi-square for pictures by gender of Australian athletes on ABC *News Online*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>(Exp)</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>(Exp)</th>
<th>Obs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(46.5)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>(46.5)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 (1, n = 93) = 5.688, p = .017.$

4.2.1(c) Hyperlinks

Tables 4.2.1c and 4.2.1cc reveal the breakdown of the 27 hyperlinks accompanying Tier Two reports about female athletes and male athletes on *News Online*. Reports about male athletes contained 13 hyperlinks, and 14 hyperlinks accompanied reports about female athletes.

\[429\text{ In all chi-square calculations, } p = .05.\]
Table 4.2.1c

Hyperlinks by gender for Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Links</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1cc

Chi-square for hyperlinks by gender for Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Links</td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(13.5)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(13.5)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 27) = .037, p = .847. \]

4.2.1(d) Story Position

A total of nine reports featuring Australian athletes by gender appeared on News Online’s Top Stories news summary page. The Tier One or splash page gave prominence to five Olympic reports featuring female athletes, and four reports featuring male athletes. The result is recorded in Tables 4.2.1d and 4.2.1dd.
Table 4.2.1d

Top Stories summaries by gender of Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Stories</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1dd

Chi-square for Top Stories summaries by gender of Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Stories</th>
<th>Obs (Exp)</th>
<th>Obs (Exp)</th>
<th>Obs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (4.5)</td>
<td>4 (4.5)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: More than 20 per cent of cells have expected frequencies of less than 5.

\[ \chi^2 (1, n = 9) = .111, p = .739. \]

4.2.1(e) Order of Appearance of Text

Of the 68 combined gender reports on News Online, 42 first mentioned male athletes and 26 reports featured females first. This information is presented in Tables 4.2.1e and 4.2.1ee.
Table 4.2.1e

Combined reports according to gender of Australian athlete(s) first mentioned on ABC *News Online*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First</strong></td>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1ee

Chi-square for combined reports according to gender of Australian athlete(s) first mentioned on ABC *News Online*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First</strong></td>
<td><strong>Obs</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Exp)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Obs</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Exp)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Obs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 (1, n = 68) = 3.765, p = .052. \]

4.2.1(f) Coverage compared with Medal Tallies

Both a “representation index” and a “representation ratio” were computed to compare the total number of words written about female and male athletes, and the total number of pictures of female and male athletes, with the number of medals won for Australia by each gender. Tables 4.2.1f and 4.2.1ff report these results.

Australia won 58 medals at the 2000 Olympics. Of these, 22 went to female athletes who received 21,781 report words and 35 pictures.
Male athletes won 36 medals, and received 22,229 words and 58 pictures.

Table 4.2.1f

Comparison of coverage in words with medals won percentage and as representation index and representation ratio for Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage of words</th>
<th>Percentage of medals</th>
<th>Representation index$^a$</th>
<th>Representation ratio$^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+11.5</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-11.5</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total words</td>
<td>44,010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.2.1ff

Comparison of coverage in pictures with medals won percentage and as representation index and representation ratio for Australian athletes on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage of pictures</th>
<th>Percentage of medals</th>
<th>Representation index$^a$</th>
<th>Representation ratio$^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pictures</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1(g) Coverage compared with Australian Team by Gender

A second “representation index” and “representation ratio” compared the total number of words written about each gender and the total number of pictures for each gender with the number of female and male athletes in the Australian Olympic team. Tables 4.2.1g and 4.2.1gg report these results. Of the 626 athletes in the Australian Olympic team, 283 were female and 343 were male.

Table 4.2.1g

Comparison of coverage in words with Australian athlete population percentage and as representation index and representation ratio by gender on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage of words</th>
<th>Percentage of team</th>
<th>Representation index</th>
<th>Representation ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>+4.5</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total words 44,010

Table 4.2.1gg

Comparison of coverage in pictures with Australian athlete population percentage and as representation index and representation ratio by gender on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage of pictures</th>
<th>Percentage of team</th>
<th>Representation index$^a$</th>
<th>Representation ratio$^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total pictures 93


4.2.1(h) Sports by Gender-Appropriateness

News Online bulletins reported on 20 Olympic sports contested by Australian female athletes, for a total of 20,655 Tier Two words. Tables 4.2.1h and 4.2.1hh report the Tier Two coverage for female sports by gender-appropriateness.

Coverage of these sports was as follows: athletics 7687 words, hockey 2416, swimming 2116, basketball 1320, water polo 1210, softball 1131, sailing 854, rowing 611, tennis 608, triathlon 601, cycling 540, kayaking 418, beach volleyball 358, shooting 335, diving 225, soccer 162, gymnastics 26, equestrian 15, synchronised swimming 14, and trampolining 8 (mean = 1032.8, SD = 1704.13).

Reports about female-appropriate sports yielded a total of 2997 words. Of the six sports categorised as female-appropriate, swimming received 2116 words, tennis 608, diving 225, gymnastics 26, synchronised swimming 14, and trampolining 8 (mean = 499.5, SD = 824.83).
Ten sports in which sportswomen competed were categorised as
male-appropriate, yielding 16,096 words. The breakdown of Tier
Two words about these sports was as follows: athletics 7687,
hockey 2416, basketball 1320, water polo 1210, softball 1131,
rowing 611, triathlon 601, cycling 540, kayaking 418, and soccer
162 (mean = 1609.6, SD = 2229.4).

Gender-neutral sports contested by sportswomen yielded a total of
1562 words for four sports. Sailing received 854 words, beach
volleyball 358, shooting 335, and equestrian 15 (mean = 390.5, SD
= 346.4).
Table 4.2.1h

Tier Two female sports coverage (words) by gender-appropriateness on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Female-appropriate</th>
<th>Male-appropriate</th>
<th>Gender-neutral</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>2116</td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>2116</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>7687</td>
<td>37.22</td>
<td>7687</td>
<td>37.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2416</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>2416</td>
<td>11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>854</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>358</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>335</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total n</td>
<td>2997</td>
<td>16,096</td>
<td>1562</td>
<td>20,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>14.51</td>
<td>77.93</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>499.5</td>
<td>1609.6</td>
<td>390.5</td>
<td>1032.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>824.8</td>
<td>2229.4</td>
<td>346.4</td>
<td>1704.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.1hh

Kruskal-Wallis H for female sports coverage by gender-appropriateness on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport score</th>
<th>Gender-approp.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Ranks assigned to female-approp. (i = 1)</th>
<th>Ranks assigned to male-approp. (i = 2)</th>
<th>Ranks assigned to gender-neutral (i = 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>358</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>418</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>608</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>854</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1131</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1210</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1320</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2116</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2416</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7687</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
T_i = 43 \quad 135 \quad 32 \\
\text{n}_i = 6 \quad 10 \quad 4 \\
\text{Mean rank} = 7.166 \quad 13.5 \quad 8
\]

\[H = 11.19 \quad \chi^2_{.05}(2) = 5.99\]
4.2.2 Respect

4.2.2(a)-(d) Descriptive Statements

In terms of the occurrence of the following themes, according to gender:

(a) the appearance of athletes was mentioned 45 times, with females receiving 21 references and males 24;
(b) athletes’ relationships were referred to 44 times, with 24 mentions for women and 20 for men;
(c) of 79 references to emotions, sportswomen received 50 and sportsmen 29;
(d) 160 references to successes were comprised of 68 for females and 92 for men; while athletes’ failures were reported 60 times, with 24 mentions for women and 36 for men.

This information is presented in Tables 4.2.2a to 4.2.2dddd.

Table 4.2.2a

Appearance references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2aa

Chi-square for appearance references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21 (22.5)</td>
<td>24 (22.5)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 (1, n = 45) = .2, \ p = .655.$
Table 4.2.2b

Relationship references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2bb

Chi-square for relationship references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 44) = .364, p = .546. \]

Table 4.2.2c

Emotions references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.2cc

Chi-square for emotions references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>(39.5)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 79) = 5.582, \ p = .018. \]

Table 4.2.2d

Success references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2dd

Chi-square for success references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 160) = 3.6, \ p = .058. \]
Table 4.2.2ddd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ddddd

Chi-square for failure references for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (1, n = 60) = 2.4, p = .121.$

4.2.2(e) Linguistic Sexism – Hierarchical Naming, Martial Metaphors, Trivialising Language and Gender Marking

(i)-(iii) Tables 4.2.2e(i) to 4.2.2ee(iii) reveal the gender breakdown of references to athletes using their last name, first name or both names. Of the 541 references to athletes by their last name, sportswomen received 246 and sportsmen 295. Twenty times athletes were called by their first name only, with females receiving 10 references and 10 males. There were 636 references to athletes by first and last name. Females received 307 of these and males 329.
Table 4.2.2e(i)

Last name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ee(i)

Chi-square for last name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>(270.5)</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (1, n = 541) = 4.438, p = .035.$

Table 4.2.2e(ii)

First name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.2ee(ii)

Chi-square for first name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs (Exp)</td>
<td>Obs (Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 20) = 0, \ p = 1. \]

Table 4.2.2e(iii)

First and last name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First and last name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ee(iii)

Chi-square for first and last name references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First and last name</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs (Exp)</td>
<td>Obs (Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307 (318)</td>
<td>329 (318)</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iv) Tables 4.2.2e(iv) and 4.2.2ee(iv) show the number of instances of martial language, such as “stunned”, “powered”, “blew away” etc., used in association with each gender. A total of 142 martial metaphors were recorded. In 74 instances, these metaphors appeared in reports about female athletes. Sixty-eight martial metaphors appeared in reports about male athletes.

Table 4.2.2e(iv)

Martial metaphors for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Martial metaphors</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ee(iv)

Chi-square for martial metaphors for females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Martial metaphors</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>(71)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 142) = .254, p = .614. \]

(v) There were 12 instances in which adult athletes were described in trivialising terms. All referred to sportswomen as “girls”. Tables 4.2.2e(v) and 4.2.2ee(v) present these results.
Table 4.2.2e(v)

Trivialising references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trivialising references</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ee(v)

Chi-square for trivialising references for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trivialising references</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 (1, n = 12) = 12, \ p = .0005. \]

(vi) Tables 4.2.2e(vi) and 4.2.2ee(vi) report instances of gender marked sports. A total of 275 instances of gender marking were counted, with sports contested by females marked 145 times, and sports contested by males marked 130 times.
Table 4.2.2e(vi)

Gender marked sports for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender marked sports</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ee(vi)

Chi-square for gender marked sports for Australian females and males on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender marked sports</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>(137.5)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 (1, n = 275) = .818, p = .366. \]

4.2.2(f) Pictures – Active and Passive Depictions

The contextual breakdown of the 35 pictures of female athletes on News Online is presented in Tables 4.2.2f and 4.2.2ff. Of these pictures, 24 framed women as active competitors, and 11 depicted them in passive poses.
Table 4.2.2f

Female athlete pictures by context on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2ff

Chi-square for female athlete pictures by context on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>(Exp)</td>
<td>Obs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(17.5)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (1, n = 35) = 4.829, p = .028.$

4.3 Discussion – The Findings

This section discusses the results of the hypotheses tests along with other findings in relation to previous sports media research.

4.3.1 Representation – Are Australian Female and Male Athletes Treated Differently?

Hypothesis 1 (consisting of five parts) predicted that Australian athletes would be treated differently on ABC News Online, with females receiving less coverage than males. It was partially supported, as findings relevant to research questions 1(a) to 1(e) demonstrate.\(^{430}\)

\(^{430}\) As noted in Chapter 1 (sections 1.12.1 to 1.13), research questions 1(a) to (e) are addressed by Hypothesis 1. The following discussion uses the terms Hypothesis 1(a) with reference to research question 1(a), Hypothesis 1(b) with reference to research question 1(b), and so on. Since only Hypotheses 1(a) and 1(b) were supported, I have described the outcome as partial support for Hypothesis 1.
4.3.1(a) Words about Female and Male Athletes

Proportionately, males and females received relatively equal coverage in words on News Online. As Table 4.2.1a shows, only one percentage point separated the amount of attention given to each gender. However, chi-square analysis (see Table 4.2.1aa) reveals a statistically significant difference in coverage by gender, $X^2(1) = 4.56$, $p = .033$. Hypothesis 1(a) is supported.

One explanation for the profile of Australian women and their sports on News Online could be the greater number of female sports available in Sydney. The 2000 Games marked the centenary of women’s Olympic participation in the modern era, and a record 25 sports and 132 events were open to them. More Australian female athletes competed at the 2000 Games than ever before and, for the first time, females’ share of the Australian team population reached 45 per cent. Of all sports reported across the Games, athletics dominated News Online’s coverage. It did so because no other Australian competitor, in any sport, received the attention afforded to Cathy Freeman.

Of the 19 News Online bulletins analysed, 11 contained reports about track and field events and each of these bulletins contained at least one report featuring Cathy Freeman. Her influence on the total coverage received by Australian sportswomen is most graphically represented in Tier Two word counts. Female track and

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431 The number of Olympic events for women in 2000 was still short of the 168 events for men. Women’s 132 events included 12 mixed gender events. Australia fielded 283 female athletes in Sydney.
field athletes received 7687 words of Tier Two female sports coverage. More than 59 per cent of this emanated from one source — Cathy Freeman.

Moreover, Freeman’s profile creates an interesting “eclipse” effect. She monopolised female athletics and female sports coverage while many other Australian sportswomen were generally ignored. Tier Two hockey coverage, for example, amounted to 2416 words, despite Australia’s women reaping a double success in Sydney. The Hockeyroos’ won their second consecutive Olympic gold medal. Their captain, Rechelle Hawkes, achieved a rare milestone, as only the third Australian to win three Olympic gold medals in the same event.

Water polo made its Olympic debut in Sydney. Australia’s women’s team went into the record books as the first winners of this new competition but their Olympic campaign produced only 1210 words of coverage. Our least-covered female gold medallists, beach volleyballers Natalie Cook and Kerri Ann Pottharst, earned just 358 words.

Removing Freeman’s total of 4850 words (Tier One and Tier Two coverage) from the word count for Australian sportswomen makes a meaningful difference to the percentages of coverage for females and males at the Sydney Olympics. Without her, women’s percentage of coverage drops by 6.3 per cent to 43.2 per cent, while men’s percentage of coverage increases to 56.8 per cent. Thus, one female athlete’s Olympic campaign accounts for the

---

432 Dominick, 1977, p.97.
overall, proportionately equitable distribution of coverage for sportswomen, as shown in Figure 4.3.1a.433

Figure 4.3.1a

Effect of the “Freeman factor” on sports coverage by gender on ABC News Online

Cathy Freeman’s Olympic success satisfies the news values of prominence, timeliness, human interest, conflict, controversy, consequence and cultural and geographic proximity. The win brought together several themes: the withdrawal of Freeman’s main

---

433 Cathy Freeman’s dominance of coverage began on September 13, 2000 with a report on her entry in the 200 metres (bulletin 1, September 13, 2000). Subsequent reports detailed:
her much-hyped “showdown” with French athlete Marie-Jose Perec, and Perec’s withdrawal from the 400 metres (bulletin 9, September 21, 2000);
her progress through the 400 metres heats and semi-finals (bulletins 10 and 11, September 22 and September 24, 2000);
her odds-on favouritism for the 400 metres final (bulletin 12, September 25, 2000);
her gold medal in the 400 metres (1218 words in bulletin 13, September 26, 2000);
her performances in the 200 metres (bulletins 14 and 15, September 27 and 28, 2000);
her 400 metres performance revisited in three, what-might-have-been-if-Perec-had-been-there scenarios (bulletins 15, 16 and 17, September 28, 29 and 30, 2000); and
her contribution to Australia’s medal tally (bulletin 19, October 2, 2000).
rival in the 400 metres, French athlete Marie-Jose Perec; the end of a 10-year, gold medal drought in track and field for Australia; the symbolic triumph of social justice (Freeman as the first Aborigine to win an individual Olympic gold medal for Australia) and a moment of national reconciliation.

Freeman’s profile on News Online suggests she was Australia’s most successful athlete in Sydney. She was not.

Other Australians to win individual gold medals were Michael Diamond, Grant Hackett, Susie O’Neill, Lauren Burns, Simon Fairweather and Ian Thorpe. Athletes of both genders won multiple medals. Thorpe topped the overall Australian tally with three gold medals (two in relays) and a silver medal.

Yet Freeman’s coverage is almost three times that received by Thorpe who was Australia’s most covered individual male athlete (1640 words). If gold medals are a standard for coverage, based on the attention given to Cathy Freeman, Australia’s four men who won individual medals were entitled to a total of at least 18,000 words on News Online.

Removing Thorpe’s word count from the total coverage for Australian sportsmen makes little difference to the proportion of coverage for females and males. Men’s coverage drops by 1.9 per cent to 48.6 per cent, while women’s coverage increases to 51.4 per cent. Thus, reports of Ian Thorpe’s multiple successes do not explain the overall distribution of sportsmen’s coverage on News Online.

Previous studies have suggested the media are biased, favouring male athletes and their sports. For example, in the sporting press, female
athletes have been denied “even a semblance of equality”, receiving as little as 1.4 per cent\(^{434}\) and 3.5 per cent of coverage in newspapers.\(^{435}\) Magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated*, have reinforced traditional attitudes towards females by providing only 8 per cent of articles about them (compared with 91 per cent for males).\(^{436}\)

Studies of U.S. collegiate\(^{437}\) and university-sponsored newspapers\(^{438}\) have also reported under-representation (less than half of written coverage) of female athletes. This profile still far exceeds the 7 per cent of sports articles\(^{439}\) and one-third of lines about women in the British press.\(^{440}\)

From 1980 to 1997, Australian media coverage of women’s sport was only a tiny proportion of that devoted to men,\(^{441}\) and popular women’s sports were grossly under-represented.\(^{442}\)

Analysis of Olympic Games media coverage shows female Olympians have fared better than in non-Olympic periods but still consistently received less air time than male athletes. Telecasts of the 1988 Summer Olympic Games gave women about one-third of coverage,\(^{443}\) while NBC devoted less than half of same-sport air time (44 per cent) to women at the 1992 Games.\(^{444}\)

Australian newspapers too have given women’s sports greater coverage during Olympic competition than at other times. In 1992,

\(^{434}\) Bryant, 1980, p.39.
\(^{435}\) Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990, pp.2-5.
\(^{437}\) Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.146.
\(^{438}\) Wann et al., 1998, pp.79-87.
\(^{439}\) Flatten and Matheson, 1996, p.7.
\(^{441}\) Menzies, 1989.
\(^{442}\) Alston, 1996.
\(^{443}\) Toohey, 1997, pp.34-36.
Olympic coverage of females reached a high of 32 per cent,\textsuperscript{445} and climbed to 41 per cent during the 1996 Summer Games.\textsuperscript{446}

*News Online* appears to have improved upon this precedent in Olympic coverage in devoting 49.5 per cent of its reporting to Australian female athletes. But, are congratulations premature?

Traditionally, women who compete in team sports have been denied the level of coverage given to individual athletes of both genders, and males who compete in team sports\textsuperscript{447} – even at Olympic level.\textsuperscript{448} If their low Olympic profile stems from the number of team events open to women, the likelihood of improved coverage in Sydney should have been substantially increased.

The number of women’s team events in 2000 rose to 33 from the 29 events open to females at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. There were also more mixed team sports. Of the 84 team events staged in Sydney, 39 per cent of gold medals were awarded for women’s team sports and 13 per cent for mixed team sports.\textsuperscript{449}

Australian females won six gold medals in Sydney. Women’s teams took home four or 67 per cent of them.\textsuperscript{450} Yet the success of these teams does not translate to online coverage, as shown below (in Figure 4.3.1aa). Hockey, water polo, sailing and beach volleyball produced

\textsuperscript{444} Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.235.
\textsuperscript{445} Embrey, Hall and Gunter, 1992, quoted in Toohey, 1997, p.27.
\textsuperscript{446} Mikosza, 1997, pp.6-12.
\textsuperscript{447} Rintala and Birrell, 1984, p.243.
\textsuperscript{448} Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.245.
\textsuperscript{450} Australian women’s teams won gold medals in hockey, water polo, sailing (double-handed dinghy) and beach volleyball; silver medals in basketball, rowing (coxless pair) and swimming (4x100 medley and 4x200 freestyle relays); and bronze in diving (synchronised) and softball.
gold medal results but garnered just one-third (4838 words) of the Tier Two words about Australia’s female gold medallists.

Women’s teams also fared worse in coverage than our men’s teams who won five gold medals in the sports of cycling, equestrian, sailing and swimming. Male teams received 6569 words of Tier Two male coverage on News Online, or 1313.8 words per gold medal compared with 1209.5 words per medal for women.

Figure 4.3.1aa

Tier Two coverage for gold medals in individual and team sports on News Online

![Bar chart showing Tier Two coverage for gold medals in individual and team sports on News Online]

4.3.1(b) Pictures of Female and Male Athletes

More males than females are subjects of pictures on News Online. As Table 4.2.1b shows, males are 1.6 times as likely to be pictured on the sports site. Hypothesis 1(b) predicted that females would

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451 The equestrian discipline of three-day eventing is a mixed team sport at the Olympic Games. Australia fielded an all-male team in Sydney and, in this study, three-day eventing has been classified as a male team event.
receive fewer pictures than males. It was supported as male photographs outnumbered female photographs by 58 (62 per cent) to 35 (38 per cent). Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in pictures by gender, $X^2(1) = 5.688$, $p = .017$, as shown in Table 4.2.1bb.

Again, the smaller number of Australian female Olympians could explain why they were less visible than males in sports pictures on News Online. One positive slant is that their profile still betters that of sportswomen in Australian newspapers. Menzies found capital city dailies published 12 times as many photographs of men’s sports than of women’s sports. Alston reported that women received only 29 per cent of pictures in regional newspapers.

U.S. newspapers have, at times, ignored sportswomen altogether. Bryant’s study of newspapers and sports magazines found the Denver Post published no pictures of individual female athletes and 21 of individual male athletes in 1980. Readers of British broadsheets in 1994 were 17 times more likely to see a picture of a male athlete than one of a female athlete. U.K. press sports photographs in 1995-1996 also favoured males over females, giving men 79 per cent of the total area of photographs and women 21 per cent.

Online media images too have highlighted male athletes. Men received 86 per cent of pictures on three leading U.S. sports Web

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454 Bryant, 1980, pp.41-42.
455 Flatten and Matheson, 1996, p.7.
sites. The fewer pictures of women (22 out of 162) also meant more female news items contained no images of them.457

In consecutive Olympics, however, newspaper coverage for women has jumped from just 11 per cent of photographs458 on the sports pages to 48 per cent.459 Hardin’s study of five U.S. newspapers during the 2000 Games seems to indicate that, at least in these newspapers and in terms of the number of photographs published (684 out of 1425 images), women are moving away from stereotypical coverage.460 With 38 per cent of 2000 Games pictures on News Online, it seems Australian sportswomen are yet to match the progress of females in newspaper coverage of the Games.

Men were not only more visible than women on the Web site, one male athlete was more visible than others. Swimmer Michael Klim appeared in 13 images. His nearest male rival was Ian Thorpe with 10 pictures.461 Next came shooter Michael Diamond, with four pictures. Cathy Freeman headed the list for female athletes, appearing in 12 individual pictures across the Games. There were six images of the Hockeyroos team and five of swimmer Susie O’Neill.

What is interesting about this coverage is why Australia’s most-photographed male and female athletes were covered so intensely. One explanation is that picture numbers were sensitive to outstanding achievements. Cathy Freeman’s gold medal performance has already been discussed in relation to word counts.

458 Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.7.
459 Hardin et al., 2002, p.69.
460 Ibid.
461 Michael Klim’s tally of 13 pictures was comprised of 10 individual and three group shots. Ian Thorpe appeared in seven individual and three group pictures.
Since more words were written about her than any other athlete there were also more opportunities to publish images of her.

Michael Klim is a different story. He was certainly a medallist in Sydney, winning silver in the 100 metres butterfly and two gold medals in relay events. Compared with his coverage in words, however, Klim was over-exposed in pictures.

His profile stems from a production technique employed on the Web site. From September 14 to October 1, 2000 News Online’s main Tier Two Olympic report, accessed from the Top Stories summary page, incorporated a generic side bar. It consisted of an athlete’s picture atop six hypertext links to features such as medal tallies, athlete profiles and results.462

Klim was first seen on News Online on September 17, in a Tier Two team picture with a report of Australia’s victory in the 4x100 metres freestyle relay.463 He next appeared on September 22, his image featuring three times in this bulletin – once in prime position on the Top Stories page, and twice in the Tier Two main report linked to the summary.464 One of these images appeared in the side bar described above.

From September 24, Klim was on a roll. His picture featured in every Tier Two side bar from September 24 to October 1, except for September 27 when Cathy Freeman briefly deposed him. Klim’s Olympic run finished on October 2, when he appeared in a group shot with a report on Australia’s successes during the Games.

462 See Appendix B, Figure 3.2 for an example of this Tier Two page.
*News Online* used Michael Klim’s picture as window dressing that was not matched in words. On six out of the seven occasions that Klim’s image appeared in a side bar, none of the surrounding text referred to the swimmer. Ironically, such practices have long been associated with the biased depiction of female athletes – where their pictures have been used to attract attention without the consistent provision of accompanying information about women’s sports.465

Whatever the reason for Klim’s prevalence, given the small number of pictures on the ABC’s Web site, his over-representation did have an impact. Without the six additional side bar images of Klim from September 24 onwards, the share of coverage for males drops to 59 per cent, and females’ share of pictures rises to 41 per cent.

Also, Klim’s profile on *News Online* came at the expense of other, worthy athletes of both genders. If females had featured in just half of the extra side bar images devoted to Klim, online audiences could have seen pictures of Australia’s synchronised swimmers, softballers and hockey captain Rechelle Hawkes.466

### 4.3.1(c) Hyperlinks in Reports about Female and Male Athletes

Hypothesis 1(c) predicted that females would receive fewer hyperlinks than male athletes. It was not supported. As Table 4.2.1c shows, of the 27 hyperlinks, 14 accompanied reports about female athletes and 13 accompanied reports about males. There

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465 Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.7.
466 On September 24, the medal chances of Australian female athletes in the marathon, synchronised swimming, tennis and hockey were reported adjacent to Klim’s side bar picture. A softball report on September 25 and a hockey report on September 30 (where Rechelle Hawkes’ third Olympic gold medal was highlighted) offered two obvious opportunities to use images of females from these sports rather than one of Michael Klim.
was no significant difference based on gender, $X^2(1) = .037, p = .847$, as shown in Table 4.2.1cc.

Structural features such as hyperlinks help online journalists tell their stories. Aside from placing generic links in side bars or at the end of reports, their potential was largely untapped on News Online.

It is not known to what extent ABC staffing levels, work routines and deadlines affected online production decisions. Whatever the reason, only 6 of the 19 bulletins sampled contained reports with hyperlinks to content about Australian athletes. As Figure 4.3.1c shows (see below), the majority of these structural features appeared in reports of the first six days of competition. Hyperlinks reappeared in a final flurry on September 26, when seven links were provided in Tier Two reports.

**Figure 4.3.1c**

**Medal wins reported and associated hyperlinks on News Online**

*Some medal wins were reported more than once within a bulletin or on successive days. Associated links were also repeated.*
The occurrence of links on Tier Two pages can signal a report’s prominence. As noted in Chapter 3, this study did not consider a Tier Two link’s destination. So, points relevant to this discussion are the ranking of reports in which links appeared, the gender of the featured athlete, the type of link offered, and its position in the report.

Links were evenly distributed between reports accessed from the Top Stories splash page and reports accessed from the Olympic News splash page. A first-time or casual reader who entered the News Online site via the Top Stories splash page may have overlooked several Tier Two reports about Australian athletes (and thus the opportunity to follow hyperlinks within these reports). This was because headlines and summaries often gave no clue that Tier Two reports included Australian teams or individual athletes.

An example was “IOC prolongs decision on fate of Uzbeki official”, published on September 14. The summary was number four out of eight news reports on the Top Stories splash page. Its Tier Two main report covered drug importation charges against an Olympic official, speculation about who would light the cauldron in the opening ceremony, the arrival of Australia’s athletics team in Sydney, and results of soccer matches played by Australia and other nations.

Two links were posted on the first screen of this combined report. They were a video link about Cathy Freeman’s decision to run in the 200 metres and a rift in the Australian men’s tennis team, and an audio link to results of the previous evening’s soccer matches. Research on online reading patterns shows that when readers are offered the opportunity they will click away. By placing links on the first screen of the combined report, News Online invited readers to leave the page before they had finished reading the whole report.
Aside from creating a site and page environment, hyperlinks allow Web audiences to gain access to additional, contextual information. Yet the information flagged in the “Freeman-tennis” and “Soccer” links did not match the themes of the adjacent text. “Freeman-tennis” appeared beside text about the Uzbeki official. “Soccer” was adjacent to text about the Olympic cauldron. Readers had to scroll down one-and-a-half screens to find text about the soccer matches. There was no text about Freeman or the uneasy relations in the tennis team.

Other instances of linked information provided out of context occurred on September 17 and September 26. In “Diamond shines as Australia gets third gold”, two audio links offered commentary on Ian Thorpe’s world record swim in the 400 metres freestyle, an event held and reported in detail 24 hours earlier. The adjacent first screen text described Michael Diamond’s gold medal in trap shooting.

“Shot put champ Hunter says he’s no cheat” was also a combined sports report. It dealt with a U.S. athlete’s positive drug test, a Romanian gymnast’s positive test and disqualification, and Australians competing in tennis, kayaking, diving and cycling. Four audio links to reports of Cathy Freeman’s 400 metres win, the previous evening, appeared beside text about the disgraced Romanian gymnast. A full screen down from these links a reader would have found the tennis results, the first of the four reports devoted to Australian athletes.

The peculiar link placements in Tier Two reports connected to the Top Stories splash page are important for two reasons. Whether intentional or not, positioning links adjacent to unrelated copy denied contextual

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467 Miller, 1996, pp.50-51.
468 “Diamond shines as Australia gets third gold”, ABC News Online, September 17, 2000.
469 “Shot put champ Hunter says he’s no cheat”, ABC News Online, September 26, 2000.
coverage to deserving athletes. The practice is uncomfortably similar to the print media’s ploy of using pictures of female athletes to attract attention that is not matched in words. In this sample both genders were affected, so there is no evidence of bias against females.

However, unrelated links were not found in Tier Two reports accessed from the Olympic News splash page. Readers who navigated to Olympic reports via this page, on September 17 for example, were offered audio links to related contextual coverage.

In “Australia claims gold and shooting bronze”, an audio link about Michael Diamond accompanied text about his gold medal win. “Aussies overpower Russians in water polo” briefly described the women’s game and offered a linked audio summary of the match. Australia’s win over Poland in hockey was reported in “Kookaburras kick-start gold medal campaign in first round”. Coverage included a linked audio report of the men’s match.

A high ranking on either of the site’s splash pages did not guarantee the inclusion of hyperlinks in Tier Two reports. Rather, the higher the summary’s ranking the less likely the main report was to contain hyperlinks.

Some athletes were favoured in contextual details. Three athletes shared 46 per cent of all hyperlinks. In view of Cathy Freeman’s saturation coverage in words, it is not surprising that she received the biggest share of hyperlinks. Her total was five-and-a-half, with five audio links appearing in coverage of her gold medal run. Gold and a world record in the 400 metres freestyle earned four audio reports for
Ian Thorpe. Michael Diamond's gold medal attracted two-and-a-half audio links and one hypertext link.470

There is evidence already that coverage in words and pictures was sensitive to outstanding achievements. Did medal wins for Australia coincide with a spike in hyperlinks?

Australia's best day, in terms of the number of medal wins reported, was September 24 (two gold medals, four silver medals). On September 20, News Online reported on athletes who won five medals, including two gold medals. The September 22 bulletin covered the addition of one gold and four minor medals to Australia's tally.

Yet during this three-day purple patch, when medals came in swimming, archery, shooting, equestrian, cycling, rowing, trampolining and water polo, News Online provided no additional contextual information about the successful athletes or their sports. By comparison, readers had the choice of seven hyperlinks on September 26, five of which were dedicated to Cathy Freeman. (Refer to Figure 4.3.1c above for the distribution of medal wins reported and hyperlinks associated with Australian athletes across the Games.)

The distribution of hyperlinks rendered men's sports less prominent than women's sports on News Online. Figure 4.3.1cc (see below) shows there was no hyperlinked coverage in nine bulletins where male medal successes were reported. A total of 11 male medal wins were not accompanied by links, compared with 8 female medal performances. On September 13 and 14, male

470 Freeman's half-link refers to the audio report of her decision to contest the 200 metres and a "spat" in the men's tennis team, published on September 14. Diamond's half-link refers to an audio report of his win and Annemarie Forder's bronze medal in shooting.
athletes gained hyperlinks when no medals were on offer in their events.

Figure 4.3.1cc

Male medals reported and associated hyperlinks on *News Online*

![Bar chart showing male medals and links](chart.png)

* Some medal wins were reported more than once within a bulletin or on successive days. Associated links were also repeated.

As Figure 4.3.1ccc shows (see below), six reports of females’ medal successes were not accompanied by hyperlinks. And once, on September 14, females received links when there was no corresponding text about their sports.
Figure 4.3.1ccc

Female medals reported and associated hyperlinks on News Online*

* Some medal wins were reported more than once within a bulletin or on successive days. Associated links were also repeated.

4.3.1(d) Top Story Position for Female and Male Athletes
Hypothesis 1(d) predicted that females would be less visible than males in lead reports on News Online’s Top Stories summary page. It was not supported.

Table 4.2.1d presents a breakdown of Top Stories by gender and shows females received 56 per cent of Tier One summaries and males received 44 per cent. With five and four lead reports respectively, the difference in story prominence for females and males was not statistically significant, $X^2(1) = .111$, $p = .739$ (see Table 4.2.1dd).
The Top Stories page on ABC News Online is similar to the splash pages of other news sites. It embodies the most important and newsworthy content.\textsuperscript{471}

Across the Games, the Top Stories page layout typically comprised the mast, and up to 10 headlines (no more than two were devoted to sport). Brief summaries and hot links accompanied all headlines. Links to Tier Two pages were offered in headline text and at the end of all summaries in a header, Full Story. General news and sport summaries occupied about two-thirds of the page. The remaining space was devoted to generic left- and right-hand side bars promoting other site features.\textsuperscript{472}

Studies of traditional print media show the prime locations of the back, front and top of inner pages are reserved for sportsmen. Newspapers in regional and metropolitan Australia rarely integrate sportswomen into mainstream sports news. Instead, they relegate them to the inner pages, positioning their stories at the bottom of the page.\textsuperscript{473} Sportswomen are generally invisible from the front page location in the U.S. press.\textsuperscript{474}

Female athletes are also relatively absent from online sports media’s prime location. On the sports sites CBSSportsLine, CNNSI and ESPN, males are more than four times as likely as females to feature on the Top Stories splash pages. Kachgal found only 52 out of 284 Top Stories articles were about female athletes.\textsuperscript{475}

Across the 2000 Games, News Online consistently promoted Olympic sports on the Top Stories page. Olympic reports led 17 of the 19

\textsuperscript{471} Kachgal, 2001, p.177.
\textsuperscript{472} See Appendix B, Figure 3.1, for an example of this splash page.
\textsuperscript{473} Phillips, 1997, p.21.
\textsuperscript{474} Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990, p.3.
\textsuperscript{475} Kachgal, 2001, p.182.
bulletins sampled. Only on the first two days of competition, September 13 and 14, were Games reports out of the top spot. All nine Top Stories summaries featuring Australian athletes as the primary subjects were published from September 16 onwards and thus appeared in lead position on the splash page. Figure 4.3.1d (below) shows their distribution by gender.

**Figure 4.3.1d**

Top Stories by gender on *News Online*

![Graph showing Top Stories by gender](image)

Given the sample size, it is difficult to describe the trend of sports coverage in Top Stories placement on *News Online*. It would seem, though, that this is a positive finding for females in that no evidence of gender bias was found in the placement of lead reports.

In one respect, sportswomen were less prominent than sportsmen in Top Stories summaries. The majority of summaries for Australian male athletes covered their gold medal wins.476 Only one out of the five Top summaries covered a sportswoman, with the exception being "Thorpe smashes world record", ABC *News Online*, September 16, 2000; "Diamond shines as Australia gets third gold", ABC *News Online*, September 17, 2000.

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Stories summaries for Australian women featured a gold medal result. Two leads speculated about Australian females’ chances of winning gold and a third highlighted a non-medal contest.

Placement on the Top Stories page gave no indication of bias when pre-race favourites were beaten. Susie O’Neill’s defeat in the 200 metres butterfly led on September 20 and was matched by a headline and summary on September 22, when world record holder Michael Klim and fastest qualifier Geoff Huegill missed out on a quinella in the 100 metres butterfly.

That more male than female medal wins were highlighted could be explained by the comparative number of medals won by each gender, the high rotation of sports reports on the site, and the time of day the finals were decided.

On September 24, for example, females actually benefited from early medal wins by males. Rowing events were scheduled from 8.30am until 10.50am and Australia won silver medals in the men’s lightweight coxless four and men’s eight. Women’s hockey matches ran from 11am until 5.30pm. The Hockeyroos won their non-medal match against New Zealand and timeliness saw them take lead position on the Top Stories splash page in News Online’s 8pm bulletin.

4.3.1(e) Order of Appearance of Text in Combined Gender Reports

Hypothesis 1(e) predicted that females would appear less often than males in first position within combined gender reports. It was not supported. As shown in Tables 4.2.1e and 4.2.1ee, although males' achievements were covered first, 1.6 times more often than females', the difference in representation by gender was not statistically significant, $X^2(1) = 3.765, p = .052$.

Proportionately, women's sports were given less prominence (38 per cent) than men's events when they appeared in combined reports. This finding contrasts with Pringle and Gordon's analysis of West Australian newspaper coverage of the 1990 Commonwealth Games, where female competitors were first mentioned in 48.7 per cent of combined articles.483

With fewer Australian women competitors and their performances to write about, it is not unexpected that more males were first mentioned in combined gender reports on News Online. However, some reports contained prominence discrepancy – a term I use to describe editorial decisions which promoted the wrong athlete, irrespective of gender, to prominence in combined reports. I will discuss three examples I believe demonstrate inconsistent editorial decision-making and in which the wrong athletes were highlighted.

In the first, the preview of a male athlete's event debut appeared ahead of coverage for females competing in a final. "Medal hopes", published on September 17, 2000, first reported Ian Thorpe's upcoming appearance in the 200 metres freestyle heats and semifinals. Then the focus shifted to the 100 metres butterfly,

describing Petria Thomas and Susie O’Neill as “Australia’s best swimming medal chances in the final”.

All events were scheduled for that night so timeliness was not a deciding news value. All were prominent, proven athletes although, by this stage, Thorpe had the edge with two gold medals (in the 400 metres freestyle and the 4x100 metres relay).

In terms of consequence, medals were on offer for Thomas and O’Neill, and the report affirmed they were contenders. Thorpe’s 200 metres freestyle campaign was beginning. A medal result was still one night away.\(^{484}\)

The second report promoted female athletes who finished in minor places above winning male athletes. Rowing coverage on September 22 featured the semi-finals. Australia’s best result, a win, came from the men’s foursome. The men’s quadruple sculls team was second in its semi-final. Both male team performances were reported after the women’s double scullers who finished third.

If previous form (also reported) influenced internal coverage order, the men’s quadruple scullers were still entitled to a higher position than the women’s double scullers. Both teams had finished fourth at the World Cup earlier in the year.\(^{485}\)

\(^{484}\) A follow-up report on the above events, “De Bruijn takes gold in 100m butterfly”, September 17, 2000, reversed the gender order. Although Thomas and O’Neill were unplaced in the 100 metres final, the winner Inge de Bruijn set a world record. So, the element of consequence helped to carry the Australian women to prominence. Then followed details of the 200 metres freestyle semi-finals, one of which went to Thorpe.

\(^{485}\) “Rowers closer to medals as weekend looms”, ABC News Online, September 22, 2000.
In the third example, a combined sports report, the Boomers quarter final win in basketball was positioned ahead of coverage of two bronze medals won by Australia’s female and male synchronised diving teams. The diving report’s stronger news values warranted a higher ranking than the men’s non-medal basketball game.

Within the diving report, the women’s event, although held first, was covered second. The news value of reporting the most recent development first could justify this order of appearance. But, Loudy Tourky and Rebecca Gilmore’s bronze was Australia’s first diving medal since 1924, a news hook which arguably promotes them to first position in internal order.  

There were no online reports with parallels to the overtly biased practice of positioning outstanding female athletic achievements after major stories on male sports losses, as observed in British print media coverage of the World Championships and the Olympics. One report came close though.

On September 17, News Online covered the Olyroo’s “failure” at the Games. A loss to Nigeria put the Australian men out of the soccer quarter finals. The report focused on the reaction of Australian coach Raul Blanco, who criticised overseas clubs for “incredible selfishness towards national teams”. It was inferred overseas-based Australian players were not released in time for a reasonable Olympic preparation.

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489 “Blanco accepts blame for Olyroo’s exit”, ABC News Online, September 17, 2000.
On the same day, the Matildas had a 1-1 draw in their match. The consequences of the draw were not revealed. One sentence of 24 words about the women’s soccer team came after 370 words about the Olyroos and Blanco’s accusations.

In News Online’s defence, it could be argued a draw is not an outstanding achievement, while Blanco’s broadside at overseas soccer clubs provided the stronger news elements of controversy and prominence. The Matildas’ one sentence postscript is indicative of the attention they received across the Games. They came away with just 162 words from three bulletins, well short of the men’s total of 454 words. Both teams suffered from bare bones coverage. Only one male soccer player was named. Online readers were never told who played for the Matildas.

4.3.1(f) Coverage compared with Medal Tallies
Hypothesis 2 proposed that the profile of coverage afforded Australian sportswomen would stem from their success at the Games but, compared with medals won, females would be under-represented and males would be over-represented. It was not supported.490

As Table 4.2.1f shows, News Online does not accurately reflect the achievements of Australian female and male athletes at the 2000 Games. That is, in terms of words written about them, females were over-represented according to both indices (representation index of +11.5, representation ratio of 1.30) relative to males who were clearly under-represented (−11.5, .81). However, as Table 4.2.1ff shows, the proportion of pictures for females (38 per cent) and males (62 per cent) exactly represents their success in Sydney.
Compared with their achievements at the Sydney Olympics, an overall representation index for athletes to medal success shows females were over-represented on News Online (+11.5 + 0 = +11.5), while the male representation index (-11.5) shows sportsmen were under-represented in Olympic reports.

The above comparative analysis suggests News Online sports coverage has reversed the form of traditional sports media, in both word and pictorial representation of female athletes. In everyday coverage, magazines such as Sports Illustrated have ignored women, giving them as little as 1 inch of space to the 700 inches devoted to male sports.

Only during worldwide events such as the Olympic Games has media coverage generally approximated a fair, equal view of the female in sport. Australian television gave far more coverage to sportswomen during the 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympic Games than during normal programming. Air time for females, who won 36 per cent of Australia’s gold medals in 1988 and 41 per cent in 1992, was about one-third of total Olympics coverage. More revealing is the contrast between Olympic and non-Olympic coverage, within the same publications. Women’s sport received 41 per cent of newspaper coverage during the 1996 Summer Games. In 1997, in the same newspapers, coverage dropped below 8 per cent.

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490 As noted in Chapter 1, Hypothesis 2 addresses research question 1(f) (see section 1.12.1).
491 Since the representation index suggests women and men received pictorial exposure consistent with their medal success in Sydney, this discussion will focus on coverage in words for each gender. Detailed discussion of coverage in pictures by gender appears in the following section where representation is compared with the Australian team population by gender.
492 Bryant, 1980, p.39.
America’s female athletes appear to have received more than their fair share of coverage in NBC telecasts of the 2000 Games. Their proportion of air time was 44.8 per cent, against their medal success of 41.2 per cent.⁴⁹⁵

On News Online, the pendulum of coverage has swung so far that Australia’s female Olympians’ 49.5 per cent of online words is higher than their medal success alone (38 per cent) would seem to warrant.

Two points are worth exploring. The first is that it is about time. Some may argue over-coverage merely rights a wrong: it challenges a history of under-coverage for sportswomen, in and out of the Olympic arena. So, it is only appropriate women were over-covered on News Online because “many female athletes and the sports in which they participate receive very little coverage beyond Olympic competition”.⁴⁹⁶

The second point is whether women really were over-covered. If a fair deal equates to 50 per cent of coverage, female athletes still have a way to go in pictorial exposure on News Online.

Arguments for the 50-50 formula ignore the inequitable structure of Olympic competition. Less than half of all Olympic events were open to females at the 2000 Games, so there were fewer medals for them to win. Since women were eligible for only 44 per cent of all medals, perhaps medal success is not a valid indicator of coverage equity for females. Until females achieve event parity and thus equal medal numbers with men, selecting a suitable index against which to compare Olympic coverage is difficult. It is also why this

study has adopted two indices for evaluating gender representation on *News Online*.

4.3.1(g) **Coverage compared with Australian Team Gender**

Hypothesis 3 predicted that compared with the gender make-up of the Australian Olympic team, females would be under-represented and males would be over-represented in coverage (words and pictures).\(^{497}\) It was supported.

As Tables 4.2.1g and 4.2.1gg show, *News Online*’s coverage does not accurately reflect the composition of the Australian team at the 2000 Olympics. Australian sportswomen were over-represented in words written about them (representation index of +4.5, representation ratio 1.10) but under-represented against both indices in pictures (−7, .84). Sportsmen were under-represented in words (−4.5, .92) but over-represented in pictures (+7, 1.13).

Against their participation, an overall representation index for Australian females (+4.5 + −7 = −2.5) shows they were under-represented on *News Online* while the index for Australian males (+2.5) shows sportsmen were over-represented in Olympic reports.

This section focuses on depictions of athletes because of the significantly more pictures of male athletes published on *News Online* (see Table 4.2b). Over-covered male athletes were seen 1.6 times more often than females, a result that seems to perpetuate the image of sport as an inappropriate activity for women and girls.\(^{498}\)

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\(^{496}\) Ibid, p.361.

\(^{497}\) Hypothesis 3 addresses research question 1(g) (see Chapter 1, section 1.12.1).

\(^{498}\) Rintala and Birrell, 1984.
Studies show readers of newspaper sports sections are more likely to see a picture of a male athlete, irrespective of the grass roots popularity of particular women’s sports. Forty per cent of participants in sport in regional and rural Australia are women yet they have received only 29 per cent of pictures in their local press.499

Increased participation rates for British females at Olympic and recreational levels have not been reflected in press pictures. Female athletes received as little as 5 per cent of images in British broadsheets.500 U.S. females depicted in recreational sports (41.9 per cent) in Young Athlete magazine were under-represented against their participation (47 per cent).501

Research also shows women are seen more often in images during elite sporting events. This does not always equate to “fair” pictorial coverage, as George et al concluded. British newspapers gave men 2.75 times the number of pictures of women at the 1995 World Championships.502

Press images of sportswomen at the 1990 Commonwealth Games (37.1 per cent) left them well behind men (53.2 per cent) but reflected the proportion of Australian women athletes at the Games (37.5 per cent).503 Pictures of U.S. women at the 2000 Olympics (48 per cent) compared favourably with the U.S. Olympic team’s demographics (45 per cent women).504

501 Rintala and Birrell, 1984, p.246.
504 Hardin et al., 2002, p.73.
In earlier discussion I have noted the eclipse effect whereby one athlete, Cathy Freeman, was over-covered in words and the rest of her gender was under-covered on News Online. This was seen again in pictures of Australia’s athletes.

Michael Klim’s and Cathy Freeman’s individual coverage eclipsed that of their fellow male and female Australian team members. So online audiences had fewer opportunities to see, ideally, a variety of female and male athletes, from a variety of sports, across the Games. And, again ideally, if females’ proportion of images had matched their presence in the Australian team, online audiences may have seen images of a further six female athletes who competed against the world’s best for Australia.

4.3.1(h) Female Sports Coverage and Gender-Appropriateness

Hypothesis 4 predicted that Australian women competing in “female-appropriate” sports would receive more coverage than women competing in inappropriate sports. It was not supported.

As Table 4.2.1hh shows, Kruskal-Wallis analysis reveals that it appears the number of words about females was not statistically equal with regard to so-called “appropriateness”, $H = 11.19, X^2_{.05}(2) = 5.99$. An inspection of the mean ranks for appropriateness suggests male-appropriate sports received the highest coverage scores (13.5), with female-appropriate sports reporting the lowest scores (7.166).

Table 4.2.1h presents a comparison of proportionate coverage of gender-typed sports. Representation of females varies by sport category, with male-appropriate sports (16,096 words of Tier Two coverage) receiving more than five times the coverage of female-

505 Hypothesis 4 addresses research question 1(h) (see Chapter 1, section 1.12.1).
appropriate sports. Even when female-appropriate and neutral sports are combined, the attention afforded women in these sports is less than one-third of the coverage for male-appropriate sports.

That more females were reported performing in sports of strength, hard contact, and/or explosive speed suggests these women won more medals for Australia. They did. Women competing in 10 sports classified as male-appropriate won 9 medals. In six female-appropriate sports, Australian women won seven medals. Four gender-neutral sports yielded three medals.506

Yet, when coverage is compared with medal success within sports, a different picture emerges. The word count for the top medal earner, the female-appropriate sport of swimming (2116 words, 6 medals), is well below coverage for the top male-appropriate sport of athletics (7687 words, 1 medal), and short of the second most-covered, male-appropriate sport of hockey (2416 words, 1 medal). Table 4.3.1h (below) reports the comparison of coverage for female sports by gender-appropriateness with medals won.

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506 Note: Only those medal successes reported by News Online are included in these tallies. Lauren Burns’ gold medal in taekwondo, Tatiana Grigorieva’s silver medal in the pole vault, Michelle Ferris’ silver medal in cycling, and Maria Pekli’s bronze in judo – all male-appropriate sports – and Leisel Jones’ silver medal in breaststroke were not reported in the sampled bulletins.
Table 4.3.1h

Female coverage according to gender-appropriateness compared with medal success on ABC News Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Gender-appropriateness</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
<th>Total medals*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>2116</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synch Swimming</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trampol.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>7687</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2416</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>male</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>854</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beach Volleyball</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>gender-neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>gender-neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>gender-neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total n</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only those medal wins reported in the sampled bulletins on News Online are included in this table.

Athletics events dominated News Online’s coverage, receiving just under half of male-appropriate sports coverage, and 37 per cent of Tier
Two female coverage. Again, as discussed earlier, Cathy Freeman’s influence on the distribution of female sports coverage is interesting.

Removing Freeman’s personal coverage of 4548 words from the equation affects the proportionate amount of Tier Two coverage for females who competed in male-appropriate sports. As Figure 4.3.1h shows (below), male-appropriate sports’ share of coverage drops from 77.9 per cent to 71.7 per cent. However, even without the “Freeman factor”, male-appropriate sports remain, proportionately, the primary focus of coverage for women on News Online.

The trend found on News Online goes against that of previous newspaper studies\(^5\)\(^0\)\(^7\)\(^0\)\(^8\) where typically, for females to garner media coverage, they must be involved in socially acceptable sports\(^5\)\(^0\)\(^8\) that

\(^5\)\(^0\)\(^7\) See: Brown, 1995; Higgs and Weiller, 1994; and Tuggle and Owen, 1999.
\(^5\)\(^0\)\(^8\) Tuggle, Huffman, and Rosengard, 2002, p.372.
emphasise aesthetics and beauty but discourage physicality. For example, the most represented women’s sport in American newspaper profiles of 1996 Atlanta Olympic athletes was the sex-appropriate sport of swimming (15.6 per cent of all profiles). The trend also contrasts with Vincent’s findings (in a cross national newspaper study) of little difference in the attention given to females competing in appropriate and inappropriate sports at Atlanta. Away from Olympic competition, women who play traditional male sports such as cricket, football, rugby and snooker are seldom seen on television sports shows, or on television news.

On News Online, aside from swimming and tennis, the stereotypically feminine sports of diving, gymnastics, synchronised swimming and trampolining received very little cumulative attention. Diving coverage was only 225 words, despite Rebecca Gilmore and Loudy Tourky combining to win a bronze, Australia’s first Olympic medal in diving since 1924.

One could argue whether diving is a popular sport. However, the contrast in the amount of coverage of the women’s and men’s teams in synchronised diving, where both Australian pairs won medals within an hour of each other, suggests success in the pool (or elsewhere) is not enough for women to attract media attention. Although both teams won bronze, the men received 73.2 per cent of the coverage devoted to diving.

510 Vincent, 2000, p.2645.
513 In tennis reports, about one-third of the coverage of Jelena Dokic’s tournament focused instead on her father Damir.
In basketball, *News Online* gave silver medallists the Opals less than half the coverage received by the men’s team who finished out of the medals. Perhaps, as discussed earlier, this was because “names make news”, a criterion satisfied by Andrew Gaze (a long Olympic history) and Luc Longley (based in the United States and playing for the Chicago Bulls). Or perhaps women’s basketball coverage was affected by the double-whammy. It is a team sport and, often, a hard body-contact sport. Women’s sports containing these elements are particularly unlikely to receive media coverage.\(^{514}\)

A degree of direct comparison is also possible within female sports. Of the four sports in which Australian women won bronze medals, diving received the least coverage. *News Online* covered the male-appropriate sports of softball (1131 words) and kayaking/canoeing (418 words), and the neutral sport of shooting (335 words) more extensively.

### 4.3.2 Respect – Do Portrayals of Females and Males Contain Gender Bias?

Hypothesis 5 predicted that ABC editorial policies would influence how female athletes were portrayed on *News Online*, with reports about females unlikely to contain previously identified forms of gender bias.\(^{515}\) As findings relevant to research questions 2(a) to (f) demonstrate, differences in portrayal by gender vary across these indicators of bias. Hypothesis 5 is partially supported.


\(^{515}\) Hypothesis 5 addresses research questions 2(a) to (f) (see Chapter 1, section 1.12.2). Thus, Hypothesis 5 has 12 parts (since research question 2(d) consists of 2 variables and research question 2(e) is subdivided into 6 variables). Hypothesis 5(a) addresses research question 2(a), Hypothesis 5(b) addresses research question 2(b), and so on. Hypothesis 5(ei) addresses research question 2(ei), hierarchical naming, Hypothesis 5(eiv) addresses research question 2(eiv), martial metaphors, and so on. Nine of 12 results supported the main hypothesis, so the overall description is one of partial support for Hypothesis 5.
4.3.2(a) Descriptions of Appearance

References to female athletes’ appearances featured less often (47 per cent) than references to males’ physiological attributes (53 per cent), as Table 4.2.2a shows. Chi-square analysis (see Table 4.2.2aa) reveals no significant difference between women and men in the incidence of descriptions about their physical appearance, $X^2(1) = .2$, $p = .655$. Hypothesis 5(a) is supported.

The trend of previous studies, where the sports media have seen female athletes’ looks and bodies as relevant in coverage of their athletic performances, was not apparent on News Online. Scholars have reported the media’s pointed evaluation of women athletes in terms of traditional standards of feminine beauty,\(^{516}\) such as body dimensions and attractiveness,\(^{517}\) public criticism of female athletes who do not live up to the ideals of beauty;\(^{518}\) sexist references to women’s revenue-producing ability, and their hair or eye colour;\(^{519}\) and a focus on the age of women athletes but rare descriptions of men by age.\(^{520}\)

Of all News Online references to appearance (women received 21 references and men received 24), an athlete’s age was most often mentioned. There was no evidence of gender bias but there were gratuitous references to age. A combined athletics report on September 27 described middle distance runner Georgie Clarke as the “teenage team-mate” of Margaret Crowley and Sarah Jamieson. Eighteen athletes were named in the report. Only Clarke was described by age.\(^{521}\) Centre Lauren Jackson was the only female basketballer of six

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\(^{516}\) Hilliard, 1984, pp.253-60.


\(^{518}\) Pfister, 1987, p.11.29.

\(^{519}\) Bryant, 1980, pp.32-34.

\(^{520}\) Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.8.

\(^{521}\) “Australian women red-hot in 200m”, ABC News Online, September 27, 2000.
named players whose age was revealed in a report on the Opals’ silver medal win.522

Australian men were not immune to irrelevant references to their age. Hockey player Brent Livermore received special attention when the Kookaburras lost to the Netherlands in a penalty shoot-out. Of the 15 players named in the report, only Livermore’s age was revealed. After describing how Livermore’s penalty stroke was blocked by the Dutch goalie, the report called him “the 24-year-old … [who] crumbled under the growing pressure”.523

In contrast to previous studies where male athletes have been described as having “a magnificent physique” or “a well-proportioned body”,524 there were few body references for them on News Online. Reports about both genders contained factual information about injuries or physical characteristics pertinent to the athlete’s discipline. For example, boxer Bradley Hore’s age, height and weight were revealed in the context of his failure to make the 48 kilogram weight division:

Australian boxing team manager Peter Rogers says the 18-year-old experienced a growth spurt in recent months which has pushed him over the weight limit. ‘I mean the guy has grown three inches in the last three months,’ Mr Rogers said. ‘The guy and all the coaches and support people around him really put in for Bradley to be 48kgs.

522 “Opals take out silver”, ABC News Online, October 1, 2000. While this study’s focus is Australian athletes only, a report on September 24 deserves comment. Jamaica’s Merlene Ottey made her sixth and final Olympic appearance in Sydney, finishing fourth in the 100 metres. “The 40-year-old had caused a storm amongst Jamaican teammates when she was selected,” the report said. Ottey finished fourth in the Jamaican trials but was “given a place anyway”. News Online said Ottey was determined to prove her critics wrong “but in the end could only manage fourth as age finally caught up with her.” (Italics are my emphasis.) Again, Ottey was the only athlete whose age was mentioned. The inference was that her years (she was also called a veteran) contributed to her defeat, rather than Marion Jones’ fastest 100 metres of the year.
'But at the end of the day at 9:50am this morning he was still 49kgs and was fairly exhausted and dehydrated and consequently did not go to the weigh-in.'

4.3.2(b) Descriptions of Relationships

More females than males were represented in references to athletes' relationships on News Online. As shown in Table 4.2.2b, females received 54.5 per cent of relationship references, compared with 45.5 per cent of references to males' relationships. The difference based on gender was not statistically significant, $X^2(1) = .364, p = .546$, as shown in Table 4.2.2bb, and Hypothesis 5(b) is supported.

Studies show the media see females’ relationships (familial, romantic, and other relationships to males) as relevant in descriptions of sportswomen. Such references infer women’s lower status. A loaded tactic is to refer to females’ dating habits; or their marital or family status, for example “a wife” and “heavy with child”.

Kinnick found marital status was revealed for 35 per cent of female and 20 per cent of male athletes in Olympic newspaper profiles. In contrast, parental status was mentioned more frequently for male athletes. Female athletes were much more likely to be characterised as struggling to balance career and family.

Elements of biased treatment of sportswomen were evident in ABC News Online’s portrayal of female athletes. Of the references to females’ relationships on News Online, none defined women

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526 Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.9.
527 Bryant, 1980, pp.32-34.
athletes in terms of their marital or parental status. However, a report, "Dokic wins through as Ilie bows out", focused unnecessarily on the tennis player’s family, in particular her father Damir. Three of the four paragraphs about Jelena Dokic’s loss in her singles match were devoted to her father’s absence from courtside.

Dokic explained her “controversial” father’s and her family’s non-attendance. She said, “They just need a break I think.” No other Olympic report exposed an athlete’s family to this style or degree of public scrutiny. Yet this was the second time News Online emphasised Jelena Dokic’s familial ties over her Olympic performance.530

Also disturbing were “ownership” references to Australia’s Hockeyroos. The players were twice described as “Ric Charlesworth’s women”, and again as “Charlesworth’s girls”, as though they were their coach’s possessions.

When the Hockeyroos retained their Olympic title, the win was presented in terms of emotional dependence. It was called “a fitting farewell for the Hockeyroo’s lord and master Ric Charlesworth”. There were no ownership or emotional dependence analogues in the 20 male relationship references. Four times basketballer Andrew Gaze’s family values were reported and, by implication, were commended.533 Men were also described as brothers,

530 “Dokic’s dad barred from all WTA events”, ABC News Online, September 15, 2000.
533 “Gaze dedicates honour to Dad”, ABC News Online, September 13, 2000.
although there was no apparent contextual relevance,\textsuperscript{534} and responsible fathers.\textsuperscript{535}

No other athlete attracted the hyperbole accorded Cathy Freeman on \textit{News Online}. If the media had not already convinced Australians that Freeman was public property, \textit{News Online} readers were left in no doubt in the post-mortem of her 400 metres win. The headline said it all, “Freeman fulfils nation’s hopes”.\textsuperscript{536} The theme reverberated throughout the 1192 word report (a very long one by \textit{News Online} standards) via phrases such as “expectations of a nation” and “lived up to public expectations”.

Quotes were attributed to diverse sources including Prime Minister John Howard, Federal Opposition leader Kim Beazley, Freeman’s cousin Roya Collins, and Aboriginal activist Isabelle Coe. They said Freeman was “a role model for young Australians”, who “carried the burden of reputation, of national expectation, of her own ambitions”, that she “handled the pressure of a nation’s hopes” and was “a champion and a role model”.

References to Freeman’s obligations to her Australian “family” served to characterise her as an athlete struggling under the pressure of this expectation and the weighty burden of national reconciliation. Even Freeman was drawn into the fray.

Freeman says she is relieved she lived up to public expectations and hopes her win will further the Aboriginal cause.

\textsuperscript{535} “Rowers closer to medals as weekend looms”, ABC \textit{News Online}, September 22, 2000.
\textsuperscript{536} “Freeman fulfils nation’s hopes”, ABC \textit{News Online}, September 26, 2000.
'What's happened tonight and what I symbolise will make a difference to a lot of peoples' attitudes,' she said.
'To the person walking in the street, their attitudes or to people in the political arena, their attitudes.
'But all I know is that I've made a lot of people happy from all kinds of backgrounds that call Australia home and I'm happy.'

Only two paragraphs in the report described the 400 metres race. In the first, a dramatic mix of fact and fancy produced contradictory messages – Freeman the woman who almost crumbled under pressure and Freeman the superior female athlete.

Freeman trailed Great Britain’s Katharine Merry and Jamaica’s Lorraine Graham at the 75-metre mark but just as the capacity crowd at the stadium and millions around Australia began to fear the worst, she strode to the lead.

4.3.2(c) Descriptions of Emotions
Female athletes’ emotions were 1.7 times more likely to be mentioned than males’ emotions on News Online. As Table 4.2.2c shows, of all references to emotions, women received 63 per cent and men received 37 per cent. Chi-square analysis (see Table 4.2.2cc) reveals a significant difference between women and men in the incidence of references to their emotional state, $X^2(1) = 5.582$, $p = .018$. Hypothesis 5(c) is not supported.

Emotional descriptors for sportswomen on News Online focused on athletes who “burst into tears”, “broke down in tears”, 537 threatened

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to “start to shed a few tears”,[^538] “cried before a game”,[^539] “started crying” during a game[^540] or were “fighting tears”.[^541] Women were lauded for winning and then accused of losing control and concentration when they displayed emotion.[^542] Walker Jane Saville was portrayed as “a devastated Saville” who became disoriented after her disqualification from the 20km walk.[^543]

A headline, “O’Neill Misty-eyed as Dutch take sprints”, inferred swimmer Susie O’Neill lost her composure after finishing second in the 200 metres butterfly final. This theme was not mentioned again, let alone substantiated, in the report.[^544]

References to Cathy Freeman’s emotions were almost as prevalent on News Online as her relationship references. In “Freeman fulfils nation’s hopes”, the athlete was described as “an emotional Freeman [who] fell to the ground in relief after crossing the finish line to win” and “collapsed on the track ... fighting tears”. In confronting a stressful situation, Freeman was described in a way that stressed emotional weakness.

Another contradiction emerged in references to the full body suit Freeman donned for the 400 metres final. Coach Peter Fortune described Freeman as “very nervous” before the race and her

[^541]: “Freeman fulfils nation’s hopes”, ABC News Online, September 26, 2000.
decision to wear the body suit as a “masterstroke”. In the suit, Freeman became an “aggressive” athlete and “if you like, quite mean”, according to Fortune.

News Online portrayed Freeman as an athlete who depended on a crutch, a body suit, in order to overcome her vulnerability and transform her from a nervous to an aggressive competitor. The theme echoes that of traditional sports media where women’s character flaws, such as emotional vulnerability, have been emphasised as a critical part of their performance.

Kinnick found articles about Olympic athletes commented on females’ emotions (57.1 per cent of profiles) more often than males’ emotions (52.7 per cent). British and Australian media have often described women athletes in ways that stress emotional weakness, while applauding men for their toughness when they confront stressful situations.

While News Online generally refrained from using emotional descriptors about males’ performances, men were credited with resilience in the face of adversity, and self-control:

Fairweather says he is thrilled to win gold for Australia.
‘It’s been a pretty emotional day, I thought I might cry if I won and I almost did,’ Fairweather said.
‘I almost did – it was amazing.’

545 “Freeman fulfils nation’s hopes”, ABC News Online, September 26, 2000.
546 Hilliard, 1984, pp.253-60.
548 “Boomers miss out on bronze in Atlanta defeat”, ABC News Online, October 1, 2000.
An exception was the hockey report, “Dutch stroke out Kookaburras”, where Brent Livermore’s unsuccessful penalty stroke was “enough to send the host nation to tears before a packed house … [and] some of the Australian players went down on their knees and wept openly.”

4.3.2(d) Descriptions of Success and Failure

More males than females are the subjects of references to success and failure on News Online. As Tables 4.2.2d and 4.2.2ddd show, males are 1.3 times as likely as females to be recognised for their achievements, and 1.5 times as likely as females to have their failures highlighted.

Of all explanations for success, men received 57.5 per cent and women received 42.5 per cent. There was no significant difference in the incidence of references to women’s and men’s successes, $X^2(1) = 3.6$, $p = .058$, as Table 4.2.2dd shows. Men received 60 per cent of failure references, while women received 40 per cent. Nor was there a significant difference in mentions of failure by gender, $X^2(1) = 2.4$, $p = .121$, as shown in Table 4.2.2dddd. Hypothesis 5(d) is supported.

The ratio of attributions of success to those of failure differed by gender. For women, success references outnumbered failure references by 2.8 to 1. Male success was 2.5 times more likely to be mentioned than male failure.

Media explanations for success or failure contain bias when they highlight women’s failures and males’ achievements. News Online reports appeared not to contain dramatic evidence of this indicator of gender bias. This is not to say News Online was free of female stereotyping.

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Stereotyping encompasses an array of representational strategies that are used in order to represent female athletes in formulaic and overly simplistic terms based on gender. These strategies include ... crediting male direction or luck for success.\footnote{Kachgal, 2001, p.161.}

As well as framing Australia’s hockey players as emotionally dependent on their coach ("the Hockeyroos’ lord and master Ric Charlesworth"), \textit{News Online}'s report on the women’s gold medal win focused on Charlesworth’s imminent retirement. Both the narrative and direct quotation attributed the Hockeyroos’ athletic performance more to their coach than to the athletes themselves.

After eight years in the job, Ric Charlesworth leaves the helm with an 80 per cent success rate. Following the match, Charlesworth said an emotional goodbye to his players and told them they had made him proud. Two-time Olympic champion Juliet Haslam described the mood in the changeroom. ‘A lot of cheering, a lot of singing,’ she said. ‘Ric had a few words, I think he was obviously pretty proud of us. ‘We owe him a lot, he’s an absolutely amazing hockey coach.’\footnote{“Hockeyroos magic brings second gold”, ABC \textit{News Online}, September 30, 2000.}

Bias also exists when men’s failures are attributed to a lack of athletic skill, while women’s failures are attributed to a lack of commitment, or when men are clearly placed above women through comparisons to Jesus Christ and Superman.\footnote{Eastman and Billings, 2000, p.8.} In the main, \textit{News Online} reports did not treat women and men differently. In only one instance was an athlete linked, tenuously, to mythology. A headline affirmed Simon

\footnote{George, Hartley, and Paris, 2001, p.98.}
Fairweather as the “Golden archer” after he won Australia’s first gold medal in the sport.555

When either gender’s failures were highlighted, usually they were reported factually. For example, an athletics report on September 30 described how the women’s 4x100 metres relay team “dropped the baton”, while the men were “disqualified for an illegal baton change” in their relay.556

However, the same combined gender report devoted far more coverage to the women’s misfortunes (223 words). It described how the changeover from lead relay runner Elly Hutton to Lauren Hewitt “went horribly wrong, with Hewitt making several grabs at the baton before it dropped onto the track”. Eight subsequent paragraphs, including direct quotation, focused on the women’s “huge disappointment”. In contrast, 134 words reported the facts of the Australian men’s disqualification.

4.3.2(e) Linguistic Sexism – Hierarchical Naming, Martial Metaphors, Trivialising Language and Gender Marking

(i) More males than females were referred to by their last names only in News Online reports. As Table 4.2.2e(i) shows, men were more often called by their last names (54.5 per cent) than were women (45.5 per cent). There was a statistically significant difference between genders in the use of athletes’ last names, $X^2(1) = 4.438$, $p = .035$, as shown in Table 4.2.2ee(i). Hypothesis 5(ei) is not supported.557

556 “Aussie men kicked out of 4x100m final”, ABC News Online, September 30, 2000.
557 Since there are six variables in research question 2(e), Hypotheses 5(ei) to 5(eiii) address hierarchical naming (research questions 2(ei) to 2(eiii)). Hypothesis 5(eiv) addresses martial language (research question 2(eiv)). Hypothesis 5(ev) addresses trivialising language (research question 2(ev)), and Hypothesis 5(evi) addresses gender marked sports (research question 2(evi)). Hypothesis 5(f) addresses research question 2(f), passive and active depictions.
(ii) Females were no more likely than males to be referred to by their first name only on News Online. As Table 4.2.2e(ii) shows, of all first name references to athletes, women’s first names were used 10 times (50 per cent) and men’s first names were used 10 times (50 per cent). There was no statistical difference for first name references by gender (see Table 4.2.2ee(ii), $X^2(1) = 0, p = 1$. Hypothesis 5(eii) is supported.

(iii) More males than females were represented in references to athletes by their first and last name. Of the 636 athletes named on News Online and as shown in Table 4.2.2e(iii), men were called by their first and last name in 52 per cent of references, with 48 per cent of references going to women. The difference based on gender was not significant, $X^2(1) = .761, p = .383$, as Table 4.2.2ee(iii) shows. Hypothesis 5(eiii) is supported.

That more men than women were called by their last names, and by their first and last names on News Online is not surprising. Australian men won more medals than Australian women in Sydney, there were more men in the Australian team, and there were more Olympic events open to men. Male athletes and their sports received more coverage than female athletes and their sports on News Online. Logically, a combination of these circumstances would result in men’s names appearing more often in News Online’s coverage.

Media sports researchers have been critical of hierarchical naming. They say its use implies a lower status for women. Male athletes called by their last name assume dominant status. Subordinate status is inferred for female athletes who are called, more informally, by their first names only. Swedish television sports news, for example, referred to women athletes by their first names about four times as often as men. Men were referred to by their last names almost twice as often as
women. American television commentary has used, exclusively, only last names for males, suggesting they were privileged over women whose first names were used often.

Eight of the 10 references to athletes or coaches by first name on News Online were found in direct quotations from athletes or acquaintances. Five of these eight references were to females. Journalists called a female and a male by their first names twice. Cathy Freeman was the only one of five women athletes referred to by her first name in coverage of the 200 metres semifinals. On September 24, hurdler Blair Young was the only male in an athletics report to be called by his first name.

(iv) Martial language was more likely to be used in reports about female athletes than male athletes on News Online. As shown in Table 4.2.2e(iv), of the 142 martial metaphors, 52 per cent described women's athletic performances and 48 per cent occurred in reports about male athletes. As Table 4.2.2ee(iv) shows, there was no significant difference between women and men in the proportion of martial metaphors describing their performances, $\chi^2(1) = .254, p = .614$. Hypothesis 5(eiv) is supported.

Media sports research has identified the use of martial metaphors, either exclusively or predominantly in association with male sports. War is supposedly a masculine activity and sport-war metaphors venerate strength and aggression. Neither of these attributes sits comfortably with appropriate female behaviour, so martial metaphors

559 Duncan et al., 1990, p.7.
have appeared more frequently in coverage of men’s sports. The absence of martial language from women’s coverage, it is argued, is sexist. It sets females apart from the normal (males are aggressive), presenting them as anomalies.\textsuperscript{563}

Against this background, it is surprising that descriptions of women’s sports on \textit{News Online} contained more martial references than men’s sports coverage. As Figure 4.3.2e shows (below), the highest number of sport-war metaphors within a bulletin occurred on September 24, when the majority of these 23 descriptions appeared in reports about women’s sports.

\textbf{Figure 4.3.2e}

\textbf{Martial metaphors for female and male sports on \textit{News Online}}

Analysis of the September 24 bulletin shows a possible correlation between the incidence of martial metaphors and the gender

\textsuperscript{563} Ibid, p.219.
appropriateness of the sports covered. Ten female sports appeared in Tier Two reports. Water polo (736 words) and athletics (719 words) gained the most coverage, followed by hockey (471), tennis (130) and basketball (119). Rowing (62 words) and sailing (19) were the only other women’s contests on the day to reach double figures in coverage. So the spotlight was on male-appropriate sports and from these came the majority of female martial metaphors.

We know strength, explosive power and aggression characterise male-appropriate sports. On News Online, women competing in these sports were also described in these terms. Australia’s water polo players “powered down the pool” and Yvette Higgins “unleashed a monster shot that crashed against the back of the net”. Our basketballers were “unstoppable” against “dangerous” competition, and centre Lauren Jackson “imposed herself on the boards, raking in 12 rebounds”.

In contrast, in the female-appropriate sport of tennis, Jelena Dokic merely “defeated” her opponent. In the same tennis report, male players “dumped”, “downed” and “eliminated” their opponents. Kinnick also found more vivid descriptions of male aggression were used to describe men competing in female-appropriate sports. She proposed these “macho” descriptors functioned to offset the view that female-appropriate, non-contact sports were not sports for “real men”.

Male sports received the bulk of sport-war metaphors in 10 bulletins across the Games (see Figure 4.3.2e above). It is interesting to examine

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566 “Dokic advances to semis as seeds falls (sic)”, ABC News Online, September 24, 2000.
other same-sport descriptions of male successes and failures against those provided for females because, in previous studies and as noted above, verbal attributions of strength and weakness for women and men have contrasted sharply. For example, Duncan found that where a man’s play was “aggressive”, a woman’s was “active”. Duncan also found strength descriptors heavily favoured males.568

When Australia’s male basketball team lost to Canada on September 17, News Online likened their campaign to two ancient battles between Pyrrhus, king of Epirus and the Romans. Pyrrhus won but at great cost to his army.

The 11-point loss means the host nation will have to beat either Yugoslavia or Russia to have any chance of reaching the medal round. But even that could be a Pyrrhic victory, with Team USA their likely first-up opponents in the knockout phase.569

No such analogies appeared in descriptions of the women’s defeat by the United States. The Opals merely “settled for their best Olympic basketball showing”, a silver medal.570

Australia won two medals in shooting on September 17. Michael Diamond “snared” his gold medal. In the same report, there were mixed descriptions of Annemarie Forder’s efforts. At first she “captured” her bronze medal. Six paragraphs later, she merely “collected” it. And in the final paragraph of the report, Forder “took bronze”.571

568 Duncan et al., 1990, p.3.
570 “Opals take out silver”, ABC News Online, October 1, 2000.
However, several times Australian male and female athletes shared metaphors describing their challenges or triumphs. In rowing, our men’s and women’s teams had to “battle” against their opponents. Our softballers had a “stunning victory” and our male swimmers celebrated a “victory inflicted on” the United States’ 4x100 metres relay team.

(v) Only female athletes were described in trivialising language on News Online. As Table 4.2.2e(v) shows, sportswomen were referred to as “girls” on 12 occasions (100 per cent of references), while sportsmen were never referred to as “boys”, “lads” or “young men”. Chi-square analysis (see Table 4.2.2ee(v)) reveals a significant difference between women and men in the incidence of trivialising references to them, \(X^2(1) = 12, p = .0005\). Hypothesis 5(ev) is not supported.

At first glance, News Online appears to have demeaned adult female athletes through repeated references to them as “girls”. Closer inspection reveals the word “girls” appeared three times from the hand of journalists. In softball reports on September 25, the Australian team was twice described as “the Aussie girls”. On September 30, readers learned the Hockeyroos’ gold medal win against Argentina “also helped Charlesworth’s girls overcome the humiliation of failing to qualify for the Champions Trophy final in May …”.

571 “Australia claims shooting gold and bronze”, ABC News Online, September 17, 2000.
574 “Incredible start”, ABC News Online, September 17, 2000.
Once, a coach infantilised his team. When the Hockeyroos’ drew with Spain on September 19, Ric Charlesworth said, “I have faith in my girls and I know they can deliver.”

The majority of references to females as “girls” appeared towards the end of the Games. In all instances except one, female athletes devalued their team mates or rivals (see Figure 4.3.2ee below). Australian walker Jane Saville described her fellow competitors as “the other girls”. Opals captain Michelle Timms said she was “very proud of [her] girls” after the basketballers gained a spot in the gold medal playoff. Melinda Gainsford-Taylor said a dropped baton in the 4x100 metres relay was “more disappointing for the young girls” in the team. In a post-race interview, Australian 4x400 metres relay runner Nova Peris-Kneebone described the team as “Us four girls …”.

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Figure 4.3.2ee

References to females as “girls” by source on News Online*

* Some sports were reported more than once within a bulletin or on successive days.

The practice of infantilising female athletes has been classed as linguistic sexism because it implies a lower status for women than men.583 Two concerns emerge from this study’s findings. The first is that sexism and stereotypes persist on News Online. ABC journalists called women “girls”. In the absence of bylines on News Online we can only speculate about the gender of the reporters. Nor is it possible to determine whether “girls” indicated an easy familiarity with or disrespect for the athletes concerned. The result is the same – online readers saw adult female athletes portrayed as children and thus as anomalies.

The second, and perhaps greater, concern is that sportswomen call themselves and other sportswomen “girls”. Two-thirds of all “girls” references came from the mouths of Australian female athletes. Those critical of the media’s role in advancing male hegemony in sport, through practices such as ignoring, trivialising and infantilising female athletes, may wish to include sportswomen in their calls for attitudinal reform.

(vi) Sports in which females competed were more likely to be gender marked than were sports for male competitors. News Online’s Olympic coverage contained 275 instances of gender marking. As Table 4.2.2e(vi) shows, sports contested by women were marked 145 times (53 per cent) while men’s events were marked 130 times (47 per cent). The difference based on gender was not significant, $X^2(1) = .818, p = .366$, as Table 4.2.2ee(vi) shows. Hypothesis 5(evi) is supported.

Instances of gender marked sports for females and males were evenly distributed across News Online splash pages (21 for each gender in headlines and summaries). However, differences emerge when Tier Two reports are categorised as combined gender or single gender reports. As Figure 4.3.2eee shows (below), in combined gender reports, male sports were more likely than female sports to be gender marked. Male sports received 51 per cent of 160 instances of gender marking. This could be attributed to the greater number of words written about male athletes and their sports in combined gender reports.
Combined and single gender reports also contained superfluous gender marking. At times, despite a clear indication of an athlete’s gender (the athlete was named), their sports were marked. For example, on September 27, News Online reported on Australia’s results in kayaking:

Australia’s Nathan Baggaley has qualified for the semi-finals of the men’s K1 500 kayaking. Baggaley finished third in his heat behind the fastest qualifier, Poland’s Grzegorz Kotowicz. Baggaley finished in 1:41:854 compared to Kotowicz’s 1:40:204.

Australia’s Katrin Borchert advanced to the semi-finals of the women’s K1 500, after finishing fourth in her heat …

In combined reports, these redundancies affected more women than men but, again, because male sports were reported more often, they did not affect the overall proportions of marking by gender.
Instances of gender marking of female sports occurred more often in reports where female sports were the sole focus. As Figure 4.3.2eeeee shows (below), female sports were gender marked 46 times across 62 reports, compared with 27 times in 44 reports for male sports (see Figure 4.3.2eeeee). For every report about female athletes, their sports were marked .74 times, compared with .61 times for males. Again, redundant gender marking boosted the count for both genders.

**Figure 4.3.2eeeee**

**Gender marked reports for females on News Online**

584 "Kayaking", ABC *News Online*, September 27, 2000. Italics are my emphasis.
Traditional broadcast media have devalued women’s sports contests, by gender marking sports with women participants to a higher degree than sports with men.\textsuperscript{585} In U.S. television coverage of basketball, men’s games were called the “national championship” while the women’s contest was called the “women’s national championship”.\textsuperscript{586}

\textbf{4.3.2(f) Pictures – Active and Passive Depictions of Female Athletes}

Sportswomen were twice as likely to be shown as active athletes than passive subjects in pictures on \textit{News Online}. This finding is similar to that of Kinnick who reported little, if any bias in newspaper representations of female athletes at the 1996 Olympics.\textsuperscript{587} As Table 4.2.2f shows, of the 35 pictures of sportswomen, 24 showed them competing in their sports while 11 pictures showed female athletes doing nothing at all.

\textsuperscript{585} Koivula, 1999, p.8.  
\textsuperscript{586} Duncan et al., 1990, p.2.  
Chi-square analysis reveals a significant difference between active and passive depictions of female athletes, $X^2(1) = 4.829$, $p = .028$, as Table 4.2.2ff shows. Hypothesis 5(f) is supported.\(^{588}\)

Passive depictions accounted for almost one-third of the 35 pictures of Australian females, as Figure 4.3.2f shows.

Figure 4.3.2f

Pictures of active and passive females on *News Online* \(^*\)

* Some pictures were repeated within a bulletin or in subsequent bulletins.

All 11 passive images on *News Online* defied the trend of previous studies where sportswomen competing in socially acceptable sports were more likely to be depicted as decorative subjects.\(^{589}\) However, passive images on *News Online* upheld the biased traditional of showing women in stereotypical poses.\(^{590}\) Six images of the

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\(^{588}\) Hypothesis 5(f) addresses research question 2(f) (see Chapter 1, section 12.2).

\(^{589}\) Mikosza and Phillips, 1999, p.11.

\(^{590}\) Shifflett and Revelle, 1994, p.147.
Hockeyroos showed them hugging in celebration. The women were not shown playing their male-appropriate sport.\textsuperscript{591}

Figure 4.3.2g

Passive women: Australia’s water polo team takes the first Olympic gold medal in the sport\textsuperscript{592}

As competitors in a sport with a reputation for hard body contact, Australia’s water polo players (seen above) were instead depicted celebrating on the pool deck, all smiles and posed for the camera.\textsuperscript{593}

\textsuperscript{591} “Second gold for history-making Hockeyroos”, ABC News Online, September 30, 2000; and “Hockeyroos down NZ in super league”, ABC News Online, September 24, 2000.

\textsuperscript{592} Source: ABC News Online, Sydney 2000 picture gallery.

\textsuperscript{593} “Water polo gold”, ABC News Online, September 24, 2000; and “Australia takes gold in water polo cliffhanger”, ABC News Online, September 24, 2000.
Passive portrait: Cathy Freeman after winning gold in the 400 metres

Figure 4.3.2h

Three passive pictures of Cathy Freeman (repeats of the shot seen above) showed her with the Aboriginal and Australian flags draped around her shoulders, hands on hips and looking upwards. These images, published across three days, helped gain her the title of most-photographed individual female athlete.
Active athlete: Cathy Freeman turns into the straight in her 400 metres heat

Freeman appeared in a total of 12 pictures across the Games. Her profile, along with pictures of triathlete Michellie Jones, the hockey, water polo, rowing and kayaking teams, helped propel depictions of sportswomen competing in male-appropriate sports to the fore on the Web site.

Compared with Pringle and Gordon’s findings, where passive depictions of females outnumbered action shots by more than 2 to 1, these results may indicate a turnaround in the under-representation of some women as active participants in their sports.

596 Source: ABC News Online, Sydney 2000 picture gallery
4.4 Summary of the Findings

In sum, the following findings indicate a certain gender imbalance in News Online’s coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games.\textsuperscript{598}

- What was the level of coverage (total words) given to female and male athletes?

At first glance, News Online’s coverage of Australian female and male athletes in Sydney seems equitable. Women received 49.5 per cent of words and men received 50.5 per cent. Based on previous trends in the traditional sports media, sportswomen received more than their fair share of total coverage.

The major point, though, is that more than one-fifth of all words about females highlighted one competitor – Cathy Freeman. At the same time, Australia’s elite female athletes who competed in team sports were deprived in coverage and in content on News Online. The coverage profile of these team players (33 per cent of Tier Two words) does not match their athletic performances in Sydney (67 per cent of Australian female gold medals). A representative profile for these team players is important because “it helps break stereotypes of women holding ancillary positions by showing them in active leadership and decision-making roles”.\textsuperscript{599}

- What was the level of coverage (total pictures) given to female and male athletes?

\textsuperscript{598} The findings are listed in order of the research questions posed in Chapter 1, sections 1.12.1 and 1.12.2.

\textsuperscript{599} Higgs and Weiller, 1994, p.2
Australian females received just 38 per cent of 93 pictures on *News Online*. Their profile still bettered that of newspapers where coverage has been as low as 11 per cent. Kachgal also found gross under-coverage for females in online images (13.6 per cent).\(^{600}\)

Certainly a select group of Australian athletes received the bulk of pictorial coverage on *News Online*. Three individual male athletes accounted for 27 of the 58 male images published. More telling is the breakdown of women’s pictures. Two individual females and one women’s team received 23 of the 35 images of sportswomen. This finding appears to support Kachgal’s conclusion that online sports sites, by giving females less visual coverage and ignoring some sportswomen altogether, may marginalise female athletes in the same way that traditional media do.\(^{601}\)

- Did reports about male athletes contain more hyperlinks than reports about female athletes?

Proportionately, females and males were equally well represented in hyperlinked reports on *News Online*. Females received 52 per cent of links and males received 48 per cent.

However, individuals could navigate around the ABC Web site in different ways. The structural differences between the site’s Top Stories and Olympic News pages saw combined sports and combined gender reports hidden behind unrelated headlines on the Top Stories splash page. As a result, viewers could have bypassed several Olympic reports containing hyperlinks about Australian athletes of both genders.

\(^{600}\) Kachgal, 2001.
the worth of including a whole new set of additives, such as hyperlinks, which online readers may or may not elect to use.

- Did report placement on *News Online*’s summary page give male athletes more prominence than female athletes?

The traditional media have been criticised for promoting male-dominance of sport,\(^{603}\) in part via the practice of excluding women’s achievements from mainstream sports coverage. *News Online* appears not to have followed this course. Unlike its print counterparts,\(^{604}\) the prime location of the Top Stories splash page was not out of bounds for women and their sports. Women received 56 per cent of all Top Stories about Olympic athletes and men received 44 per cent.

- Did combined reports favour one gender? That is, in reports about both female and male athletes, who is covered first?

*News Online*’s practice of giving men’s events prominence over women’s sports when they appeared in combined reports devalues women’s accomplishments and fails to accord them the recognition they deserve.\(^{605}\) Sixty-two per cent of combined reports first mentioned male competitors and their sports compared with 38 per cent of reports for female competitors.

- Did the level of coverage (in words and pictures) correlate with the number of medals won by Australian female and male athletes?

\(^{603}\) Hargreaves, 1986, p. 151.

\(^{604}\) Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990.

\(^{605}\) Hargreaves, 1994, p. 194.
Deserving athletes were denied exposure when unrelated hyperlinks appeared with Tier Two reports accessed from the Top Stories page. Readers who navigated to Olympic reports via the Olympic News splash page were more likely to encounter text with related links.

Three athletes accounted for almost half of all hyperlinks. In terms of representing the reality of Australian athletes’ performances at the Games, hyperlinks appeared to promote females’ success (15 links accompanied 12 medal reports) while ignoring males’ achievements (14 links with 29 medal reports). Male medal wins were under-represented in hyperlinks, making men less prominent than women in contextual coverage.

From a production point of view, News Online under-utilised the power of the hyperlink to provide layers of depth in its coverage of female and male athletes.

News Online “repurposes” content from its radio and television news arms and, presumably, radio and television journalists filed text, audio and video reports across the Games. Yet the relative absence of males in hyperlinks is at odds with the trend of Olympic coverage for males in words and pictures in this and other studies, as discussed in earlier sections.

Perhaps hyperlinks are not a favoured tool in ABC online news production. Those responsible for production and layout decisions on a site with a high rotation of news and sports reports may see the publication of text as their first priority. They may have doubts about

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601 Ibid.
602 As noted, some medal wins were reported more than once within a bulletin or on successive days. Associated links were also duplicated.
The findings show Australian women seem to have received much more coverage (49.5 per cent of words) than their medal success warranted (38 per cent). This contrasts with the 38.7 per cent of coverage for female athletes who won 45.1 per cent of Australia’s medals at the 1990 Commonwealth Games.\textsuperscript{606}

However, the data are consistent with American television coverage of the 2000 Olympics that also revealed the contradiction in over-coverage for U.S. females. To gain exposure, U.S. sportswomen had to compete in socially acceptable, individual sports.\textsuperscript{607} Ambivalence also advanced the profile of Australian sportswomen on 	extit{News Online}. They got more coverage if they competed as individuals, in inappropriate sports.

Female coverage in words was not proportionate to success. Cathy Freeman’s Olympic campaign, albeit in a male-appropriate sport, contributed more than 6 per cent of women’s coverage in words. Nor did male coverage correlate with their success in Sydney. Australian men won 62 per cent of Australia’s medals but received 50.5 per cent of words.

- Did the level of coverage (in words and pictures) accurately reflect the gender composition of the Australian Olympic team?

Compared with their participation (55 per cent), Australian men may have warranted more than 50.5 per cent of words on 	extit{News Online}. However, sportsmen seem to have been over-covered in pictures (62 per cent).

\textsuperscript{606} Pringle and Gordon, 1995.  
Note: Pringle and Gordon’s study compared coverage for female athletes from all nations with the percentage of medals won by Australian sportswomen.  
\textsuperscript{607} Tuggle, Huffman, and Rosengard, 2002, pp.371-72.
The extent of under-representation of females in pictures on *News Online* is not severe in comparison with their profile in regional Australian newspapers, or on sports Web sites (13.6 per cent of images).\(^{608}\) This study suggests *News Online* may have reflected the proportion of medals won by Australian females in 2000 (38 per cent). Against the number of Australian women competing in Sydney (45 per cent), females may have deserved more pictorial coverage than they received. The latter finding lends some preliminary support to the case that female athletes may not be considered as newsworthy as male athletes on sports Web sites.\(^{609}\)

- Which sports received the most coverage for female athletes? That is, did females competing in female-appropriate sports receive more coverage (in words) than those females competing in inappropriate sports?

Scholars have suggested women who compete in male-appropriate sports challenge traditional sex role stereotypes about sport involvement. As a result, they get less media coverage.\(^{610}\) *News Online* may be challenging these stereotypes too. Females competing in male-appropriate sports were featured twice as often during the Sydney Games as those competing in socially acceptable sports. The mean number of words for male-appropriate sports on *News Online* was 1609.6, while female-appropriate sports yielded a mean of 499.5 and the mean for neutral sports was 390.5 words.

Or, perhaps the gender appropriateness of sports is a dead issue. Based on his findings of little difference in newspaper coverage of

\(^{608}\) Alston, 1996; and Kachgal, 2001, p.197.

\(^{609}\) Ibid, p.184.

\(^{610}\) Jones, Murrell, and Jackson, 1999, p. 2; and Theberge, 1997.
appropriate and inappropriate sports for women at the 1996 Olympic Games, Vincent suggests such classifications are “no longer an accurate reflection of how society views women competing in sports requiring speed, strength and power”.611

- Did reports comment more often on one gender’s appearance, relationships, emotions and successes and failures?

No differences based on gender were apparent in proportionate references to athletes’ appearance or relationships. However, females’ emotions were seen as relevant in News Online’s descriptions of their athletic performances. The 63 per cent of emotional descriptors for women included frequent references to loss of control and emotional vulnerability. The study also found instances of male “ownership” of female teams, and attributions of women’s success to male guidance or direction.

Males were also more likely to be recognised for their success (57.5 per cent of references), and more likely to have their failures highlighted (60 per cent of references) than females. In the first instance, this could be attributed to the number of medals won by Australian men in Sydney. The number of failure references for men could also reflect the higher number of events they contested.

Previous research suggests the media exhibit bias by referring more often to females’ than males’ appearance, relationships, emotions and failures. News Online’s focus on female emotions echoes this practice, reminding females who venture into the domain of male sports that they occupy a secondary status.612

611 Vincent, 2000, p.2645.
Did reports on female and male athletes contain linguistic sexism?

Men were called by their last name only (54.5 per cent of references) and first and last name (52 per cent of references) more often than women. This finding would seem to reflect the greater coverage for men and the number of male competitors in the Australian Olympic team. However, the use of first names only was equally distributed across genders, suggesting women (per capita) were placed in a subordinate position to men.

In contrast to print and broadcast media where the absence of martial metaphors from descriptions of women's sport is seen as sexist because it portrays females as passive and unassertive, News Online used slightly more sport-war metaphors for female events than male events. Men's sports received 48 per cent of martial metaphors.

Only women were trivialised by the use of infantilising references. George et al noted a similar finding in their content analysis of newspaper sports coverage. Adult female athletes were often referred to as "girls", with tabloids using the term repeatedly. Male athletes were never referred to as "boys".

Twelve times adult sportswomen were called "girls" on News Online. Eight of these references appeared in direct quotes from Australian female athletes.

Regardless of who does it, infantilisation demeans adult females and helps to undermine sportswomen's status. Its apparent acceptance and use by contemporary Australian female athletes who called their adult

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612 Cashmore, 2000, p.182.
peers “girls” begs the question, “Do they care?” Hargreaves has noted some women (and men) support, accommodate or collude in existing patterns of discrimination in sport, while others oppose them and struggle for change.615 Sportswomen looking for change will have priorities. If one of them is how they are treated in the media, some female athletes may desire more coverage ahead of reversing perceived minor cultural conventions (such as being called girls).

Although differences in the frequency of gender marked sports were not great (53 per cent for females, 47 per cent for males), the findings suggest asymmetrical gender marking on News Online marginalised female sports. When male contests were simply called athletic events, for example “the 20 kilometres walk final”,616 News Online portrayed them as the universal or norm. Labelling women’s contests as women’s events, for example, “the women’s 20 kilometre-walk”,617 portrayed them as anomalies and inferior.

• Did pictures depict female athletes as passive rather than active?

Sixty-nine per cent of images of sportswomen on News Online framed them as active, competitive athletes. However, women competing in team sports were more likely to be seen in passive, stereotypical postures such as hugging one another or posed, smiling, for the camera.

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615 Hargreaves, 1993, p.179.
4.5 Summary and Preview

This chapter has concluded that the representation of and respect for Australian athletes in Olympic sports coverage on ABC News Online could indicate bias in the treatment of sportswomen. It has discussed each gender’s coverage profile (against previous research and comparative indices), how one athlete was favoured over her 625 Australian team mates and how, despite their contribution to Australia’s medal tally, women competing in team sports received less attention than individual athletes of both genders and males competing in team sports.

These findings raise questions about the implications of News Online’s sports coverage for social learning, the notion of male hegemony in sport, ABC policies on gender representation, national sports participation and Australian media’s treatment of female athletes and their sports. These questions are addressed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Sport belongs to all human beings. [It] provides opportunities to learn, to experience success, teamwork, and moments of excellence. But sport is also a tremendous medium of communication and emancipation which can help build girls’ and women’s physical and psychological well-being and awareness and, hence, their role in society.618

5.1 Introduction
The major thrust of this thesis has been to examine sports coverage by the online media. This study has analysed ABC News Online’s treatment of Australian female and male athletes across the 2000 Olympic Games. The aims were to explore whether Australia’s national free-to-air broadcaster perpetuates the gender bias evident in traditional media’s sports coverage, how News Online’s performance compares with ABC editorial guidelines, and if sports coverage for females has improved in Australia since 1996.

This chapter reviews the findings presented in Chapter 4 and discusses their implications in relation to theory, ABC policy and practice. The overall importance of this study to sports media research will also be discussed, along with recommendations for future practice and research.

5.2 The Hypotheses and the Findings
Australian sportswomen did not receive equitable treatment in Olympic Games coverage on News Online, as indicated by the findings presented in Chapter 4.

There was partial support for the first hypothesis that females and males would receive differential coverage. Females were under-covered in words and pictures but there was no significant statistical difference, based on gender, between the number of hyperlinks, the number of lead stories on the splash pages or the order of appearance of text within combined gender reports.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that female coverage in words and pictures would be less than their share of medals warranted, while males would be over-covered compared with medals won. It was not supported. Against the representation indices constructed for this study, females were over-covered and males were under-covered on *News Online*.

The third hypothesis proposed that females would receive less coverage and males would receive more coverage than warranted by their proportion of Australian competitors. This was the case.

Contrary to the fourth hypothesis, females competing in socially acceptable sports did not receive more coverage on *News Online* than those women competing in inappropriate sports.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that the portrayal of female athletes on *News Online* would not reflect previously identified forms of gender bias. There was partial support for this prediction. The study found no statistically significant difference between females and males in the number of references to their appearance, relationships, and successes and failures. Nor was there a significant difference by gender in the use of first and last names, first names only, martial metaphors and gender marking of sports.
Differences in the depiction of female athletes on *News Online* also supported Hypothesis 5. Significantly more images of active sportswomen than passive sportswomen were published on the site.

However, the findings suggest significant gender bias in *News Online*’s more frequent mentions of female athletes’ emotions, greater use of last names only for male athletes, and exclusive use of trivialising language to describe sportswomen.

Overall, *News Online*’s Olympic coverage may signal an improvement in the treatment for female athletes through the provision of generally positive images of them. In contrast, for those “other” women who play team sports, the prospect of equitable coverage seems, at best, elusive.

### 5.3 The Findings in Relation to Theory and the ABC Charter

There are, of course, several explanations for gender imbalance on *News Online*. Fewer Olympic sports were open to females than males. Australia’s national team was comprised of many more males than females. In the sports media, medal success usually connotes coverage and Australian men won more medals than Australian women. It is difficult to imagine that female athletes will achieve parity of coverage as long as Olympic politics restricts their access to the sports arena (and medals). Whatever the reasons, the implications of these data for theory and practice should be examined.

The data show *News Online* may have given Australian sportswomen greater coverage (49.5 per cent of words) than was warranted by the dual standards of female medal success (38 per cent) and team population (45 per cent). What detracts from this proposition is how females achieved this representation or recognition. One female athlete was “news-privileged” in ABC coverage of the Games. Cathy
Freeman’s over-coverage meant other Australian sportswomen, especially those competing in team events, were not as well represented.

On a theoretical level, these findings are an example of the symbolic modelling variable in Bandura’s approach to social learning.\(^{619}\) Under-coverage of women’s team sports on *News Online* may instil or perpetuate among its audience the belief that sport, especially at elite level, is the province of males (and perhaps some females). From either the modelling or the cognitive theoretical perspective, certain behaviours (individual female competition and success), particularly when performed by models young online audiences can identify with (such as Cathy Freeman), have a high likelihood of being emulated. In relation to the attention variable in Gerbner’s cultivation theory, the representation of and respect for the few female athlete role models portrayed on *News Online* may be cultivating among heavy online readers the belief that male guidance provides the only viable path to success (solution) for a bunch of girls who cry a lot (problem). Such conjectures need research of ABC *News Online*’s audience to be tested properly.

The data also show that when weighed against the proportion of Australian female competitors in Sydney (45 per cent), females warranted much more pictorial coverage than they received on *News Online* (38 per cent). More images of Australian men than women were published across the Games. Multiple pictures of a select few female athletes contributed substantially to women’s overall coverage, so there was little exposure of new or less well-known female faces to

\(^{619}\) Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling of other peoples’ behaviours, attitudes and reactions (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory suggests that both what is portrayed in the media and what may be left out may affect people’s interpretations, perceptions, attitudes, perceived norms and other cognitive or emotional processes (Malamuth and Impett, 2001).
online readers. Absent from News Online Olympic reports were images of beach volleyball gold medallists Natalie Cook and Kerri Ann Pottharst, silver medallists the Opals (basketball), and bronze medallists Petria Thomas (swimming), Katrin Borchert (kayaking), shooter Annemarie Forder and the softball team.620

Two Australian athletes finished the 2000 Games in elite company. Equestrian competitor Andrew Hoy and Hockeyroos’ captain Rechelle Hawkes joined Dawn Fraser as the only Australians to win gold medals in the same event at three Olympics. Online audiences had two opportunities to see pictures of Hoy on September 22, once in a combined sports report and once in an individual report.621

On September 30, News Online covered the Hockeyroo’s gold medal win. In two reports, about one-third of the written coverage was devoted to Hawkes’ achievements.622 Neither report featured a captioned picture of her. Instead, News Online recycled a wide-angle shot of eight nameless hockey players, several with their backs to the camera or faces obscured.

Again, on a theoretical level, these findings can be related to the basic symbolic modelling processes in social learning. Pictures, according to Bandura, can be effective conveyors of behaviour.623 The extensive coverage of Australian male athletes, in images and words, may instil or reinforce among News Online’s audiences the

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620 These athletes’ achievements were reported in the sampled News Online Olympic bulletins so there were opportunities to complement their coverage in words with pictures.
622 “Second gold for history-making Hockeyroos” and “Hockeyroo’s magic brings second gold”, ABC News Online, September 30, 2000.
belief that, despite their achievements in Sydney, women’s sport has no value or relevance compared with men’s sport. Such propositions also require testing through audience research.

The ABC’s guidelines for news presentation include the goals of accurate, impartial and objective journalism. Fair reporting does not mean “merely an endorsement of the status quo”.

Any practice that infers a lower status for sportswomen or devalues their contests, such as less coverage in words and pictures, emphasis on emotions, a higher degree of gender marking and exclusive infantilisation – all of which were observed in News Online’s Olympics coverage – conflicts with the organisation’s guidelines. ABC journalists are required to treat all sections of society with respect and to avoid the use of prejudicial language and images. Images are prejudicial if they denigrate or discriminate, perpetuate myths or reinforce stereotypes, or convey irrelevant or outdated and biased views.

Journalists have a defence. If the material is factual, it can be published. The passive images published on News Online between September 24 and 30, 2000, of the women’s water polo and the hockey teams were factual. All athletes were framed reacting to their gold medal wins. However, water polo and hockey are also power sports where players swim or run, throw or hit balls, dodge, charge, challenge

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624 Similar principles are enshrined in the AJA’s Code of Ethics. Clause 2 of the Code requires journalists not to place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability.
and block shots, and score goals. News Online viewers never saw these factual images from the pool or pitch.

Under-coverage of females in images, coupled with portrayals of them as passive subjects, may instil or reinforce in News Online’s audiences the stereotypical belief that women’s sports are less powerful, less interesting and thus separate and different from men’s sports. Again, such conjecture needs detailed audience research to be tested properly.

And if it is supported, News Online may have placed sportswomen in a position of weakness that serves the interests of dominant social groups. Hegemonic groups, according to Duncan, use the naturalness of photographs to legitimate their own interests. She asserts passive images of female athletes serve to shape consensus or consent to existing hegemonic arrangements in sport and society, and their message “gets passed off as objective and unmotivated at the same time as it serves some interests more than others”.628

Exclusionary or disproportionate reportage and gender-stereotyped messages are inherent in traditional media coverage of women’s sports. As well as encouraging biased impressions about sport as a socially unacceptable calling for females, they are contrary to a wider social awareness of sportswomen’s achievements.

The Internet’s capacity for mass communication, at least in the industrialised world, may reinforce or stop these traditional sports socialisation messages. Reinforcement of the messages of male hegemony in sport occurs when the media simultaneously trivialise or distort their portrayals of women’s sport.

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This study found some evidence of the stereotypical portrayal of female athletes, and their maturity and emotions, seen in traditional sports reporting and so effective in undermining any potential threat to male power posed by sportswomen. The ABC may be accused, in this instance, of advancing or legitimating the dominant ideologies and patriarchal values in Australian society.

5.4 The Findings in Relation to Practice, Issues Arising and Implications

*News Online*’s failure to accord females competing in Olympic team sports coverage consistent with their success has wider social and practical implications.

Women’s sport in Australia suffers from low participation and high drop out rates. The Olympic sports of cycling, swimming and tennis, the most popular sports among Australian females, attract only 1.7 million participants. Far fewer women and girls (a total of 245,300 participants) play basketball, hockey, soccer, softball and volleyball.629 The sporting and social reality is that these team sports are not fashionable.


Note: The following figures refer to all sport and physical activities and so differ from the figures and trends for organised sport participation by Australian females and males as described in Chapter 1, section 1.8. Swimming has more than one million participants. In second place is another female-appropriate sport, tennis (512,400 participants). The most popular male-appropriate sport among women is cycling (232,600), while equestrian (141,000) is the top neutral sport. Official figures are not available for diving, synchronised swimming, trampolining, water polo or beach volleyball. The ABS also warns that figures for athletics (3800), triathlon (4000) and shooting (2500) are too unreliable for general use. With these reservations in mind, the traditionally feminine sport of swimming appears to be twice as popular with women as all the male-appropriate sports combined (.47 million participants) and covered during the 2000 Games on *News Online*. Female participation for team sports is: basketball (91,400), hockey (29,200), soccer (34,000), softball (31,500) and volleyball (59,200).
Nor is their popularity likely to increase while ever the media define female team sports as unworthy or less worthy of coverage than individual contests for both genders or male team sports. The relative absence of women’s team sports and their players from News Online Olympic sports coverage could compound the “symbolic annihilation” of these female athletes.630

A positive slant is that News Online’s Games coverage departs from the practice of reporting extensively on female-appropriate sports. Reports covered female individual and team sports across sex-types rather than highlighting socially acceptable sports for women. Ironically, reporting on women’s sports that emphasise physical strength, stamina and body contact is out of synchrony, both with popularised Australian sports and the structure of the Olympic Games.

As Hardin notes, media coverage that accurately reflects the reality of the Games must also emphasise sexual difference, because sexual difference is part and parcel of the Olympic Games. She asserts women will be portrayed as more suited for aesthetic sports as long as the Olympics dictate it by creating gendered categories such as synchronised swimming and softball for women and boxing and baseball for men.

We cannot expect completely ‘gender-equitable’ coverage of an event that is not fair in the opportunities it offers men and women, and we cannot expect to see the stereotypes entwined with sexual difference disappear in realistic mediated coverage of an event that perpetuates gender differences.631

630 Kane and Greendorfer, 1994, p.34.
631 Hardin et al., 2002, pp.75-76.
If Hardin is right, where does this leave discrepancies in intra-gender coverage? Olympics reports on *News Online* gave predominance to a few Australian sportswomen. Other female members of the national team, regardless of their performances, skill, dedication and courage, were not as well represented. Perhaps what is needed is a new definition of success … one that gives all athletes a fair go.

Two years before the Sydney Olympics, Cashman and Hughes suggested success should not be confined to medals won or “a crude assessment of money spent versus medals achieved”. They offered a broader definition where success goes “beyond medal achievement to other signs of benefit, such as improved world rankings and the achievement of personal ‘bests’”. 632

The above suggestion strikes at the core of modern sports journalism where entertainment and news values collide. Winning is an intrinsic element and losers are often ignored, or chastised or even vilified. Superlatives abound. Male athletes are lionised as demi-gods. Absolutes are encouraged, often at the cost of balance. There is no space or air time in sports reporting for the “reasonably” great ones.

A new view of success is only half the battle. It will mean little while sports coverage remains a function of where news is most likely to happen (the topical and geographical areas of male sports), or of male dominance of media sports departments, or of assumptions that audiences are only interested in men’s sports. If Australian audiences are truly to see Australian athletes, then sports coverage on their own *ABC News Online* must also rise above these obstacles.

5.5 Importance of the Research

One of the aims of this study was to investigate whether there has been an improvement in the coverage of women’s sport in Australia since 1996.633 Studies from 1988 to 1996 show consistent, flagrant under­coverage for females in Australian media. On television, sports air time for women reached a high of just 2 per cent. Female sports were ignored on commercial radio (0.4 per cent) and got 3.4 per cent of air time on non-commercial radio. The best result for them in sports magazines was 7.9 per cent of coverage, while 10.7 per cent of newspaper coverage went to sportswomen.634

With 49.5 per cent of words, 38 per cent of pictures and placement of reports about women in prime positions on the site’s splash page, the quantitative presence of Australian female athletes on News Online appears to easily outstrip that achieved in the above studies.635 However, the findings also suggest the habits and practices ingrained in the ABC’s traditional sports reporting have migrated to the new environment of the Web.

In one respect, this is not surprising. Presumably, the bulk of ABC News Online’s “repurposed” Olympic sports content originated from the organisation’s radio and television newsrooms. Inequitable coverage, stereotyping and trivialisation of female athletes in original copy will not necessarily be filtered out in the transition to online publication. Yet, if biased newsroom practices are circumvented, the Web potentially offers an infinite news hole where the

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635 As noted in Chapter 2, it is difficult to make comparisons between studies because research methods and media vary.
accomplishments of female athletes can be reported, evaluated and popularised to the same extent as male athletic performances in text, images, graphics and sound.

Research suggests traditional media tend to reaffirm male hegemony in sport, valuing only the accomplishments of male athletes.636 This study’s findings appear to support assertions that the same applies to online sports media. News Online’s treatment of female athletes suggests the gender-stereotyped messages inherent in the traditional media geared toward young audiences are replicated in cyberspace.

The messages of this new electronic medium (both what is portrayed and what is left out) are important because of its growing relevance and “the extent to which the mass media’s gender-stereotyped messages affect adolescent girls’ perceptions of their roles in society”.637 U.S. research shows girls are getting socialised with the Internet at an earlier age. Pre-teens spend as much as 20 hours a week online. As age goes up, so does the amount of time spent on Web sites.638

Only some of Australia’s female Olympians were visible and had their achievements acknowledged on News Online. The portrayal of Australian sportswomen was not free of stereotypical depictions or irrelevant references to their emotionality, maturity and dependence. Yet, when compared with the messages of recognition and respect for sportswomen in Australian and overseas traditional and new sporting

637 Robertson, 1997, p.103.
media, these findings may be encouraging.\textsuperscript{639} News Online’s Olympic performance may not match the Australian Sports Commission’s goals of positive portrayal and significant coverage for women’s sport, but at least the door is ajar.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research and Practice
The Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney in 2000 honoured the centennial of female athletes competing in the Olympics. A record number of 4069 sportswomen, from more countries than ever before, competed in 44 per cent of all events. For the first time, women comprised 45.2 per cent of the Australian Olympic team. By 2004, Olympic officials predict there will be more women Olympians with their numbers finally reaching half the athlete population.\textsuperscript{640} Perhaps Australia’s Olympic team for Athens and media sports coverage will also reflect this worthy goal.

In 2000, a worldwide audience went online for Olympic news. In the United States, with the 15 to 21-hour time difference, the Sydney Olympics were “the perfect games for the Internet”. NBC’s Web site (nbcolympics.com) drew more than 66 million page views from home audiences. More than 56 million page views were recorded for olympics.com, the official Olympic Web site.\textsuperscript{641} In 2004, because of the eight-hour time difference, Australian audiences too may choose to “watch” the Athens Games on the Web.

\textsuperscript{639} Perhaps these positive findings are due, in part, to the study’s methodology. Kinnick (1998, p.234) argues that quantitative analysis “counts” both the presence and absence of bias. Methodologies such as rhetorical analysis lend themselves to critical analysis of the most biased passages and images. For example, Duncan’s (1990) study of Olympic photographs intentionally selected images that suggested sexual difference; photos that did not suggest bias were not analysed. A second explanation is that journalistic practices may have caught up with contemporary social attitudes by reflecting greater acceptance of females in sport (Vincent, 2000).

\textsuperscript{640} International Olympic Committee, Promoting Women’s Sport in the Olympic Games: Statistics (IOC, 2001), cited October 15 2001; available from http://www.olympic.org/ioc/e/org/women/wom en io e.html, p.3.
Much of the research cited in this study has focused on traditional media’s sports coverage in western, capitalist societies. Now, researchers are mindful of online media’s capacity for mass (even global), simultaneous communication, and the technology’s attendant potential to reinforce the status quo or advocate social change. For these reasons, and given the reported drop-off in female sports coverage in traditional media in non-Olympic periods, further investigation of online media’s coverage of sports and its athletes in Olympic and non-Olympic periods is warranted. So is a longitudinal study of sports reporting on the Web.

The 2004 Athens Games would provide an opportunity to compare ABC News Online coverage across two Olympics. Will News Online again under-represent the achievements of some female athletes? Will the stereotypes of tearful adolescents in 2000 be replayed, or will they be replaced by a kind of sports reporting that positively portrays and significantly canvasses the breadth, depth and quality of females’ performances? Research is also warranted into how and why ABC sports journalists and editors make decisions about what to cover and what they think about their sports coverage. The Internet’s interactive technology such as chat rooms or message boards and mailing lists could be used to survey online audiences’ perceptions of Web sports coverage.\(^{642}\)


\(^{642}\) Wimmer and Dominick (2000, pp.418-420) note the Internet offers new opportunities for survey researchers. Internet surveys can be distributed in different ways: by email, on the Web, or a combination of the two. But they also warn that, like all new technologies, net surveys have both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths include cost (savings of $10-$20 per completed email survey compared with mail or telephone surveys), quicker turnaround time, and the ability to incorporate graphics, images and audio in the survey. On the downside, it is difficult to verify the respondent’s identity, and the Internet population is not a representative sample of, for example, the Australian population. Long questionnaires are less likely to get a response. Angry or aggressive respondents can sabotage researchers’ systems. Using the Internet as a research tool also raises unique ethical questions. For example, researchers who analyse the content of bulletin boards, newsgroups, list
In the meantime, it is hard to imagine a one-size-fits-all solution to the problems of under-coverage and differential treatment for sportswomen. Studies of women’s sport and its coverage, from 1983 to 1994, show a common finding – female sport is under-represented in newspaper, radio and television reports. Toohey argues it is clear, in the Australian context, that this research “has had little, if any, impact on reducing existing inequalities and changing the attitudes of those who decide what is to be seen, heard and read in the media”.643

Since 1994, at least two more Australian studies have proposed wide-ranging strategies for government, sports organisations and the media to improve the quantity and quality of portrayal of women’s sport in the media.644 Alston, for example, recommends that:

- government introduce guidelines for media to achieve gender equity in sports reporting;
- media outlets adopt a gender equity policy in sports reporting and that this be constantly monitored at editorial levels; and
- women’s sporting organisations lobby for change in media bias.645

Phillips’ approach also aims to raise awareness of the issues and consequences of disproportionate coverage of sport. Among his recommendations is the introduction of media awards for good quality women’s sports coverage.646

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643 Toohey, 1997, p.19. Toohey cites Fasting and Tangen’s 1983 study of Norwegian media; the Australian Sports Commission’s Women, Sport and the Media report (1985); U.S. television sports coverage (Wilson, 1990); Theberge’s 1991 content analysis of print media sports coverage; New Zealand sports media coverage (Ferkins, 1992); and Stoddart’s study of Australian sports media (1994).


645 Alston, 1996, pp.43-44.

While we wait to see whether these suggestions bear fruit, a regional Queensland university’s example may be setting new seeds. Final year journalism students at the university study online reporting. In 2000, they used content analysis to examine gender representation in ABC News Online’s coverage of the Olympic Games. The 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester were the focus for a content analysis of gender representation in online sports coverage by the BBC, CBC and TVNZ.

Through their research, students gain knowledge of a round that is highly valued by many of their potential employers. And they learn that while sport talks, biased or differential coverage will never tell the whole story.
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APPENDICES
## APPENDIX A

### Table 1.1

**Australian Olympic participation and gold medals by gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australians at the Olympic Games, 1948-1996</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>822 (26%)</td>
<td>2344</td>
<td>3166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total gold medals</td>
<td>34 (41%)*</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australians at the Olympic Games, 2000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>283 (45%)</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total gold medals</td>
<td>7 (44%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * includes two medals won by mixed teams.

Table 1.2

Number of events at the Olympic Games, 1948-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total events</th>
<th>Male events</th>
<th>Female events</th>
<th>Female % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>86**</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>98**</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>108**</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>132**</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2803</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>799**</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** includes mixed events.

Table 1.3

Australian Olympic medals by gender, 1948-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total medals</th>
<th>Male medals</th>
<th>Female medals</th>
<th>Female % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11*</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 311 195 116 37

Note: * includes one medal won by mixed teams.

### Table 1.4

Participants in organised sport and physical activities in Australia, 1996-97 to 1999-2000*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number ('000)</td>
<td>Participation rate (%)</td>
<td>Number ('000)</td>
<td>Participation rate (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>1 917.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>1 559.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>2 063.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>1 717.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>2 285.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>1 820.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>2 267.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>1 719.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * relates to persons aged 18 years and over who participated in organised sport or physical activity during the 12 months prior to interview in the year shown.

Source: ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities, 4177.0, 1999-2000
Table 2.1

Representation of women in sports coverage in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported by</th>
<th>Final year of study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Female coverage %</th>
<th>Female photos %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>N/p, TV</td>
<td>2.025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfister</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>N/p &amp; Mag</td>
<td>4.4, 2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rintala</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumpkin</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>N/p, TV</td>
<td>2.5, 1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>3.5, 7.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifflett</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>21, 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urquhart</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toohey</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>33, 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embrey</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoddart</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>N/p, TV</td>
<td>4.5, 1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higgs</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malec</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatten</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>11.9, 6.02, 21.5, 5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.2, 19.5, 7.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wann</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alston</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>5.8, 4.6, 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>9.5, 3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnick</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>N/p, Mag,</td>
<td>10.7, 6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV, Radio</td>
<td>2, 1.4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mikosza</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>40.9, 7.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastman</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>13, 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koivula</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardin</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachgal</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Web sites</td>
<td>18.3, 13.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * includes mixed coverage; †percentage of Top Stories.

Source: Respective studies
Table 3.1

Olympic sports by gender-appropriateness *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Female-appropriate</th>
<th>Male-appropriate</th>
<th>Gender-neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking/Canoe</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synch. Swimming</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trampolining</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Sports listed are those covered in sampled bulletins on ABC News Online and in which Australian female athletes competed at the 2000 Olympics. Each sport has been classified according to guidelines offered by scholars including Daddario (1998).
### Examples of thematic verbal descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Physiological attributes – includes irrelevant references to size, age, masculine attributes, feminine attributes etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Condescending descriptors – for example, “elegant presence”, “golden girl” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>References to marital status, boyfriends, girlfriends, family, responsibilities etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td>References to happiness, elation, disappointment, jubilation, tearfulness etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional dependence – for example, “couldn’t have done it without ...” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success and failure</strong></td>
<td>Explanations for winning – references to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>athletic skill/strength (“powerful”, “confident”, “skilful”, “smart”, “big and strong”, “dominant” etc);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experience (“veteran”, “been there before”, “experienced” etc);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>athletic consonance (“the day belonged to”, “his/her time”);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership (“led the way”, “was in charge” etc); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commitment (“focused”, “persistent” etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explanations for losing – references to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>athletic skill/strength ( “mental lapse”, “weary”, “shaky”, “choked” etc);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experience (“overwhelmed”, “green”, “inexperienced” etc);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>athletic consonance (“not her day” etc);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership (“lost control”, “panicked”, “struggled to stay in touch” etc); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commitment (“indecisive”, “distracted”, “lost concentration” etc).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Figure 3.1

ABC News Online Top Stories summary page, page 1.

Source: ABC News Online, accessed at http://www.abc.net.au/news
Figure 3.1

ABC News Online Top Stories summary page, page 2.

Source: ABC News Online
Figure 3.2

Tier Two report accessed via link from the News Online Top Stories page, page 1.

[Image of a webpage]

ABC News Online

Swede stuns Aussie butterfly stars

Sweden’s Lars Frølander has stunned Australian swimming fans Michael Klim and Geoff Huegill to take gold in the 100 metres butterfly at the International Aquatic Centre.

Either world record holder Klim or fastest qualifier Huegill had been considered certainties to win the event, with other expected to take silver.

For 80 metres that looked a confident prediction, with Klim leading at the first turn and having Huegill at his shoulders in second.

But over the second half of the last lap Frølander emerged from Klim’s wake in lane three to power home and touch first.

Frølander finished in 52 seconds flat, more than a second outside Klim’s world mark.

Klim was a heartbeat further back in 52.16, with Huegill 0.04 seconds astern.

It is the second time at the meet Australia has been denied what seemed a certain gold, after Susie O’Neill and Petria Thomas took silver and bronze to Misty Hyman’s gold in the women’s 200 metres freestyle.

Klim began the meet on an incredible high as part of Australia’s upset gold medal win over America in the 4x100 metres freestyle relay, breaking the world record in his leg.

That record lasted only two days before being usurped by Dutch sensation Pieter van den Hoogenband. Klim then missed the medals in finishing fourth of the 100 freestyle final.

He put that disappointment to focus on the fly, but fell short in his signature event.

Source: ABC News Online
Figure 3.2

Tier Two report accessed via link from the News Online Top Stories page, page 2.

"It was obvious that Lars would be a danger, he’s been very consistent the last few years,” Klein said. "I swam my best. Unfortunately it turned out that way.”

**Popov denied**

Americans Anthony Ervin and Gary Hall have shared the Olympic men’s 50m freestyle swimming gold medal after a dead heat.

The US pair both touched the wall in 21.98 seconds, with van den Hoogenband taking the bronze in 22.03.

Russia’s Alexander Popov finished sixth in the race, in which 0.53 seconds separated first from eighth.

Popov came into the race attempting to win the 50 metres gold for the third successive Olympic Games.

He was attempting the same feat in the 100 metres freestyle, but had to be content with silver behind van den Hoogenband and in front of Hall.

**Inky mark III**

Inge de Bruijn has set her third world record of the Olympics swim meet, clocking 24.13 seconds in the semi finals of the 50 metres freestyle.

The Dutch swimmer bettered the record of 24.39 seconds she set in Rio de Janeiro on June 10, finishing two-thirds of a length in front of American Amy van Dyken.

She had already set world records en route to gold in the 100 metres butterfly and 100 metres freestyle.

Sweden’s Therese Alshammer won the other semi in 24.50, beating out Dana Vollmer.

Susie O’Neill finished sixth in that semi and will miss the final.

**Mocanu takes double**

Diana Mocanu has captured her second gold of the Games, completing her backstroke double with a victory in the 200m.

The 16-year-old from Romania took the lead from Romanian-born French swimmer Roxana Maracineanu heading into the final turn and cruised to the victory in 2:08.16 minutes.

Maracineanu, the world champion who was squeezed out of the medals in fourth place in the 100m backstroke on Monday, took silver in 2:10.26.

Source: ABC News Online
Figure 3.2

Tier Two report accessed via link from the News Online Top Stories page, page 3.

and Japan’s Miki Nakao won the bronze in 2:11.05.

And Brooke Bennett of the United States has won the women's 100m freestyle Olympic swimming gold medal with the silver going to Ukraine's Yana Klochkova and the bronze to another American, Kaitlin Sandtheg.

Freeman wows crowd

Australia’s Cathy Freeman raised the roof when she raced into the semi-final of the 400 metres on her way to what is expected to be almost certain gold.

The nearly 100,000 people in the Stadium Australia, the glittering center piece of the Sydney Games, roared their approval of the 27-year-old when she was introduced.

They roared again when Freeman, attempting to become the first Aboriginal to win Olympic gold in an individual event, hit the home straight well in front.

Cameras flashed all round the stadium as the mostly Australian crowd wanted to record the night they saw Freeman run in the Olympics.

The reigning world champion eased up 20 metres from the finish but was forced to pick up the pace when America’s Monique Henningan closed in.

However it was an emphatic win from Freeman and proved that she has not been affected by the controversy surrounding Marie-Jose Perec.

Perec, the defending Olympic champion, had been expected to be the major threat to Freeman adding the Olympic title to her world championship, but the French woman stunned everyone when she fled Sydney and flew home to Paris.

Freeman clocked 51.83 seconds.

Nova Peris-Kneebone also moves into the next round, finishing third in her heat, as does Lee Naylor.

Hoy wins equestrian silver

Andrew Hoy has won his second equestrian medal of the Sydney Games, this time silver in the individual three-day event.

Source: ABC News Online
Hoy, riding Swizzie In, started the final stage of the event, the showjumping in fourth place but a clear round put pressure on the three riders ahead of him.

New Zealander Mark Todd, who was in third place, got through the ride without knocking a rail but incurred time faults to slip behind Hoy.

Then Heid Antikatzis of Greece had a disastrous round, slipping from second to fourth.

That left Dennis O'Connor of the United States to ride. He did not go clear, pulling one rail but completed the course inside the time limit to defeat Hoy by 5.8 penalties.

Hoy was part of Australia's gold-medal winning three-day eventing team.

He also won gold medals in the teams event at the 1992 and 1996 Games.

Hoy was thrilled about the result.

"I was just shaking, I'm still shaking," he said.

"David did a great job. he had a good lead in the dressage and then he did a good job yesterday with cross-country."

"From my horse, I just couldn't of asked anymore. he was absolutely fantastic right from the start."

Check out ABC Online's Olympics site for complete coverage of the Games.

Related Links
- International Olympic Committee
- Official site of the Sydney 2000 Games

Source: ABC News Online
Olympic News

Australia claims shooting gold and bronze
Australia's Michael Diamond has repeated his triumph of four years ago winning gold in the men's trap event in Sydney. [FULL STORY]

De Brujin takes gold in 100m butterfly
Jinge de Brujin of the Netherlands has won the women's 100 metres butterfly swimming gold medal in world record time. [FULL STORY]

AOC unfazed by Olympic team's suspension
The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) says it's prepared to fight on despite the discovery of drug cheats. [FULL STORY]

Hockeyroos over Britain in nail-biter
Australia has begun the defence of its women's Olympic hockey title with a 2-1 victory over Great Britain. [FULL STORY]

Boomers suffer shock defeat
Canada has defeated Australia 101-90 in the men's Olympic basketball competition. [FULL STORY]

Angry canoeists reject finals course
Canoe officials have been forced into a last-minute redesign of the Olympic slalom course after an unprecedented uproar from teams. [FULL STORY]

Australia in control at team three-day event
Defending Olympic champions Australia has consolidated its lead over Britain and the United States in the equestrian three-day team event, maintaining another strong dressage score. [FULL STORY]

Achilles stram forces Fredericks out
The hopes of Namibia's four-time Olympic sprint silver medallist Fredricks ever winning Olympic gold have ended, with an Achilles forcing his withdrawal. [FULL STORY]

Source: ABC News Online
Aussies overpower Russians in water polo
The Australian women’s water polo team has continued on its winning way, defeating Russia 6-3. [FULL STORY]

Canadian grabs triathlon gold
Canadian Simon Whitfield has won the first Olympic gold medal in triathlon despite crashing in the bike leg. [FULL STORY]

Kookaburras kick-start gold medal campaign with first round win
In men’s Hockey, Australia has defeated Poland 4-0 in its first match of the Olympics. [FULL STORY]

Blanco accepts blame for Olyroos’ exit
The coach of Australia’s Olympic men’s soccer team has said sorry to the Australian public after his team’s failure at the Games. [FULL STORY]

Source: ABC News Online
Defending Olympic champions Australia has consolidated its lead over Britain and the United States in the equestrian three-day team event, mustering another strong dressage score.

Stuart Tinney posted the third best mark of the competition with 36, behind Britain's Pippa Funnell, the European champion, on 32 and leader, Australia's Andrew Hoy on 30.6.

Tinney, competing at his first Olympics, says he is thrilled at the test mark, a personal best, and boosted Australia's attempt to win a third consecutive gold.

"I even feel like I could have asked for more, but I just wasn't game," he said.

Fellow Australian Matt Ryan, a Barcelona dual gold medallist, did not fare as well though, with his horse Kibah Sandstone unnerved by the crowd.

"He's a really highly strung horse," he said. "He thought voices were coming out of every potplant. It is fantastic to have the Aussie support but I found it very frustrating. I couldn't be too dramatic or dynamic."

On Saturday, announcers continually had to ask the enthusiastic crowd to stop applauding the riders as they entered the arena because the cheers were spooking the horses.

Briton's Funnell had no such problems and made just one mistake.

"You can be brave with this horse," she said of Supreme Rock. "I tried to go for the big marks in the medium canter and just didn't get him back for the flying change, but he was brilliant."

But bad luck continued to dog the New Zealand riders, with Blyth Tait's horse taking a leap backwards at the start of his test.

The current Olympic three-day event champion scored 52, continuing the Kiwis disappointing form after two-time Olympic individual champion Mark Todd on Saturday managed just 58.6.

"He's been very excitable all week, I think he has just gone over the top, they are bored with all of this ... they have been here too long without a competition," Tait said of his mount Ready Teddy.

"I think we are saving our best for tomorrow (Monday)," he added, saying the three-day team event would not be won in the dressage arena but on the cross country session."

Twelve teams are taking part - Australia, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Spain and the United States.

Scores are worked out on penalty points, so the lowest wins.

Dressage horses have a compulsory routine of more than 30 movements.

The dressage section - unusually - was spread over two days meaning the three-day event in Sydney is in reality a four-day event with the cross country and showjumping segments still to come.

Source: ABC News Online
APPENDIX C

Figure 3.5

Coding sheet for ABC News Online Olympic sports reports

Online Sports Report Code Sheet

Day and date of bulletin ______________________________, 2000
Downloaded at ______________ (pm)

For instructions on the requirements for each category, turn to page 8.

A. Top Stories headline ________________________________
   1. Top Stories female words ________________________________
   2. Top Stories male words ________________________________

B. Top Stories → main report headline ________________________________
   1. Main report female words ________________________________
   2. Main report male words ________________________________

C. Sport Summary headline ________________________________
   1. Sport Summary female words ________________________________
   2. Sport Summary male words ________________________________

D. Sport Summary → main report headline ________________________________
   1. Main report female words ________________________________
   2. Main report male words ________________________________

E. Olympic Summary headline ________________________________
   1. Olympic Summary female words ________________________________
   2. Olympic Summary male words ________________________________
F. Olympic Summary → main report headline

1. Main report female words
2. Main report male words

G. 1. Top Stories pictures female
2. Top Stories pictures male

H. 1. Top Stories → main report pictures female
2. Main story pictures male

I. 1. Sport Summary pictures female
2. Sport Summary pictures male

J. 1. Sport Summary → main report pictures female
2. Main report pictures male

K. 1. Olympic Summary pictures female
2. Olympic Summary pictures male

L. 1. Olympic Summary → main report pictures female
2. Main report pictures male

M. 1. Tier Two hyperlinks female
2. Tier Two hyperlinks male

N. 1. Tier Two order of text female first reports
2. Tier Two male first reports

O. 1. Top Stories report prominence female first
2. Male first
P. Tier Two sports contested

1 - Athletics  
1a - Female words 
1b - Female-approp.  
1c - Male-approp.  
1d - G-neutral

2 - Basketball  
2a - Female words 
2b - Female-approp.  
2c - Male-approp.  
2d - G-neutral

3 - Beach Volleyball  
3a - Female words 
3b - Female-approp.  
3c - Male-approp.  
3d - G-neutral

4 - Cycling  
4a - Female words 
4b - Female-approp.  
4c - Male-approp.  
4d - G-neutral

5 - Diving  
5a - Female words 
5b - Female-approp.  
5c - Male-approp.  
5d - G-neutral

6 - Equestrian  
6a - Female words 
6b - Female approp.  
6c - Male-approp.  
6d - G-neutral

7 - Gymnastics  
7a - Female words 
7b - Female-approp.  
7c - Male-approp.  
7d - G-neutral

8 - Hockey  
8a - Female words 
8b - Female-approp.  
8c - Male-approp.  
8d - G-neutral

9 - Kayaking/Canoeing  
9a - Female words 
9b - Female-approp.  
9c - Male-approp.  
9d - G-neutral

10 - Rowing  
10a - Female words 
10b - Female-approp.  
10c - Male-approp.  
10d - G-neutral
11 - Sailing
  11a - Female words_________________
  11b - Female-approp. _____  11c - Male-approp _____ 11d - G-neutral____

12 - Shooting
  12a - Female words_________________
  12b - Female-approp. _____  12c - Male-approp _____ 12d - G-neutral____

13 - Soccer
  13a - Female words_________________
  13b - Female-approp. _____  13c - Male-approp _____ 13d - G-neutral____

14 - Softball
  14a - Female words_________________
  14b - Female-approp. _____  14c - Male-approp _____ 14d - G-neutral____

15 - Synch Swimming
  15a - Female words_________________
  15b - Female-approp. _____  15c - Male-approp _____ 15d - G-neutral____

16 - Swimming
  16a - Female words_________________
  16b - Female-approp. _____  16c - Male-approp _____ 16d - G-neutral____

17 - Tennis
  17a - Female words_________________
  17b - Female-approp. _____  17c - Male-approp _____ 17d - G-neutral____

18 - Trampolining
  18a - Female words_________________
  18b - Female-approp. _____  18c - Male-approp _____ 18d - G-neutral____

19 - Triathlon
  19a - Female words_________________
  19b - Female-approp. _____  19c - Male-approp _____ 19d - G-neutral____

20 - Water Polo
  20a - Female words_________________
  20b - Female-approp. _____  20c - Male-approp _____ 20d - G-neutral____
A. 1. **Sources of bias** female
   a. Appearance __________________ b. Relationships __________________
   c. Emotions __________________
   d. Success/failure (S) ___________ (F) ________________

   2. **Sources of bias** male
   a. Appearance ________________ b. Relationships __________________
   c. Emotions __________________
   d. Success/ failure (S) ___________ (F) ________________

B. 1. **Language use** female
   a. Last name _____ b. First name_____ c. First & last name ________
   d. Martial metaphors __________ e. Trivialising language __________
   f. Gender-marking ______________________________________

   2. **Language use** male
   a. Last name _____ b. First name_____ c. First & last name ________
   d. Martial metaphors __________ e. Trivialising language __________
   f. Gender-marking ______________________________________

S. **Pictures** female
   a. Active ________________ b. Passive ________________
Figure 3.6

Coder instruction sheet accompanying form shown in Figure 3.5

News Online Sports Report Code Sheet Instructions

Definitions: “Sports reports” are those reports whose topics or themes are contests, achievements, or issues affecting individual Australian Olympic athletes or teams. Exclude reports about the opening (on September 15, 2000) and closing (on October 1, 2000) ceremonies.

Focus on Olympic sports reports about Australian athletes. That is, unless a particular Australian athlete or team is mentioned, do not include reports about athletes of other nations; or the economic, political or social conditions affecting sport; or reports about coaches, venues, athlete payments or sponsorships, sports administration, drug-testing procedures, or performance enhancing drugs.

“Summary word” refers to the words in each sport report summary posted on the Top Stories, Sport Summary and Olympic Summary pages (including the headline for each summary).

“Report word” refers to the words in the main report posted on the site’s Tier Two page (accessed by hyperlink from the Top Stories, Sport Summary or Olympic Summary pages) and includes the report’s headline.

Code all Olympic sports reports, according to the above criteria.

Complete one set of sheets for each bulletin to be coded.

A. Top Stories headline: Transcribe the first three words of the headline, for example “Diamond shines as …”.

For single gender summaries, count the total number of words in the summary. For combined gender summaries, count the number of words devoted to each gender and include the respective totals in the corresponding gender categories. Where combined summaries contain gender-neutral language, such as “Australia has won gold …”, do not count the number of neutral words.

Do not count captions for pictures or hyperlink text.

1. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for females, i.e. ///// ///// ///// = 15 words.
2. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for males.

B. Top Stories → main report headline: Transcribe only if different from headline A. Count words as per instructions for section A.

1. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for females.
2. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for males.
C. **Sport Summary** headline: Transcribe the first three words of the headline. Count words as per instructions for section A.

1. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for females.
2. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for males.

D. **Sport Summary → main report** headline: Transcribe only if different from headline C. Count words as per instructions for section A.

1. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for females.
2. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for males.

E. **Olympic Summary** headline: Transcribe the first three words of the headline. Count words as per instructions for section A.

1. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for females.
2. Enter one slash mark for each headline and summary word counted for males.

F. **Olympic Summary → main report** headline: Transcribe only if different from headline E. Count words as per instructions for section A.

1. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for females.
2. Enter one slash mark for each Tier Two headline and report word counted for males.

G. **Top Stories pictures**: Only pictures featuring individual Australian athletes or more than one Australian athlete will be counted. If a team is the dominant visual element, count the picture as one entry according to the gender of the team. Do not count the number of athletes appearing in a picture.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Top Story summary.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Top Story summary.

H. **Top Stories → main report pictures**: Count pictures as per instructions for section G.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.

I. **Sport Summary pictures**: Count pictures as per instructions for section G.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Sport summary.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Sport summary.
J. **Sport Summary → main report pictures**: Count pictures as per instructions for section G.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.

K. **Olympic Summary pictures**: Count pictures as per instructions for section G.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Olympic Summary.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Olympic Summary.

L. **Olympic Summary → main story pictures**: Count pictures as per instructions for section G.

1. Enter one slash mark for each picture of female athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.
2. Enter one slash mark for each picture of male athlete(s) appearing with Tier Two report.

M. **Tier Two hyperlinks**: The term hyperlinks includes hypertext, video, audio, picture or graphic links.

For single-gender reports, the hyperlink count will reflect the total number of links in or with reports about that gender, and devoted to that gender.

For combined gender reports, count the number of links devoted to each gender and include these totals in the corresponding gender category. If a link is not obviously associated with one gender, classify it as gender-neutral. Gender-neutral links will not be counted.

1. Enter one slash mark for each hyperlink associated with female athlete(s).
2. Enter one slash mark for each hyperlink associated with male athlete(s).

N. **Tier Two order of text**: In combined gender reports, and irrespective of whether the report first mentions athletes of another nation, count the number of reports in which Australian females are first mentioned and the number of reports in which Australian males are first mentioned.

If the report first mentions Australian athletes in a gender-neutral manner, for example “our team”, examine the report for first mention of one gender.

1. Enter one slash mark per report for an instance of female athlete(s) first mentioned.
2. Enter one slash mark per report for an instance of male athlete(s) first mentioned.

O. **Top Stories prominence**: Eligible reports are those which appear in the Top Stories summary and refer to Australian athletes by gender. That is, a reference such as “the Australian team” is gender-neutral and will not be counted. If both genders are mentioned, look for the gender first mentioned.
1. Enter one slash mark if report refers to female athlete(s).
2. Enter one slash mark if report refers to male athlete(s).

P. **Tier Two sports contested**: Select the featured sport from (1–20).

For each Tier Two report, and against the featured sport, enter one slash mark for each word about females.

Against the featured sport, enter one **only** slash mark according to the gender-appropriateness (b), or (c), or (d) of the sport.

For example, for a combined gender report on swimming enter one slash mark for each word about female swimmers, and one slash mark against (b) for a female-appropriate sport. If another report mentions swimming, words will again be apportioned in the swimming section, according to gender, but do not enter more slash marks for gender-appropriateness.

See Attachment A for a list of sports and their gender classification.

Q. **Sources of bias**: Examine all text, including athlete and coach interviews, for occurrences of the following themes along gender lines. Count any word or adjoining words, phrase, sentence or paragraph concerning the same theme as one appearance of that theme. See Attachment B for examples of thematic verbal descriptors relating to (a) appearance, (b) relationships, (c) emotions, and (d) success and failure. Do not count factual descriptors.

1. Enter one slash mark for each instance of mention of female’s (a) appearance, (b) relationships, (c) emotions and (d) success and failure.
2. Enter one slash mark for each instance of mention of male’s (a) appearance, (b) relationships, (c) emotions and (d) success and failure.

R. **Language use**: Examine all text, along gender lines, for the manner in which athletes are named, the use of martial language, trivialising language and gender-marking of sports.

Martial language (d) uses the metaphors of war. Examples include “charged”, “smashed”, etc.

Trivialising language (e) refers to descriptions of adult female athletes as “girl”, “young lady” etc and adult male athletes as “boy”, “lad”, “young man” etc. The terms “guy” and “guys” are not considered to be trivialising references.

Gender marking (f) occurs when sports are referred to as “women’s hockey”, “women’s tennis”, “men’s basketball”, “men’s 400m” etc.

1. For females, enter one slash mark for each instance where the athlete was described by (a) last name, and/or (b) first name, and/or (c) first and last name.
Enter one slash mark for each usage of (d) martial metaphors, and/or (e) trivialising language, and/or (f) gender-marking of sports.

2. For males, enter one slash mark for each instance where the athlete was described by (a) last name, and/or (b) first name, and/or (c) first and last name.

Enter one slash mark for each usage of (d) martial metaphors, and/or (e) trivialising language, and/or (f) gender-marking of sports.

S. Pictures: Examine all pictures counted for sections G to L (inclusive) for depiction of female athletes.

Category (a) active, refers to the athlete doing something competitive (for example, rowing in a race) or training.

Category (b) passive, refers to the athlete doing nothing competitive. It includes, for example, posed shots of the athlete in a social or domestic setting etc; or pictures featuring the glamorous appearance of the athlete, such as a female in day or evening wear, or with lavishly applied make-up and hairstyling more appropriate for a formal event; or where the athlete appears motionless (such as recovering after exertion); or where the athlete is shown from the shoulders up (in a mug shot); or where the athlete is depicted celebrating (for example, hugging a team mate).

1. For each picture of a female, enter one slash mark to indicate if the athlete is depicted as (a) active, or (b) passive.
## Attachment A

### Olympic sports by gender-type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Female-appropriate</th>
<th>Male-appropriate</th>
<th>Gender-neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking/Canoe</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synch. Swimming</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trampolining</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Sports classified in the above table are those in which Australian female athletes competed and their achievements were reported in sampled *News Online* bulletins.
**Attachment B**

**Examples of thematic verbal descriptors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Physiological attributes – includes irrelevant references to size, age, masculine attributes, feminine attributes etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Condescending descriptors – for example, “elegant presence”, “golden girl” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>References to marital status, boyfriends, girlfriends, family, responsibilities etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td>References to happiness, elation, disappointment, jubilation, tearfulness etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional dependence – for example, “couldn’t have done it without …” etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Success and failure** | Explanations for winning – references to:  
|                    | athletic skill/strength ("powerful", "confident", "skilful", "smart", "big and strong", "dominant" etc);  
|                    | experience ("veteran", "been there before", "experienced" etc);  
|                    | athletic consonance ("the day belonged to", "his/her time");  
|                    | leadership ("led the way", "was in charge" etc); and  
|                    | commitment ("focused", "persistent" etc). |
|                    | Explanations for losing – references to:  
|                    | athletic skill/strength ("mental lapse", "weary", "shaky", "choked" etc);  
|                    | experience ("overwhelmed", "green", "inexperienced" etc);  
|                    | athletic consonance ("not her day" etc);  
|                    | leadership ("lost control", "panicked", "struggled to stay in touch" etc); and  
|                    | commitment ("indecisive", "distracted", "lost concentration" etc). |
Figure 3.7

Coder certification

Coder Certification – Sydney 2000 Olympic Sports Coverage

This is to certify that I have tallied the following references in nine, odd number bulletins from ABC News Online, from September 13 to October 1, 2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words</strong></td>
<td>13177</td>
<td>9656</td>
<td>22833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pictures</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hyperlinks</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story position</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Order of appearance of text</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Failure</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First name only</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First and last name</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last name</strong></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martial metaphors</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trivialising language</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender marked sports</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender-appropriate sports (female words)

- Female-appropriate: 1473.5
- Male-appropriate: 9839.5
- Gender-neutral: 1215.5
## Picture context

Active: 13
Passive: 10

## Tier Two sports coverage for females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>4402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>364.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Volleyball</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing/Kayaking</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>793.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronised Swimming</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taekwondo</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>481.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trampolining</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed: Rhonda Hagan

Date: 04/03/03