

SPORTS COLUMN WRITING: A COMPARISON OF
TEN 1957 AND FIVE 1927 COLUMNISTS

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Faculty, have
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SPORTS COLUMN WRITING: A COMPARISON OF
TEN 1957 AND FIVE 1927 COLUMNISTS

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a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sports news, which once consisted primarily of paid advertisements in a few newspapers, is today a major news section of nearly every newspaper in the world.

Newspaper surveys have indicated that the sports page commands more attention in the newspaper pages as much or more than any other section.¹ Sports page readership and intensity of readership is high. Whether the news is as vital to survival as that printed in other sections may remain a controversial question, unanswerable here. But to the sports fan himself, the news about sports is vital, important, and interesting.²

The Sports Column began in earnest in the 1920's and has developed into a major interest spot in most American newspapers. The columnist is looked up to by the readers, and usually considered a walking encyclopedia of sports information.

¹Horace K. Basinger, "A Survey of Reader Interest in the Sports Page of the Small Daily Newspapers," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1938), p. 1.

²Frank Nicholson Pierce, "Contemporary Sports Page Opinions and Practices in Representative American Newspapers," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1950), p. 1.

The sports columnist is often the best-known man on the newspaper staff. Endowed with double-column measure, full latitude, and autographic adornment, the sports column becomes the public personality of the columnist. Sheer repetition of the format plus volume ultimately will attract the attention of the readers to the columnist. Whether he is good or bad, the writer will become an awe-inspiring individual whom people will invite here and there so they may bask in the reflected glory of his presence.³

Sports columnists are asked to speak at every type of function whether or not it has to do with sports. They will be besieged with television sets, lawn mowers, baskets of fruit, and a variety of other gifts.

It takes a rock-ribbed columnist to withstand the barrage. Some can't take it. They become autointoxicated and given to writings frequently favorable to their gift-giving admirers.

The good sports columnist must first of all be a man of balance. He must have an honesty that is strong to the point of aggressiveness. He must be thick-skinned, for at least half of his fan mail will be rough on his self-esteem. He must be resourceful, keenly aware of all

³Stanley Woodward, Sports Page. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 195.

developments in his field. He must have a wide acquaintance with people in sports and be able to turn out his daily product punctually and within space limitations. He also should be able to write. In fact, he should be "damn near literary."⁴

There seems to be a definite form for writing the sports column. The lead paragraph is introductory in opposition to the form of the news story. Whether an interview, a conversation piece, or an expression of the writer's opinion, the column then proceeds through stages of background, incident, and discussion to the tagline which cuts it off.

Sports columns are from 900 to 1,200 words long. Most columnists are geared to a certain length and will hit it every time.

Sports column writing is usually done more leisurely than news writing, but on occasion it becomes far more hectic. A morning paper columnist may have to write the final part of his column first when he does a spot job on an afternoon event. If he covers an evening event such as a boxing match, his general technique is to write a dummy piece in the afternoon for use in the early editions and substitute part or all of a new one after the event.

⁴Ibid.

A skillful columnist will avoid duplication when he is backing up a man writing the news story on the same event. He will know instinctively which phases of the story belong to him and which don't, and will avoid treading on the lead-writer's toes. The effect of duplication on the reader is bad, though it used to be routine procedure. What the sports page tries to make is a presentation which the reader can go through without continually stumbling over the same facts. The good columnist, therefore, considers himself a subsidiary asset on a spot news story and doesn't interfere with the reporter's work.⁵

Sports columnists can turn out Pulitzer Prize winners as well as the next writer, or they can become a drawback to the newspaper. An example of the former is Arthur Daley of the New York Times who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1956.

The purpose of the sports columnist is to dig below the surface of the news story, and come up with the interesting sidelights.

The regular sports columnist will turn out from 250 to 365 columns a year. He must take the unusual in sports and write about it in a colorful manner so his readers will enjoy it enough to come back for more.

⁵Ibid.

Good sports columnists are never stuck for ideas. If nothing else, they will put a call through to an old baseball player and, in dusting out a few corners, write a column pleasing both to the has-been and current readers. Or they may write about checkers, or the sporting opportunities of the backyard, thereby winning new followers.

There are not many writers who can produce six columns a week at an average of a thousand words a day, and maintain the expertness expected by the average reader. The writer who can do it is worth his weight in advertising copy to his newspaper.

Many columnists work independently of the rest of the sports department. However, in this particular study, seven of the ten columnists being considered are also sports editors and therefore do not write independently.

On papers which are willing to spend money on sports coverage, the columnist will be on the road much of the year, traveling from one important event to another. The year will begin with the bowl games, progressing through spring baseball training and basketball tournaments to the Kentucky Derby, the Indianapolis Speedway, golf and tennis tournaments, the World Series, the big Saturday afternoon football games, and every fourth year the Olympic Games. In between these major events the columnist will work locally, but on his own. Nine out of ten ideas for columns

will have to come from his own head.

Sports columning is a particular and specialized form of writing. Inexperienced people who attempt it are likely to find that their product has no unity, that it has not been pointed closely enough at a single objective, and that it does not get over effectively what the writer is trying to say. Experienced columnists have a way of tying together a column, even though it may be composed of odds and ends, so that it has unity of tone, if not of subject matter.

A. The Problem

It is the purpose of this study to: (1) Compare the sports column style of the "Golden Era of Sports" (1927) with our modern (1957) columnists and (2) To analyze the content of the modern sports columns as exemplified in the ten writers selected.

The method of selection was random, although an attempt was made to represent the major sections of the country. The writers were chosen on a basis of their ability, and the author's interest in the sports program carried on by the areas represented.

The ten sports columnists are: Arthur Daley, New York Times; Jimmy Burns, Miami Herald; Earl Ruby, Louisville Courier-Journal; Doc Green, Detroit News; Gordon

Cobbledick, Cleveland Plain-Dealer; John P. Carmichael, Chicago Daily News; Oliver E. Kuechle, Milwaukee Journal; Bill Rives and Charles Burton, Dallas Morning News; Bill Leiser and Will Connelly, San Francisco Chronicle; and Emmett Watson, Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

All of the newspapers are metropolitan dailies and range in circulation from 183,755 (San Francisco Chronicle) to 588,576 (Chicago Daily News).⁶

Studies have been made of various aspects of sports writing, but no analysis of column writing has been discovered, nor has there been a comparative study made of the style of the modern sports columnist and the early columnist.

The decade of the twenties was picked because of the general feeling among writers that it was the "Golden Era" of both sports and sports writing. July of 1927 was selected in hopes that the writers of thirty years ago would have a common subject with today's writers. The first Major League All-Star baseball game was not played until 1933, but baseball is the topic of major interest in both groups of selected columns.

The columnists selected from the 1927 period are: Grantland Rice, New York Herald-Tribune; W. O. McGeehan,

⁶ Editor and Publisher Yearbook, 1957, p. 30, p. 65.

New York Herald-Tribune; John Kieran, New York Times; Harvey T. Woodruff, Chicago Tribune; and H. G. Salsinger, Detroit News.

Kieran began the column "Sports of the Times" on January 1, 1927, and Arthur Daley took it over on December 25, 1942. The study of the first and present year of a single sports column provides an interesting study in itself, both from a stylistic standpoint and an historical view.

Salsinger is the present sports editor of the Detroit News and his column in 1927 gave him his start in sports journalism. The other three writers also made individual marks of greatness during their careers, thus their selection for study in this thesis.

A limitation to the study is found in the fact that all ten of the modern columnists are prominent, with years of sports journalism behind them. This means that the average sports columnist, the man who knocks out a local-interest-only column six days a week for the Daily Beacon, is not included in this analysis making it a poor national cross-section. This study is of ten of the best sports columnists in America today.

The three weeks selected for this study were the first three in July. The All-Star baseball game was July 9, and it was thought important that the modern

columnists under consideration in this thesis be given a chance to compete against one another on the same subject.

It is interesting to note that nine of the ten writers devoted from one to five columns during the fourteen-day period to the All-Star game, or the important argument of the time--balloting for the All-Star team. The one writer who didn't mention the All-Star game was Emmett Watson of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Although interested in major league baseball, Mr. Watson devoted most of his writing during that period to the Floyd Patterson-Pete Rademacher heavyweight championship boxing match, which was coming up in Seattle.

Six of the columnists attended the All-Star game in St. Louis, which gives them an interesting common bond for the purpose of this study. Jimmy Burns of the Miami Herald devoted five columns to the game and the voting procedure under discussion at that time. Three other columns by Burns were written on baseball which perhaps gave too much weight to the subject even for Miami readers. However, this study will not attempt to judge the "local angle" interest of the columns.

Another major subject during that period of study was the proposed Brooklyn Dodgers-New York Giants franchise shifts to California. The Patterson boxing matches with Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson and Rademacher, the Congressional

hearing on sports, and mid-summer football items also drew attention in the order listed.

Each writer devoted at least one full column to an item of completely local interest. Although the ten writers in the study are with metropolitan dailies, it is felt probable that the smaller the paper, the more space the sports columnist will devote to strictly local sports.

B. Organization

The thesis is organized into three parts: (1) History of sports writing and sports column writing, (2) Comparison of sports columning today and in 1927, and (3) Analysis of present sports column writing from a literary standpoint.

The author has gathered historical matter from many sources in an attempt to write a comprehensive history of the subject. It is believed that no attempt has been made before to write a complete history of the sports column. Although this history is far from complete, it is considered a satisfactory compilation of factual material.

The "heart" of the thesis is found in Chapter III, which compares the ten modern columnists with the five representing the 1920's, and Chapter IV, which is devoted to a content study of the ten modern sports columnists. Although individual comparisons of sports writing have

been made as well as individual content analyses, no attempt has been made to analyze the subject on a broader or more national scale.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

Sports reporting and commenting had its start with the beginning of sport itself as far back as the first of the ancient Olympic Games in 776 B. C. in Olympia, Greece.

Interest in the first Olympic Games as well as other sporting events of the time was stirred by heralds on horseback who announced the attractions of the day as they rode on their way to the "stadia," and the results as they rode back through the towns on their way home again.

Sports reporting found its birth in these heralds.

Sports columnists can go back to a time nearly that long ago when heralds would pause in the towns and opionate a news story, or "editorialize" on the results of an event. This was the birth of the idea of sports columning.

Since ancient days many transitions have taken place. Sports and sports reporting have gone through periods of boom and bust, periods of mere tolerance, favoritism, and complete intolerance.

Today millions of people, influenced by a report of a coming sports event, flock to the stadiums, the ball parks, or the gymnasiums to see the events and then insist that a complete report be given in the local paper the

following day.

If something spectacular happens in front of their eyes at the game they want to read what the local columnist has to say about it. Fans are never satisfied with just seeing an event. They insist on a written review.

A. American Beginning

But, let us make our real start by turning to the beginning of the history of sports writing as a whole and then of sports columning in particular.

Shortly after the turn of the Century a group of sports promoters, realizing that American newspapers would not devote space to sports publicity unless it was in the form of paid advertisements, decided to form their own paper. In 1819, therefore, the American Farmer, a weekly newspaper which solicited advertisements and, in exchange, printed sports items, was founded. John Stuart Skinner, postmaster of Baltimore, sponsored this, the first of the sporting journals.¹

Ten years later, the American Farmer began a second paper, the American Turf Register, which was devoted entirely to horse racing.

¹Frank G. Menke, The New Encyclopedia of Sports. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1953), p. 660.

On December 10, 1831, William Trotter Porter began publishing the Spirit of the Times: The American Gentleman's Newspaper, a weekly devoted exclusively to sporting news.

Founded in Baltimore, the Spirit of the Times soon was moved to New York where it became popularly known as Porter's Spirit of the Times.

Porter was amazingly successful with this specialized paper. The editor published the sporting venture on a national scale by printing stories of interest from all horse racing centers of the nation.

Porter directed the appeal of his paper solely to followers of racing and hunting. There was an "Answer to Queries" department that also proved popular. As the periodical became more authoritative and more widely read, the editor's opinion came to be widely sought.

Porter used a few woodcuts plus jokes and card game rules to help fill the columns.

In 1832, Porter had financial troubles and was forced to sell to the owners of the newspaper, Traveller.

Traveller's owners, recognizing the importance of Porter's influence, hired him to be "Editor of Sports" for the paper. He thus became the first sports editor in the United States. Later in 1832 Porter quit the Traveller and until 1835 worked in different editorial capacities on

newspapers in and around New York.

On January 2, 1835, Porter purchased the Traveller from C. J. B. Fisher. The next day, he resumed publication of the Spirit of the Times. He began numbering the paper as if there had been no lapse in publication since its beginning in 1831. This is the explanation for the "lost volumes" of the Spirit of the Times between 1832 and 1835.

In 1839, Porter bought the American Turf Register, which had been founded in 1829. He moved it from Baltimore to New York, continuing the Spirit of the Times as a weekly and running the American Turf Register as a monthly newspaper. In 1845, Porter reduced the latter to the status of a racing calendar.²

By 1860 the Spirit of the Times boasted the unprecedented circulation of 100,000, one of the largest circulations of any kind of sports newspaper or magazine in the country.³

Many attempts were made to duplicate the success of the Spirit of the Times. The National Police Gazette was started in 1845 and with sensationalism and blatant journalism gave the readers something new and different in

²Ibid.

³Frederick Hudson, Journalism in the United States. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), p. 341.

sports writing.

The Gazette summarized the week's events in each issue which included sports, hangings, rapes, murders, and burglaries. It confined its sports stories to prize fighting and cock fighting, and gave most of its space to professional athletics.

George Wilkes took over the editorship of the Spirit of the Times after Porter's death, and attempted to make it the supreme court of racing. Various turf powers, who resented this, formed the National Trotting Association in the 1880's and chose to ignore the former dominance of the Spirit of the Times by making their own turf rules.

As a result, the Spirit of the Times began to lose some of its patronage, and finally died in 1901.

Frank Queen began a sports periodical in New York in 1853 called the New York Clipper. The Clipper concentrated its coverage on prize fighting, and soon became recognized as an authority on anything pertaining to boxing. For many of the major fights of that time, odds were posted and stakes were deposited at the office of the Clipper.

The first story written about the game of baseball-- a very brief one--appeared in the New York Sunday Mercury in April, 1853. This was not a sports newspaper, but dealt with general news. The item mentioned baseball as a

comparatively new game that was "attracting quite a few followers."⁴

Near the end of the Civil War two more sports publications were started. They were Turf and Field and Farm. According to a book devoted to journalism written in 1873 by Frederick Hudson, "These papers indulged in learned articles on racing, angling, baseball, cricket, lacrosse, yachting, skating, shooting, rowing--indeed, in all outdoor sports. They give an impulse to open-air enjoyments, and do a great deal towards improving the physique of the human family, and towards throwing away the physic of the family physician."⁵

Not until after the Civil War did sports events receive more than mere mention in the regular newspapers. Publishers thought of sports as business and, therefore, demanded that if its promoters wanted newspaper space they pay for it just as the other advertisers did.

The first substantial sports news in a regular daily appeared in James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald in the early 70's. Bennett confined his early accounts to boxing, but later added polo, tennis, and golf as they increased in popularity. His acceptance of sports as a

⁴Menke, op. cit., p. 660.

⁵Hudson, op. cit., p. 342.

necessary and important news source was a revelation to the newspaper world. Sports stories proved popular with readers from the beginning and soon other papers adopted Bennett's methods.

This journalistic wizard introduced the practice of using telegraph and cable to obtain distant sports news. By contracting Billy Edwards, a former heavyweight boxer, to dictate blow-by-blow accounts to a shorthand expert, Bennett became the first publisher to employ sports experts to gather sporting news.

Credit for helping to promote the interest in baseball that made it the "National Pastime" is given to Bennett and Porter who published more and more about the new sport as it developed in the late 60's and 70's.

It was largely through these two illustrious editors that outdoor sports in general and baseball in particular from 1865 to 1875 showed a vigor never before approached.

B. The Scene Today

In the middle of the 20th Century sports promoters and publicity directors take for granted their teams will be given space on the sports page--gratuitously. Few, if any, of the sports writers covering athletic events, writing columns or color or pre-game articles, think of the large amount of free advertising they are giving to the

men or teams involved. As far as they are concerned the contest is news and must be reported to the public. This also is true of the press releases so readily handed out and just as readily reprinted by sports editors and columnists.

Newspapers have kept baseball alive through more than sixty years by publishing--gratis--the standing of the clubs and the hitting and pitching averages of the stars. They have spotlighted football, basketball, racing, and many other sports. In exchange for the \$10,000 worth of free newspaper publicity, sports promoters and athletic directors have added hundreds of millions to their bankrolls.⁶

During the twenties and early thirties sports reporters covering the major league baseball teams had their expenses paid by the teams being covered. Sports editors have since dropped this plan because of its possible influence on the writer. The writers of today are on a complete expense account so they won't be tempted with a dinner at the expense of the ball club.

In 1868 the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first professional baseball team. The National League of

⁶Menke, op. cit., p. 660.

American Baseball Clubs was founded in 1876.⁷ Newspapers in general and the New York Herald and Spirit of the Times in particular publicized baseball and were instrumental in creating interest in the game.

The first intercollegiate football game was played in 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton. That initial game would hardly be recognized as football today and it was 1874 before a game between Harvard and McGill College of Canada produced ideas in the heads of the American coaches that resulted eventually in the game as we know it today.⁸

The first All-America football team was selected by Walter Camp of Yale in 1889. For many years the great coach (referred to by many as the father of American football) looked only to eastern schools for his All-America players. Yale, Harvard, and Princeton were the only schools represented on the first two select elevens, but a player from Pennsylvania made it in 1891, and gradually more and more "foreign" standouts made the team.

The appointment of Amos Alonzo Stagg as football coach at Chicago University in 1892 began a new era for the sport in the Middle West. However, it was not until the

⁷Ibid., p. 95.

⁸Allison Danzig, The History of American Football. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 78.

early 1900's that western schools began to be recognized as football powers. They finally "arrived" in the minds of eastern schools and sports writers in 1913 when an up-start Notre Dame team whipped Army 35-13 before 8,000 stunned spectators at West Point.

The day after this game, the sports writers in the East were writing about something they had rarely seen in eastern football--a pass play. Passing had become legal in 1906, but did not develop until that day in 1913 when a quarterback named Gus Durais threw five touchdown passes to an end named Knute Rockne to beat the best of the eastern elevens.

All of the rule changes, games, players, coaches, and their plays were followed faithfully by the sports press.

When Joseph Pulitzer bought the New York World he organized a separate sports department. By 1892, virtually all the great papers in the leading cities had "sporting editors" with trained staffs, and though the sports section as such had not appeared, the Herald, World, and New York Sun each would sometimes devote a page or more to sports.

Sports writers became famous for their stories in various papers--Joe Vila of the New York Sun, who introduced play-by-play reports of football games; Damon Runyon

of the Denver Post and New York American, who became more famous as a short story writer; W. O. McGeehan, who began a distinguished career on San Francisco papers and finished it on the New York Herald Tribune; Charles E. Van Loan of various California and New York papers; and Nels Innes, sports editor of the Boston Herald, who compiled the outstanding records of his day and published them in a small book. He is credited with being the first to issue such a publication (the year unknown). There were many other well-known writers.

Wireless was first used for news reporting at the international yacht races of 1899. Guglielmo Marconi, a young man of twenty-five, handled the transmission of this report for the Associated Press.⁹

By 1900, William Randolph Hearst, stormy tyrant of journalism, had worked out the modern sports section for his New York Journal. He always did his contemporaries one better and his early work can be compared favorably to present day treatment of sports. Hearst made the sports section radical in its departure from the rest of the paper. He developed specialists in different fields of sport. His experiments in sports reporting reached such a

⁹Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism. (New York: The Mac Millan Co., 1950), pp. 578-9.

height at the end of the 19th Century that many other publishers openly screamed at his "open prostitution of journalism." Much of what Hearst created in the 90's has formed the basis for the present day sports page.¹⁰

But sports coverage in the United States, almost one hundred years old at the beginning of the 20th Century, still was suffering from a lack of popular enthusiasm. There seemed to be a social stigma attached to sports of the day. The writers, therefore, concealed their identity under such pen names as "Uppercut" and "Left Jab" to shroud the fact that they were writing sports.¹¹

Prize fights were covered for the papers by the referees or by ex-fighters such as Billy Edwards who worked for Bennett; retired players wrote baseball stories. Racing stories were written by anyone who could write well enough for readers to understand who won the race and by how far. In addition, the papers also hired men from street corners and pool halls.

The influence of these men upon sports reporting was almost entirely discreditable. They used incorrect

¹⁰James Harry Padgitt, "The History and Development of the Sports Page as Typified by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat (1876-1938)," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1939), p. xiv.

¹¹Menke, op. cit., p. 661.

grammar, substituted verbs for nouns and nouns for verbs, and used adjectives only as superlatives.

The only requirement for a sports writer was that he know something about sports; therefore, we see the discreditable beginnings of American sports journalism. These men also invented a special language-of-the-trade, or jargon, in their writing. No one knows exactly who originated sports jargon, but it has been estimated that it started in the 1880's and expanded rapidly.¹²

Use of jargon increased until it reached a climax in the late 1920's and early 30's, and then began its decline just before World War II. Not only did jargon decrease, but sports writing in general received an established status as a profession with high qualifications.

Editors began demanding from their sports writers talents other than mere sports knowledge. The prime requisite of any reporter in sports or general news has become a knowledge of how to write the English language correctly.

At the beginning of the present century, newspapers--including metropolitan papers--felt they were suffering from a rush of generosity if they had three men

¹²Stanley Herman Slom, "Jargon-Free Sports Writing," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1951), p. 35.

on their sports staff. The same papers today have from 20 to 40 men. An example is the Chicago Tribune with 30 men on the sports desk and nearly 100 stringers.

In the present decade, about 10,000 men earn their livelihood as sports writers for daily newspapers. Additionally, there are about 1,500 sportscasters performing on radio and television. There are many periodicals devoted to sports that employ as a group 10,000 men--and upward.

Sports has come from the oblivion of the advertising columns to a major news rating today. If one counts in the advertising solicitors, the compositors, and others with the editors and editorial assistants and the radio and TV army, the sports reporting legions of today total perhaps 250,000--maybe 400,000--and those who write do so proudly under the exact name that belongs to them. An amazing revolution has been wrought in sportdom in about four decades.¹³

One of the major factors in the 20's which was a part of the revolution was the sudden surge toward sports hero-worship.

Until the 1920's, the public regarded professional athletes as crude, muscular muggs engaged in activities

¹³Menke, op. cit., p. 661.

hardly worthy of attention from gentlemen of breeding and culture. Amateurs were accepted with mere tolerance; but the attitude was founded essentially on the snob appeal of the social sports. Even the football players of the Ivy League were looked upon as a strange species.

The crazy, turbulent twenties brought an abrupt and radical change in viewpoint. Whether it was an emotional hang-over from the war or merely the firing of imaginations by the most colorful and compelling stars any decade has seen is moot. Whatever the cause, America suddenly became sports-mad and its athletic heroes were canonized one cut below sainthood.

Babe Ruth, the most photographed personality in the world after Edward, Prince of Wales, received a salary greater than the President's. Red Grange, a football player from the University of Illinois, left college to turn professional and cleared a quarter of a million dollars in two months. More than two million dollars were paid to see Gene Tunney defend his heavyweight championship against Jack Dempsey. Bobby Jones won the golf titles of Britain and was given a tickertape reception down Broadway in New York City previously reserved for visiting royalty, transatlantic aviators, and channel swimmers.¹⁴

¹⁴Stanley Frank, Sports Extra. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1944), pp. xiii-xiv.

In the 1920's the lead stories on major sports events--always represented solemnly as the spectacle of the century--ran interminably. It was not unusual for a metropolitan paper to carry a 4,000-word account of the World Series game or a heavyweight fight, accompanied by a crowd, or color, story of equal length which was usually left to the columnist. The crowd stories were written by "trained seals," prose poets from the city staff or celebrities such as Ring Lardner and Irvin S. Cobb, who had left newspaper work and returned to do a once-over-lightly.

The trained seals vanished several years ago. Editors discovered that regular staff members of the sports departments were capable of writing thoroughly acceptable crowd and feature yarns and compressing them into the body of news stories that consumed half the space formerly devoted to one aspect of the event. A growing appreciation for the esthetics of sport was apparent.¹⁵

Sports columning also has come a long way from the original means of editorializing the results of sports events by shouting couriers who told of the "astounding" happenings at the first Olympic Games.

Today, no form of writing is as free of rules and grammatical regulations as the sports column. Yet, as will

¹⁵Ibid., pp. xiv-xv.

be seen in the writings of the ten columnists selected for this study, sports columnists hold their own in literary ability and achievements.

The sports columnist of today has dropped many of the flowery expressions used by the 1920-30 writers. Most of the favorite adjectives of the earlier writers are cliches today, but at the same time it must be remembered that thirty years from now, our "up-to-date" expressions also will be cliches.

As mentioned in connection with sports writing in general, the writing standards increased near the close of the twenties and beginning of the thirties. Today the standards are high, and many of the columnists' writings score as well in standard readability tests as do many of our best selling novels. And the sports columnist is usually able to write his column only once--perhaps with no chance to even read over the copy before it goes to press.

The late twenties and early thirties found most columnists falling into one of two schools of sports journalism, either the "Gee whiz" or the "Aw nuts" school. The "Gee whiz" writers were always optimistically pleasant. They never wrote a nasty word about anybody, and they always picked the human interest elements out of a story to put in their columns. The chief exponent of this type

of writing was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, sports writers of all time, Grantland Rice.

The following excerpt from a Rice story of October 19, 1924, in the New York Herald Tribune will serve as a heart for the rest of the thesis--as sort of a guide or comparison for ten current columnists.

Outlined against a blue-gray October sky, the Four Horsemen rode again. In dramatic lore they are known as Famine, Pestilence, Destruction and Death. These are only aliases. Their real names are Stuhldreher, Miller, Crowley and Layden. They formed the crest of the South Bend cyclone before which another fighting Army football team was swept over the precipice at the Polo Grounds yesterday afternoon as 55,000 spectators peered down on the bewildering panorama spread on the green plain below.

A cyclone can't be snared. It may be surrounded, but somewhere it breaks through to keep on going. When the cyclone starts from South Bend, where the candle lights still gleam through the Indiana sycamores, those in the way must take to storm cellars at top speed. Yesterday the cyclone struck again as Notre Dame beat the Army, 13 to 7, with a set of backfield stars that ripped and crashed through a strong Army defense with more speed and power than the warring cadets could meet.

Notre Dame won its ninth game in twelve Army starts through the driving power of one of the greatest backfields that ever churned up the turf of any gridiron in any football age. Brilliant backfields may come and go, but in Stuhldreher, Miller, Crowley and Layden, covered by a fast and charging line, Notre Dame can take its place in front of the field....

It (Notre Dame interference) formed quickly and came along in unbroken order, always at terrific speed, carried by backs who were as hard to drag down as African buffaloes. On receiving the kick-off, Notre Dame's interference formed something after the manner of the ancient flying wedge, and they drove back up the field with the runner covering from 25 to

30 yards at almost every chance. And when a back such as Harry Wilson (Army star) finds few chances to get started, you can figure upon the defensive strength that is barricading the road. Wilson is one of the hardest backs in the game to suppress, but he found few chances yesterday to show his broken field ability. You can't run through a broken field until you get there.

One strong feature of the Army play was its head-long battle against heavy odds. Even when Notre Dame had scored two touchdowns and was well on its way to a third, the Army fought on with fine spirit until the touchdown chance came at last. And when the chance came Coach McEwan (Army) had the play ready for the final march across the line. The Army has a better team than it had last year. So has Notre Dame. We doubt that any team in the country could have beaten Rockne's array yesterday afternoon, East or West. It was a great football team brilliantly directed, a team of speed, power and team play. The Army has no cause for gloom over its showing. It played first-class football against more speed than it could match.

Those who have tackled a cyclone can understand.¹⁶

This is a literary masterpiece, and though it would be out of place on a modern sports page, it would certainly be well read.

W. O. McGeehan, on the cynical, critical side, was the founder of the "Aw nuts" school, although he was not a professional aginner. He properly belongs between those extremes, a little to the left of center.¹⁷

McGeehan at his best was a satirist; he had an

¹⁶Grantland Rice, "Notre Dame Cyclone Beats Army 13 to 7," New York Herald Tribune, October 19, 1924, pp. 1, 18.

¹⁷Frank, op. cit., p. 96.

ironic touch but he never descended to the slang caricature fancied during that time. Below is an example of this "Aw nuts" type of writing as written by McGeehan for the New York Herald Tribune on October 10, 1925.

After mature deliberation I have come to the conclusion that only those who know little or nothing about the national pastime really enjoy a World Series. The experts are interested only in the games that put the non-experts into a state of somnolence, while they suffer great mental anguish at the games that produce thrills for those who know little or nothing about the intricacies of inside baseball.

For instance, after the opening game of the current Series, Mr. Wilbert Robinson, president of the Brooklyn Baseball Club, approached me beaming with enthusiasm. "Now there," said Mr. Robinson, "was a great game of baseball." "Why?" I demanded. Mr. Robinson withered me with a look of scorn. "And they send saps like you to report baseball games," he said, bitterly.

Following the second game Mr. Robinson held me with his glittering eye. "You saw it?" he asked. "Surely," I replied evasively and tried to hurry on. "You got the big story of the game?" he demanded. "Oh, yes," I replied airily. "Peck fumbled one and then Cuyler drove out a home run, and it was all over."

The World Series guest here beat his breast and emitted loud raspberry. "Do you mean to tell me," demanded Mr. Robinson, "that you did not notice the big feature of the game? Didn't you see the Pittsburgh infield come in during the ninth inning? Anybody who knows anything about baseball would have noticed that. I asked Fred Clarke about it after the game and all he said was, 'You go to hell!' and here you are going to write a piece about the baseball game and you didn't even see that."¹⁸

The 20's ushered in a new era of sports journalism--

¹⁸W. O. McGeehan, "Down the Line," New York Herald Tribune, October 10, 1925, p. 17.

an era of deepening interest in sports and sports writing--
an era that has been called the "Golden Era" of sports.

Sports writing has advanced in the last thirty years both in grammatical style and in literary expression. Several of the ten columnists under consideration in this study began their journalistic careers in the 20's, and have made the style transition along with the newcomers.

History is a great teacher, and the sports column of today is a result of its own history. For this reason it was deemed important that a chapter of this thesis be devoted to historical matter--an introduction to the subject.

CHAPTER III

BIOGRAPHIES

This chapter is devoted to short biographical sketches concerning the sports columnists studied in this thesis.

No two of these writers reached their present position via the same route. Each story of the development of an excellent sports writer and columnist has its own twist which adds spice to their somewhat similar styles. In most cases they are also sports editors.

With the exception of the two Detroit writers, enough information is provided about each columnist to give a background impression.

All that is known about Doc Green and H. G. Salsinger of the Detroit News is that the latter was sports editor and columnist through the 1927 period and still writes "The Umpire." Green is currently the sports editor and writes his daily "Press Box."

The following writers have been studied:

Arthur Daley, studied for his column, "Sports of the Times," which he has written for the New York Times since 1942.

The day John Kieran wrote his final "Sports of the Times," Daley was told by the sports editor, Raymond J.

Kelly, to write the column until further notice. Daley has been writing it ever since.

Daley won the Pulitzer Prize in 1956 "for his outstanding coverage and commentary on the world of sports." Only two other sports writers have won the coveted Pulitzer award.

The Pulitzer Committee which announced the 1956 award cited Daley "for local reporting under conditions not usually subject to deadline." He was chosen from a list of 718 entries in the field of journalism.

Daley, born and reared in New York city, was graduated from Fordham University in 1926 at the age of twenty-two. After graduation he was hired by the Times as a sports reporter and has been with that newspaper since.¹

Gordon Cobbledick, studied for his column "Plain Dealing" which he has written for the Cleveland Plain-Dealer since 1946.

Cobbledick was educated at Case Institute in Cleveland, receiving his degree in 1921.

After doing odd jobs for two years, he got his journalistic start with the Plain-Dealer in 1923 and worked there for three years.

¹Marjorie Dent Candee (ed.), Current Biography. (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1956), Vol. 17, p. 136.

He became an editorial writer for the Cleveland Times in 1926, but returned to the Plain-Dealer the next year to receive his first introduction to the sports department.

In 1944, Cobbledick entered the Army as a war correspondent and served in the Pacific two years.

He has been the sports editor and the writer of "Plain Dealing" since his return from service in 1946. He is a member of the Baseball Writers Association and was the organization's president in 1942.²

John P. Carmichael, studied for his column "The Barber Shop" which he has written since his first working day on the Chicago Daily News in 1934.

Carmichael began his career in journalism with the Milwaukee Journal as a reporter and quickly found his niche as a columnist. He transferred to the Milwaukee Leader where he was a reporter and columnist on the news side.

His first introduction to Chicago journalism came as a sports reporter on the Chicago Herald-Examiner. He transferred to the Daily News three years later, and started writing the column, "The Barber Shop" his first day

²"Gordon Cobbledick," Who's Who in America. (Chicago: Marquis Publications, 1957), p. 497.

at work. He has been sports editor of the Daily News since 1943.

Carmichael is the author of Biggest Days in Baseball and is the editor with Marshall B. Cutter of Who's Who in the Major Leagues.³

Oliver E. Kuechle, studied for his column, "Time Out for Talk," written for the Milwaukee Journal since the late 40's.

Kuechle has worked for the Journal his entire journalistic career which began in 1928. He is a graduate of Marquette University, and since his initial day of work with the Journal has worked at everything from obits to sewing circle meetings.

He has been on the sports desk since 1944 when he was in charge of the Journal's New York Bureau. He has been sports editor for a little over a year.⁴

Emmett Watson, studied for his column, "Watson's Needle," which he has written since the mid-40's for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

After graduation from college, Watson played pro-

³John P. Carmichael, "Who's Who in America. (Chicago: Marquis Publications, 1957), p. 416.

⁴Irving T. Marsh, Edward Ehre (eds.), Best Sports Stories of 1948. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1948), p. 332.

professional baseball for four years before joining the news side staff of the Seattle Star.

He left the Star to add two years of experience to his career with the Seattle Times before moving over to the Post-Intelligencer, where he has been since 1940.⁵

Bill Leiser, studied for his column, "As Bill Leiser Sees It," which he has written for the San Francisco Chronicle since the late 30's.

Although Leiser was born and raised in the Mid-West, he went to Stanford University for his advanced education and has been on the West Coast since. He received his AB degree in political science in 1921 and a Juris Doctor degree in 1923.

He edited the Stanford Daily while at the university and had many contacts with newspapers as a campus correspondent.

Leiser knew American football, and when the West Coast colleges switched to football from rugby, the Stanford reporter was in great demand. He was known as the football "expert" for the San Francisco Examiner (his first job), and thus passed up the cub stage of the normal reporter.

⁵Irving T. Marsh, Edward Ehre (eds.), Best Sports Stories of 1947. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1947), p. 276.

He spent nine years with the Examiner and then transferred to the Chronicle, where he became sports editor in 1934. He was one of the first to make the break with the Hearst-owned Examiner.

He is also a past president of the Football Writers Association.⁶

Earl Ruby, studied for his column, "Ruby's Report," which he has written for the Louisville Courier-Journal since 1940.

Ruby was born less than five miles from Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, and has seen every Derby since, as a boy of twelve he sneaked in to his first one.

He wrote a few stories for the Courier-Journal while he was in high school and at the University of Louisville.

He started full-time work for the Journal in 1930 and became sports editor of Kentucky's largest daily newspaper in 1937.⁷

Bill Rives, studied for his column, "The Sport

⁶Irving T. Marsh, Edward Ehre (eds.), Best Sports Stories of 1945. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1946), p. 99.

⁷Irving T. Marsh, Edward Ehre (eds.), Best Sports Stories of 1944. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1946), p. 122.

Scene," which he has written for the Dallas Morning News since 1949.

He graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio in 1926.

Rives began his career in journalism with the Associated Press in Dallas, and after working in Houston and New York offices, he returned to Dallas to become sports editor of the Morning News in 1949.

He won the E. P. Dutton news feature award in 1951 for his outstanding sports coverage.⁸

Jimmy Burns, studied for his column, "Spotlighting Sports," which he has written for the Miami Herald since becoming sports editor of the paper in 1944.

Burns graduated from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia in 1922 and went directly to work on the city staff of the Atlanta Georgian.

He was with the Georgian for seventeen years during which time he was makeup editor, sports editor, and city editor. Burns received his excellent sports writing background from Ed Danforth, dean of southern sports editors until his retirement in 1957.

Burns went to the Miami Daily News as city editor in 1940 and to the Herald in 1943 as assistant city editor.

⁸Best Sports Stories of 1947, p. 275.

A year later he became sports editor.⁹

John Kieran, studied for his column, "Sports of the Times," which he initiated for the New York Times in 1927 and handed over to Arthur Daley in 1942.

Kieran was twenty-three when he got his first newspaper job in 1915 with the Times. He worked on the sports desk two years, spent two years in the war, and then resumed his duties with the Times' sports department.

Kieran was graduated from Fordham University in 1912 where he lettered in baseball and swimming. He graduated cum laude. After a year of teaching he went to work for a construction company until he received the job with the Times.

He transferred to the New York Tribune in 1922 and from there to the New York American in 1925. At the end of 1926, Kieran was called back to the Times to start "Sports of the Times."

In 1938, Kieran became nationally known on the radio program "Information Please."

On December 25, 1942, Kieran wrote his last "Sports of the Times" column. The next year he went to the New York Sun to write a natural history column called "One

⁹Letter from Jimmy Burns to author, December 6, 1957.

Small Voice."¹⁰

Grantland Rice (1880-1954), studied for his column "The Sportlight," which he wrote for the New York Herald-Tribune from 1914 to 1930.

The dean of American sports writers, Rice has written more words--good words--on major sport events than any other man in the business.

Rice received his education at Vanderbilt University and his start in newspaper work with the Nashville Tennessean. He even helped start the Tennessean when it was published for the first time in 1907.

Rice left for the "big city" in 1910 to work on the New York Evening Mail until 1913 and the New York Herald-Tribune until his death in 1954.

The now famous "The Sportlight" column was syndicated from 1930 to its author's death.¹¹

W. O. McGeehan (1879-1933), studied for his column, "Down the Line," which he wrote for the New York Herald-Tribune from 1922 to his death.

McGeehan began his journalistic career in 1900 with the San Francisco Call. He became city editor and later

¹⁰ The National Cyclopedia of American Biography. (New York: James T. White & Company, 1946), G, pp. 144-45.

¹¹ Grantland Rice, The Tumult and the Shouting. (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1954).

managing editor of the San Francisco Post after leaving the Call. He also worked on the Bulletin and Examiner before migrating to New York City in 1914.

In New York, he quickly became one of the top men in the toughest of all newspaper leagues. He was appointed sports editor of the Tribune in 1916 and five years later was promoted to the managing editor's throne.

Executive work palled on McGeehan, though, and in 1922 he abdicated to devote all his time to his sports column.¹²

Harvey T. Woodruff, studied for his Chicago Tribune column, "In The Wake of the News," which he initiated in 1919.

Woodruff got his start in journalism with the Chicago Times Herald where he worked as a sports reporter from 1895 to 1898.

He became sports editor of the Chicago Record in 1898, but relinquished the office because of differences of opinion with the editor-in-chief in 1901.

After a period of time out of journalism, Woodruff began working for the Tribune in 1908 and became the

¹²William O. McGeehan, "Who Was Who in America."
(Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Company, 1942), Vol. I,
p. 811.

famous paper's sports editor shortly thereafter.¹³

¹³M. N. Ask (ed.), Who's Who in Journalism. (New York: Journalism Publishing Company, 1928), p. 423.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON

In making a comparison between the writings of ten sports columnists of a modern era and five from an era of thirty years ago it was felt necessary to choose similar topics for study of examples. Therefore, we will take a look at the writings of the fifteen men, comparing treatment of similar topics to include interviews, controversial issues, drama, personalities, fans, and letters from fans, amateurism, and pre-fight columns on the major boxing match of the period.

It might be inserted at the outset that the author will not attempt to make an ability comparison between modern and older writers. It must be remembered that writing styles have changed in the last thirty years, and something we consider outmoded today might have been original with a 1927 columnist.

On the other hand, originality in style and interpretation among the writers of either era will be mentioned as well as characteristics considered by the author to be in poor taste.

A. Interviews

One of the most important phases, if not the most

important, of the sports columnist's writing is the interview. The columnist depends on his ability to talk to sports figures four out of five times he writes a column, and a sports columnist may be only as good as his ability to conduct an interview.

The interview is a natural starting point then for this chapter.

Interviewing will be found in all examples of sports columning used in this thesis, but in the following examples the interview is the basis for the column. It is the bread and butter of the column.

Most writers from the 1927 period chose to introduce their topic and then quote what the subject had to say. Two examples of this style of interviewing follow. The first is an H. G. Salsinger interview with Jack Dempsey's trainer before the July 21, 1927 bout with Jack Sharkey. The interview appeared in Salsinger's column in the July 9 issue of the Detroit News.

If Jack Dempsey follows the advice of his trainers he will return to the style of fighting that he used before he met Tommy Gibbons.

In his training camp his advisers have been coaching Dempsey to return to the old method and abandon the system that he fell into in his bout against Gibbons.

They have been telling him to go back to the "short" punches that he mastered so thoroughly before he took the title from Jess Willard.

Martin Burke recently told how Dempsey had spoiled

his effectiveness by changing his style.

"Jack had gotten into the habit of pulling his hand back before starting heavy punches," said Burke. "His opponents soon became wise to the move and they had time to take a backward step which made Dempsey either miss or force the blow to lose its steam before it landed in the event that it happened to land. Dempsey was left wide open and off balance, a simple target for a telling blow by his opponent.

"We recently explained this mistake to Dempsey and in a practice bout with Carl Carter, one of his sparring partners, we put the matter to a test. Carter was told to look for the tell-tale movement and step back any time Dempsey pulled his hand back. The result was that Dempsey either missed with his swing or the blow just grazed Carter and had no effect on him.

"But when Dempsey used the short punches he doubled up Carter. He had all the punishing power in the short punches that he used to show and he could easily have knocked out Carter had he so desired..."

The second example appeared in "Down the Line" by W. O. McGeehan in the July 5, 1927 New York Herald Tribune. This is a typical interview style of that time in that the columnist tended to shroud the interviewee under an umbrella of pretense. McGeehan tells what his subject (Wilbert Robinson, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers) has to say about the old Baltimore Orioles, but Robinson is never quoted directly, and McGeehan writes as if he is hiding Robinson behind the nearest coattail.

MR. WILBERT ROBINSON, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, is in very wrong indeed with the Old Times' Club. When the members of that organization recover their coherence and verify what Mr. Robinson is alleged to have said, steps will be taken to have him expelled

from the organization forthwith. In the mean time the members of the Old Times' Club are numb with amazement and mute with indignation.

In order that you may appreciate the enormity of the offense of Mr. Robinson against his day and generation it is necessary to make some preliminary explanations...

The tradition has been that the Old Orioles made up the most sagacious, colorful and effective baseball team ever known to the national pastime and the conviction was that there never could be a greater baseball aggregation than this one. It was not necessary to go to any trouble to prove this. Any member of the Old Orioles would admit at any time that it was so. Mr. Robinson, in my hearing, admitted it on many occasions very frankly and convincingly.

But it seems that on his sixty-third birthday Mr. Robinson in the presence of several credible witnesses did declare that the Old Orioles were not the greatest baseball players in the world. The rotund deponent did further state that the current New York Yankees were a greater baseball team than the Old Orioles in every way and voiced an opinion to the effect that the current New York Yankees would have been a hard team for the Old Orioles to beat...

The offense is plain enough. Mr. Robinson clearly has violated Paragraph 1, Section 1, of the Old Timers' Club, which reads, "All members of this club must live and think in the past. The slogan of this club is, 'Nothing is like what it used to be.' It is the duty of every member of this club to propagate this doctrine at all times and in the face of opposition. Any member who admits progress in any line of sport will be charged with dereliction of duty and upon being tried and found guilty will be subjected to such punishment as the Board of Governors may deem adequate for the offense"...

Joseph Kelley, former Old Oriole and member of the Old Timers Club, asks for a suspension of judgement in the case of Mr. Robinson. "If he said the Old Orioles were not the greatest team, he may have been kidding," said Mr. Kelley. "There always is a lot of kidding in the Old Timers' Club."...

This column, which is more indirectly told than directly quoted, tends to be humorous to the 1957 reader, but the interview was more than serious to the 1927 reader who considered the "Old Orioles" the greatest baseball team ever.

Before going on to the modern style of interviewing, it might be mentioned that a new trend in sports writing developed just prior to World War II that was to lead to the style familiar to us today.

John Kieran of the New York Times was partly responsible for the innovations and especially in the interview. One new style involved no introduction and complete quotes throughout.¹

¹John Kieran. "Sports of the Times," New York Times.

Bradenton, Fla., March 25, 1940 - "Hello Casey," said the grizzled gent.

"Why, hello there, Kid," said Casey, and turning to the tourist, Casey added, "You know Kid Elberfeld, don't you?"...

Trying to learn anything about the (Boston) Bees with Elberfeld and Stengel together was useless. It was Casey up, Elberfeld on deck and this tourist in the hole.

"I sent Casey up," said the grizzled gent who was reputed to be the toughest bird in baseball.

"That's right," said Casey. "He had me in Montgomery in 1912. Washington had a scout down looking at me."

"Mike Kahoe," said Elberfeld, "and do you remember what he said?" "Yeah, he said I was too tall," answered Casey with a chuckle.

"He said you were too dumb," said Elberfeld.

The 1957 columnist has developed the interview into an artistic weapon through which he gains a tremendous readership.

Sports enthusiasts have become demanding in their request for first hand knowledge of the happenings in the world of sports. They tire of reading what the columnists have to say. They want to know why Casey Stengel had Mickey Mantle bunting in the eighth inning of yesterday's game with a runner on first, one out, and a two strike count, but they want the Yankee skipper himself to tell them. It has become the columnist's duty to find out the answer from Stengel, and put it in the column just as Casey says it.

This is one reason the modern writer depends so much on interviewing for columnar material, and why the

"Well, it was this way," said Stengel. "You gave me a great build up, and three times in that game I was doubled off base on long flies. After the game you insisted to Kahoe that I was a good player, from the neck down. So I went to Brooklyn, Ha."...

"Remember me giving you my hit-and-run sign with a man on second," said Casey, "I never heard of that before - or since - and yet I'll bet you could pull it right now."

"Sure," said the Kid, "you give the sign - the runner fusses around and gets the shortstop to chase him toward second, then he breaks for third like he's stealing. The third-baseman has to cover the bag - there's a big hole on that side of the infield - and I just poke the ball through"...

sports columnist has such a wide readership.

Doc Greene of the Detroit News wrote an excellent column July 17, 1957 illustrating to the fullest the importance of the interview. Probably the nation's number one sports interviewee is again the subject.

THE "HUNCH" as a tactical weapon in baseball was the text of Casey Stengel's sermon in the dugout.

The subject occurred at a remembrance of a bit of advice ladled by a then manager named Connie Mack to an about-to-be manager named Mickey Cochrane back in 1934.

After he left the A's, Cochrane sought out his boss and asked:

"Mr. Mack, is there anything you can tell me about managing a ball club that might help me when I get to Detroit?"

Mack considered a moment.

"One thing," he said. "Whenever you have a hunch to change a pitcher, change him."

Rogers Hornsby, during his years as a pilot, refused to go to the mound to remove a pitcher. He sent the coach, who did not have the power to change the order.

"Sometimes," interjected Stengel from among his gestures, "he would motion to the plate umpire from the bench and remove him that way."

Hornsby feared dissuasion.

"I like to go out and talk to 'em," said Casey. "But I admit that mostly I forget the conversation and change 'em anyway. When Vic Raschi pitched for me, all I had to do was stand up and he'd think I was coming out. He'd bear down with all he had. If it didn't work then, there was no use talkin'."

"When I look at my bullpen, I have a hunch I ought

to go home and hide under the bed."

Casey, on the other hand, set a major league record last season by juggling 26 players in and about an 11-inning game against the Red Sox on a day when he apparently had hunches that had little hunches...

To the question of whether he had played many hunches that were seemingly against all logic, and had they won for him, Casey headed for the safety of the drinking fountain.

"Yes. Plenty of 'em," he gurgled. "But those are my secrets and I'm not going to tell you about 'em, because if everybody gets to know 'em maybe they won't pay me the salary I get by looking mysterious."

Greene handled this interview perfectly, with a fascinating column as the result. It is a perfect example of letting the subject of the interview carry the ball. Greene knew that a single question or comment was sufficient to get Stengel talking. From then on it was just a matter of writing fast or having a good memory.

One of the finest sports columnists today writes the next interview. Arthur Daley talks to professional tennis player Ted Schroeder in the July 7, 1957 "Sports of the Times" and through the column tells the reader of an interesting moment in the life of the subject.

TED SCHROEDER is a whimsical guy who describes himself as "old, senile and retired." At the age of 35 he may think that he's approaching antiquity but he's as tanned, trim and cat-like in his movements as when he was winning a national tennis championship in 1942 and when he was defending the Davis Cup with Jack (Jake) Kramer a decade ago. Right now he's helping Big Jake promote the round-robin professional tennis tournament on the sacred turf of Forest Hills from July 13 to 20.

"We have the six best players in the world," says Ted, the breezy one, "and I have to regard Frank Sedgman of Australia as my private pigeon. He gives me a Frank Buck complex, I brought him back alive.

"Sedgman had won at Wimbledon and at Forest Hills in 1952, acknowledged as the world's best amateur by far. Jake talked to him about turning pro as he and Ken McGregor passed through California in September.

"This would not happen until after the Davis Cup matches in Australia that December but there was no harm in discussing it. Loss of amateurism was not involved. I could even discuss blowing up the White House. They might toss me in Bellevue but it wouldn't affect my amateur standing..."

If an interview becomes humorous when placed in column copy form, so much the better. The columnist must consider the mood of his reader. A morning paper would lend to one mood perhaps; the evening paper another.

Emmett Watson adds a touch of humor to his evening "Watson's Needle" and includes some of it in his July 1, 1957 interview with Fred Hutchinson, manager of the St. Louis Cardinals.

Being a guy who is subject to suggestion on the topic of food, I got downright hungry talking to Fred Hutchinson, of the St. Louis Cardinals, about those baseball hearings in Washington.

Hutch called them "a lot of baloney."

Moreover, he said he was tremblin' with fear over the current state of the SAC, foreign aid, our Middle East policy, the weapons program in Korea and Ike's golf game.

"It's a fine state of affairs," he said, "when they can neglect such things just to investigate baseball. Haven't they got anything more pressing to do?"

Now Hutch was never very fast as a pitcher, but his control was exquisite. So he hauled off with his best shot (old pitchers usually have one good fast ball per interview) and threw high inside at Rep. Emanuel Celler, of New York.

"He's just looking for publicity," said Hutchinson. "A while ago, all he wanted was to get major league baseball on the coast. Then when somebody pointed out that two New York teams might go, and that New York people elected him, he's all against the move.

"Now here's a game that the fans like, the players like and even the Senators and Representatives like. Everybody likes it except Celler. He's going to change it."

The columnist that knows his audience is at an advantage. In the above, and following examples of Watson's writing, the reader feels at home in the column.

Watson writes in a friendly, light-hearted manner and wins readership with it.

Earl Ruby of the Louisville Courier-Journal, who usually discusses three or four unrelated topics in his "Report," led the July 16, 1957 column with an interview with young tennis player Eddie Sledge who was in Louisville for a tournament. Ruby's headline on the column was "Dad Who Foots Tennis Bills May Get Big Dividend Later - When You Go to College Free."

Eddie Sledge, No. 2 ranking junior tennis player in America, jackknifed his six-foot lean frame onto a divan in the lounge at the Louisville Boat Club.

"I love it, I love it, I love it!" he was telling a friend in his piercing Texan voice.

Four young ladies at a corner table quit playing

bridge and came to attention.

"I would rather play tennis than anything else on earth," he continued.

"My Dad had to force me to try it when I was 11 years old. He was city champion of Dallas. I thought it was a sissy game. I liked baseball.

"But Dad insisted. 'Tennis will take you places,' he said. Dad had played basketball and baseball in high school. He went two years to L. S. U. He met a girl and got married. He came home and drove a street car for a living. Later he got in the used car business and had done real well.

"'Basketball didn't help me,' he said. 'Tennis did. It made me known among the right people. It will do more for you than any other sport.'

"I have found he was right. During the last three years I've visited every state in the Union. I have played in the best clubs. I've met the best people.

"Dad has had to foot most of my travel bills. But next fall he will start getting it back with interest. I've got a full scholarship to U. C. L. A. That's \$8,000 Dad can count as money in the bank."

Ruby uses an eye-catching technique knowingly or unknowingly with his initial quote in the second paragraph. The columnist is much freer to use techniques and tactics to gain reader-attention than is the news reporter. In a sports column perhaps almost anything goes.

B. Controversial

Just as in every other phase of newspaper news, sports happenings can be controversial. Sports columnists have argued back and forth for years over various detailed

points in sports. One of the most interesting and perhaps most written about arguments among sports writers, is over the extra point in football. Some columnists say abolish it because too many games are won or lost by the extra point and it doesn't really decide the better team. Other writers say the extra point is important because without it there would be too many tie games.

Another argument, which actually began during the period under consideration in this thesis (July, 1957), concerns the voting procedure for the annual major league all-star team. Many ideas pounded their way into print via the sports column.

Other modern sports controversies will also be discussed and will be compared in text to controversial matters of the 1927 era.

One of the most interesting results of this particular study came in discovering personalities and temperaments among the fifteen sports columnists.

Temperaments range from the almost hot-headedness of one or two of Kuechle's columns to the never ending stream of pleasant optimism found in "Sports of the Times" by Arthur Daley.

The day-to-day personality of each columnist comes out in his work. Headaches or family troubles can almost be distinguished within the daily efforts of the writers

being analyzed.

In studying the following examples, it was decided that the overall column, in order to be controversial, should include three things. The columnist should state major and minor premises and a conclusion.²

The major premise should include grounds for the argument; the minor premise, the issues being considered; and the conclusion should either summarize the writer's feelings or state a proposition.

One of the most used forms of literary "comeback" is sarcasm. Sarcasm, if it gets out of hand, can be a treacherous tool for either the writer or the speaker. The following portion of W. O. McGeehan's column of July 3, 1927 is an excellent example of controlled sarcasm at its best.

Sir Hall Caine, the British novelist, having discovered the manly art of modified murder through reading accounts of the bout between Mickey Walker and Tommy Milligan, takes his pen in hand to denounce the "prevailing and preposterous passion for triumphs of brawn over brain." He calls for some man who can speak with authority of the public conscience to call a halt to "those orgies of corrupt degrading humanity, those gross exhibitions of merciless savagery and loathsome trafficking in human suffering."

All of this will excite some wonderment in the United States, where modern prizefighting has been

²Harold P. Scott, An Analysis of Writing (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), p. 86.

distinguished by a lack of brutality, unless you wish to consider the suffering of the customers, who have been accustomed to contributing a million dollars in gate receipts for about ten thousand dollars' worth of prizefighting or less...

The Milwaukee Journal's Kuechle, who is at the top of the list of writers interested in stepping off of toes into hot water, wrote in his July 19, 1957 "Time Out for Talk" that;

The attempt to exonerate the Wisconsin State Athletic commission of laxity in its supervision of Doc Gules' fight card at the South Side armory July 2 is noble, indeed. Only it makes no sense. It smells almost as bad as the fights themselves - and four of the fights on this card, involving Minneapolis boys ended in a total of four minutes and 20 seconds.

What possible excuse can there be for a commission which permits promoters and managers to flout the rules; sanctions mismatches; condones other shenanigans; and, saddest of all, permits wool to be pulled over its eyes as two of the Minneapolis imports did by fighting under other boxers' names?

What is a commission for anyway?

Has it never heard of anything as simple as a social security card or a driver's license to determine identity? (The FBI, really, isn't needed). Can't it have a legitimate suspicion of a boy's condition when he doesn't look to be in shape no matter what the doctor's stethoscope says about his heart? Can't it beg, cajole or somehow, somehow get promoters to get their signed contracts into the commission office at least a day before the fight? The rule clearly says five days.

An apology for this commission is nonsense.

The truth about that July 2 fight card is slowly coming out and it becomes more unsavory by the day. By Monday when the commission holds a full dress meeting to consider all that happened, and especially the case of the imposters and their manager (Joe Daskiewicz), it ought to be in full bloom...

During the Major League All-Star voting ballyhoo nearly every columnist had something to contribute to the battle between the fans and the baseball commissioner's office in Cincinnati.

One of the best columns was produced by Bill Leiser of the San Francisco Chronicle.

In the midst of all the printed screaming, Leiser wrote his July 10, 1957 "As Bill Leiser Sees It."

A VOTE OF THE FANS, or a popularity contest conducted by newspapers can provide no sensible means of determining which athletes shall participate in such an All-Star baseball game as was presented yesterday in St. Louis.

We voiced this opinion some days back when Commissioner Ford Frick repudiated the vote of the fans and named Stan Musial, Willie Mays and Hank Aaron to participate in the big contest rather than three Cincinnati players who had been "voted in" through an accumulation of ballots from their home community.

We suggested, after Commissioner Frick took over, that the baseball writers who cover big league games should select the All-Star baseball team, just as they select the new members for the Baseball Hall of Fame. We're glad to note Will Connolly's report that the Seals' manager Joe Gordon agrees.

There's no way to make a general popular vote a legitimate vote. A legitimate vote on anything requires qualified registration and secret, protected ballot.

The (big league) Baseball Writers' Association has the means of providing both qualified registration of voters and protected ballot, and should take over the job.

We don't approve of the popular newspaper vote because we have tried it and could see no practical way in the world of assuring it was on the level. It

would take a checking (accounting) staff greater than a newspaper could possibly afford to employ to eliminate all the names of voters (in hundreds of thousands) who signed as many as two or 20 petitions being circulated in the area.

We'd also guess there'll be no further "popular votes."

Gordon Cobbledick didn't seem to mind the way the All-Star ballot box had been stuffed (July 2, 1957 "Plain Dealing"), but Casey Stengel irritated the columnist by his pitcher selections for the 1957 classic (July 3, 1957).

Cleveland, July 2 - The democratic process, as represented by the popular vote for the major league All-Star teams, undoubtedly has certain imperfections. And yet, in spite of local beefs here and there and in spite of a bit of ballot stuffing in behalf of the Cincinnati Redlegs, the result is about as good as could be expected under any system.

Consider the American League team, which we of the Cleveland area know somewhat better, unfortunately, than we know the National Leaguers. As announced yesterday it includes only one starter with whose selection anyone could quarrel very seriously.

George Kell, twice a bean ball victim this year and, consequently, in and out of the Baltimore line-up virtually since the season's opening, hardly qualifies as an All-Star third baseman. But where else is the American League team badly chosen?

Cleveland, July 3 - This was supposed to be my week to be nice to everybody and not nag or find fault, and then Casey Stengel came along with his All-Star picks and now I gotta belt him.

What justification is there, I ask, for his selection of Bobby Richardson and Elston Howard? To be sure, they're Yankees and Stengel can be forgiven for regarding all Yankees as supermen. They've made a genius of him, but using the All-Star game to repay them ain't cricket. It ain't even baseball.

The All-Star game is supposed to belong to the fans. For this one day each year they're given the chance to be the managers, at least to the extent of picking the starting line-ups. Behind the starters, who are chosen by popular vote, the managers can pick whom they please. It pleased Stengel to load the squad with Yankees, thus denying the rooters the chance to see a number of bona fide stars of other teams.

Both of Cobbledick's columns deal with controversial matters. One talks of the problem of voting itself, which will eventually be decided by the commissioner and not the sports writers, and the other deals with the ancient human characteristic of telling what the leader-in-the-spotlight "should have done."

Kuechle, who is distinctive in that he never hesitates to say what is on his mind, led his July 1, 1957 column with;

THE ANNUAL all-star poll has become a joke. If there was any doubt about it, and in most places there hasn't been for years, it was certainly dispelled by what happened in Cincinnati in this year's poll and by what Commissioner Ford Frick has had to do to set things straight - well, a little straight anyway. Cincinnati fans, in a well organized campaign directed by the Cincinnati Times-Star and a couple of Cincinnati radio stations, managed to fill all eight places on the National League's starting line-up with Cincinnati men (the managers pick the pitchers). Frick immediately and arbitrarily kicked three of them off, Gus Bell, Wally Post and George Crowe, and substituted Willie Mays of the Giants, Stan Musial of the Cardinals and Hank Aaron of the Braves.

And this is a national poll of the fans?

The trouble with the poll from the beginning has been that it has never been really properly controlled - and, 'tis said, has been shot with shenanigans and padding. Or maybe it is better to say, it has been

impossible to control.

One paper or radio station in all honesty has sent in an accurate vote, another has conveniently added a couple of ciphers to its total first. One paper or radio station has laid down strict voting procedures with an official ballot, another has accepted anything legible or illegible - letters, telegrams, scrap paper, petitions with hundreds or thousands of office or factory signatures. One paper or radio station has enthusiastically pushed the poll, another has let the whole thing drift...

In the last two years, with the commissioner's office in charge, it (the voting procedure) has been a laughable mess. (Cincinnati had five starters on last year's team too). Frick and his two little office redcaps, Frank Slocum and Charles Segar, have been babes in the woods. They not only haven't known where to turn but how.

The writers of the 1927 era of sports enjoyed using "twenty-five cent words" to color their columns, and John Kieran was no exception as is seen in his July 9, 1927 controversial column on the possibilities of New York as a future Olympic site.

Apropos of recent references to the 1928 Olympic games to be held at Amsterdam, an ordinarily conservative gentleman has worked up a large sized chunk of indignation over the fact that New York City, his native town, has never been honored in the past with the Olympic Games and seemingly there is no intention of so honoring the aforesaid town in the near or far future.

This seems to be stretching a point. The International Olympic Committee is facing the problem of locating the 1932 games, with Germany making a bid and Los Angeles demanding recognition. New York City won't even finish in the money in the argument, and, anyway, with the income tax, traffic cops and the rumored shrinkage in the size of the dollar bill to fit the shrinkage in value, it does seem a bit like borrowing trouble to wax indignant over an outrage that is five

years away...

There is one serious defect in New York's claim on the Olympic games. This athletic festival, held first in 776 B.C. at Olympia, near Elis in Peloponnesus, had its moral as well as athletic regulations.

It had its musical contests as well as its boxing matches, and its poetry competition as well as its chariot races.

Competition in poetry is a little slack along Broadway, but musical rivalry is brisk in "Tin Pan Alley."

New York qualifies there, but it's along moral lines that objections may be raised. According to the original Greek conditions nobody could compete in, attend or assist the Olympic games in any way who was not of the highest moral character.

Well, there's something to worry about. Either New York is the wickedest city in the world or several worthy and well-meaning critics are all wrong. And if it's wicked it isn't moral, and if it isn't moral it can't have the Olympic games.

All right. Never mind the Olympic games. We can still have the six-day bike race.

Another "Sports of the Times" column Kieran wrote (January 2, 1927) dealt with one of the most controversial of sports subjects--football's extra point. It is an interesting and well written essay on a problem never solved but always argued.³

³John Kieran, "Sports of the Times," New York Times.

This being the open season for discussing the revision of football rules, the opponents of the "point after touchdown" play should get together and agree on some plan of attack against the alleged evil...

It has been said that weaker teams often win from stronger elevens by one of these "freak points after

In summing up the section on controversial writing it is necessary to comment on characteristics of an argumentative piece of writing.

The writer must be careful that he introduces the subject thoroughly. If the reader doesn't understand what all the fighting is about he won't hesitate in his page turning. The columnist must make some explanatory comments on how the question arose in the first place, and what the consequences will be when a solution is reached.⁴

People are constantly in touch with things controversial. It is a rare individual who is able to avoid an occasional argument, and the field of sports provides as many opportunities for oral and written fighting as any other subject.

The sports columnist cannot possibly avoid controversial writing. How he handles his audience will determine the success or failure of his persuasiveness.

touchdowns." It may be so. Weaker teams will often win against stronger teams without the point. There are upsets in all sports, and a good thing it is too. If the stronger team always won, if the better golfer always took the match, if Babe Ruth knocked a homer every time he went to bat, the fun would be gone from the sport and the end of sport would be near at hand. There would be no need of playing the game before a howling mob of sports followers.

⁴ Scott, op. cit., p. 140.

C. Drama

The drama of a sports event is sometimes breathtakingly thrilling, sometimes heartbreaking, but always memorable to the spectator.

It is the job of the news reporter to write the story of the game. The good news man can make his story thrilling to the reader or he can give facts and nothing else. The sports reporter usually has more opportunities than the straight news reporter, and the sports editor will pass colorful phraseology that would be condemned by the news editor.

The sports columnist has the job of taking an incident out of a game and drawing a word picture for the reader's benefit.

The last minute goal-line stand that prevents one team from scoring the tying touchdown may be the lead in the news story, but the columnist may write his entire column about it.

The columnist talks to the coach and finds that it was "the most thrilling play I've ever seen," or to the player himself who says dramatically, "this is the happiest moment of my life," or to the losing coach who says, "that boy will make my all-conference team."

The writer then puts together his column. He may

decide that the situation was similar to one created when an army faces annihilation with its back to the sea, and suddenly counterattacks to victory.

On the other hand, the columnist may suddenly find out that the wrong man was given credit for the tackle, and that it was really the third team senior halfback, who was playing because it was the last game of his career.

The reader thrives on columnar material of this sort. The fans cannot get into the dressing room after the final game to listen to the tearful speech of the coach as he announces his retirement, but the columnist is expected, indeed required, to write about it next day.

This is the drama of sports column writing.

The following column was written by Bill Rives of the Dallas Morning News for his July 9, 1957 "The Sport Scene." Talk of an impending sports classic is always fascinating.

THERE WILL BE drama within drama when the major league All-Star game is played today in St. Louis...

This is more than just a baseball game between the outstanding stars of the National and American Leagues. It is a performance combining athletic skill with elements of mystery, the rise of youth, the return of the washed-up and the proud parade of the slow-yielding aged. Lew Burdette of the Milwaukee Braves worked Sunday (he beat Chicago, 4-2, on six hits) but he should be ready to answer the call for a short spell during the inter-league classic.

And when he does, there will be millions of eyes watching his every move on the mound. Burdette was the

subject of recent controversy. The charge was made that he slipped a little saliva onto the ball when the umpires weren't looking. Burdette haughtily denied the allegation, insisting he was a dry and always had been...

There are other dramatic facets in the game this afternoon. Ted Williams, one of the greatest players of all time, might be playing his last All-Star game, who knows? Yogi Berra, the indestructible Yankee catcher, was in the batting doldrums but the ever-loving fans elected him to the American League All-Star team; now, in recent games - and as if to prove them right - his bat has been booming with its old-time authority.

Yes, there is sentiment as well as skill, drama as well as prowess, in the All-Star game.

In comparing Rives' contribution with that of another columnist from the earlier era we find many differences.

Harvey T. Woodruff starts his July 10, 1927 column in the Chicago Tribune dramatically enough, but in the third paragraph he gives a different part of the same sporting event the ball and from there on the drama fizzles.

FRIEND DON: After the Lincoln Handicap yesterday I am an optimist on Chicago racing. Of course we knew in advance that the best field which has raced over a Chicago track for nearly 25 years was to start. Barring some one of the lot toprowing his field, that insured a contest. It was all of that; it was a real horse race all the way between Chance Play, Flat Iron, and Princess Doreen, and as pretty a horse race as you would care to see. The others, after Jock found the pace too hot, might as well have been in their barns. No horse had a chance to come from behind against that early speed which was sustained for the entire route.

It would have done your heart good, Don, to hear

that big crowd cheer Earl Sande as he rode back to the Judges' stand and smiled good naturedly at the plaudits. The crowd and its enthusiasm savored of old American Derby at Washington Park...

But French Lane will tell you about the race and the enthusiasm. What really impressed me was the crowd - not the size of the crowd, which was about the same as the big throng of July 4, but the caliber of the crowd. You know what an enthusiast I always have been in turf matters and how I always have felt our substantial citizens would like this sport of sports when they became acquainted with it.

Well, they were there - there in greater numbers than at any other race since racing was revived in Chicago. Honestly, Don, my enthusiasm over the Lincoln handicap, the number of close finishes and even the fact that I landed on a couple of those juicy long shots, is all secondary to the satisfaction of knowing that the best element in Chicago has accepted racing at its face value and lent its presence.

The 1927 columnist tended to underestimate the power of his audience, and in the above example sometimes even loses him. Where Rives takes the reader for granted, Woodruff insults his audience with prolonged explanations.

Another example of 1927 dramatic columning was found in H. G. Salsinger's July 2 "The Umpire."

TONY LAZZERI, the New York Yankees infielder, recently beat St. Louis in a close ball game by swinging on a three and nothing ball and lining an extra base hit to right center with two men on bases.

Ten years ago Tony Lazzeri probably would have been fined for doing this, but baseball has changed. To win ball games in these days it is often necessary to do the unorthodox.

Swinging on a ball with the count three and nothing is no longer considered a baseball crime. It is done on numerous occasions in the big leagues each year.

Pitching has advanced, and against most pitchers a fast ball hitter is sure of getting a fast ball only in a three-and-nothing situation. It is his one chance to take a toe hold and swing.

JOHN J. MCGRAW has for years carried three or four players each season who would occasionally swing with the count three and nothing.

McGraw favored this plan because of the effect on opposing pitchers. Noting the tactics used by the Giants at bat, pitchers never felt quite certain what the batter was likely to do.

At the same time, McGraw explained that not more than one out of three batsmen can be relied on to hit with the count three and nothing. Most of them prefer to take a chance on the ball being wide and drawing a base on balls.

One leading batter told us recently that no great hitter can ever swing on a three-and-nothing ball. It is so contrary to his creed that he is never able to meet the ball squarely. There would be a mental confusion that would doom the effort.

For a talented job of hidden drama, Grantland Rice's July 10, 1927 "The Sportlights" is an excellent example.

The American League pennant race has settled down to a matter of seeing how many records the Yankees will make or break, and a three-cornered National League argument among the Pirates, Cardinals and Cubs, with the Giants still on the outside fringe.

The Yankees have the old mark of 107 victories, which the Red Sox set in 1912, and the Cubs' mark of 116 victories in 1906 to shoot at. They may not break either. But they won't be far away from the Red Sox mark and they will smash all long-distance-hitting records ever known.

The home run battle between Ruth and Gehrig should provide more long-distance drama than any season ever shown since Pop Anson was a recruit and King Kelly was a busher.

Pittsburgh and St. Louis are the two leading picks

in the older league, but any one who underrates the Cub team, with McCarthy crowding them along, is comical in the cupalo.

Basketball hit the sports spotlight at least in Louisville, Kentucky last July as the National Collegiate Athletic Associations met in Colorado Springs to decide where their next championship tournament would be held. Louisville, which had high hopes of getting the rich festival for her new Freedom Hall, spent anxious moments awaiting the N.C.A.A. decision.

Earl Ruby writes from the meeting for his July 3 "Ruby's Report."

Colorado Springs, July 2 - Kentucky appears likely to land not only the N.C.A.A. 1958 National Basketball Championship, but the regional tournament as well.

Freedom Hall in Louisville seemed to be highly favored as site for the finale by the basketball committee in meeting here this afternoon.

The University of Kentucky at Lexington was seriously talked as host again for the regional, which it staged so handsomely last spring.

The double cause for pre-fourth celebration by Bluegrass basketball followers developed when Ted Sanford, Kentucky high commissioner, was brought into the conference late this afternoon by phone.

"How much would it hurt attendance at the championship tournament if we play a regional in Lexington the week before?" asked Walter Byers, executive director of the N.C.A.A., who sat in on the meeting.

"It would help the sales a great deal, not hurt," said Bill Henry, sports director for the Fairgrounds, "but the state high school tournament is scheduled in Lexington that week."

"I think you are wrong," grinned A. C. "Dutch" Lonborg, chairman. "Let's check."

So I phoned Ted in Lexington.

"We usually hold the high school meet the third week in March," explained Sanford. "But next spring it will fall one week later - on March 19, 20, 21, 22. This was caused by March 1 falling on a Saturday..."

So Dutch had a good belly laugh at Henry's expense and it was agreed Lexington was in position to take the regional. It became apparent also that the championship in Louisville would be played the same weekend as the high school tourney in Lexington.

"How much will that hurt the gate?" asked Byers.

"The regional at U. K. last year ran in conflict with the state high school tournament in Louisville," said Henry, "and both were sell-outs."

The N.C.A.A. committee did finally choose Louisville for the 1958 tournament, and Ruby led the whole city with his written celebration.

Arthur Daley contributes his talent for dramatic lore through a column written during the 1946 World Series.⁶

⁶Boston, Oct. 11, 1946 - There is nothing sadder in baseball than the hunch which goes astray and nothing can make a manager appear more like a master mind of penetrating perception than the hunch which works. Joe Cronin took a huge gamble with the unpredictable Joe Dobson today and as a result his Red Sox headed for St. Louis tonight one victory away from the world championship.

The form charts called for the square-jawed Irishman from San Francisco to counter with the very left-handed Mickey Harris, but Cronin made use of his Celtic ancestry to the full. He conferred with the Leprechauns and the Little Men who Marse Joe McCarthy had

D. Personalities

Perhaps one of the easiest topics for the sports columnist to write about is the individual sports figure, the player, coach, or manager seen by the fans on the athletic field.

In order to criticize an individual either positively or negatively the writer must know the person well. Close friendship need not be necessary, but a more than speaking acquaintanceship is.

Accuracy is of primary importance in any type of newspaper writing, but a personality sketch of a famous, or infamous, figure requires more than the normal interest towards accuracy. A mistake on an episode in a game will be laughed at, but not considered serious. An erroneous statement dealing with personalities could, depending on the subject, result in a libel trial or the loss of the writer's job.

Parts of three excellent columns from the 1927 period have been selected to represent the "old style" of writing. The first two are written about the same man and therefore give a writing comparison between two columnists.

found so helpful during the course of his brilliant managerial career. They advised Dobson and Dobson it was.

McGeehan headed his July 10, 1927 column, "The Silver Jubilee."

ON TUESDAY, July 19, they will celebrate at the Polo Grounds the twenty-fifth anniversary of an event of no small significance in the history of New York, the coming of John Joseph McGraw as manager of the Giants. The program calls for sports and exercises expressive of the city, from "hoofing contests" expressive of the arts, to an oration by Mayor James J. Walker, expressive of the intellectual development of the city in those twenty-five years, and it will conclude with a baseball game in which the Giants will be master-minded by the master mind which has guided their destinies for a quarter of a century.

All in all that same master mind has not guided the course of the New York National League team so badly, for in those twenty-five years the Giants under McGraw have attained baseball successes the like of which have not been attained by any other team in any league...

They say of John Joseph McGraw that he's a hard loser. He is. But that is the spirit of professional baseball which may not be the most gentlemanly of our pastimes. At least there is no hypocrisy about it. The idea of the national pastime is to win at any cost, and not to simulate graciousness when one does not win...

In a quarter of a century John Joseph McGraw has softened somewhat both mentally and physically. Naturally he would. His hair has silvered in keeping with the jubilee and his figure that was once so wiry has become plump. But there is still plenty of the old-time fire in his eyes, and he retains considerable of the bitterness of tongue that was regarded by baseball followers as a gift and sheer inspiration in the old days when he is roused.

I understand that on the huge loving cup to be presented to McGraw on the jubilee celebration there will be engraved a figure of McGraw as he looked when he came to the Giants, a dynamic little man of whalebone, steel and fire. I can think of nothing more appropriate.

You might call such a figure "The Spirit of Baseball." Some of the idealists or romantic persons might dispute this. But, all in all, I think that the way McGraw has played the game is the way the game is supposed to be played, to yield nothing, to claim everything, to fight to the last ditch, to take the victory as a right and never to lose with a smile. That is baseball, stripped of pretenses and hypocrisy...

The second 1927 column on McGraw is written by Kieran for the July 8 "Sports of the Times."

John McGraw is having a rough time of it this year, which is all the more reason to remember other and happier seasons and to give him a rousing party on his twenty-fifth anniversary as manager of the Giants.

According to Mayor Walker, Judge Fuchs and Willie Collier, who have the matter in hand, the idea is to condense Old Home Week into a single day at the silver jubilee of the Sage of Pelham. The big lawn party will be staged at the Polo Grounds on July 19, just a quarter of a century after the day when a snappy black-haired dark-eyed chap handed the Giant line-up to the official scorer at the Polo Grounds and said:

"If our shortstop don't go good a guy named McGraw will get in there. That's me."

Both of these pieces of writing tell the story of the career of one of the baseball greats. The second is more lightly handled perhaps, but both are excellent personality sketches. Both, in their own way, honor a great sports star, and McGraw followers, baseball fans, and the subject himself will read the columns with much enjoyment.

McGeehan turned the stunning defeat of tennis star Bill Tilden at Wimbledon, England the summer of 1927 into

a splendid personality sketch.

It looks like a bad year for athletes in the process of coming back. William Tilden 2d, the former men's singles tennis champion and the main hope of the United States in the defense of the Davis Cup was eliminated yesterday at Wimbledon by Henri Cochet, of France. The final will be fought out by Frenchmen, as it was at Forest Hills last year...

Some of the critics at Wimbledon insist that Tilden might have won the battle with Cochet if it had not been for his flair for the theatrical. With Cochet apparently beaten, Tilden became careless and condescending. Cochet, playing with intense earnestness, did not decline to take full advantage of the lapses of Tilden. Then when Tilden tried to flash back, he found himself about spent, while Cochet, the younger and more earnest, had the reserve strength and dash to beat him out.

It is not the custom to advance alibis in tennis, consequently nobody can offer as an alibi for Tilden's defeat, when he seemed to be the same Tilden he used to be, the fact that he is at heart a showman with a passion for melodrama and that even in the strain of a tennis game he could not resist the appeal to the gallery. Allowing for the temperament and the whimsicalities of Mr. Tilden, you cannot go behind the results. You must accept this as an indication that Mr. Tilden has failed to come back.

While almost all of the other writers mentioned in their columns the "great American loss," only McGeehan mentioned the incident on the courts--casually called a "flair for the theatrical." The columnist picked an interesting sidelight out of a tremendous tennis match and produced an enjoyable piece of writing.

With the exception of a few differences in the use of words, the two eras of sports columning are similar in this particular area of writing.

The 1957 examples of personality sketching are approached the same way they were thirty years ago. The writer has an individual to talk about, he usually goes out of his way to make the subject look good.

This is the case in four of the five modern examples which follow. The fifth piece of writing was taken from the Kuechle column of July 14, and it represents the negative type of personality sketch, i.e., the type that "talks down" the subject.

1. Arthur Daley, "A Touch of Class." (July 1)

By the end of the 1939 season it was obvious that Charlie Keller was near the end of his career as a ball player. His back was troubling him and he no longer terrorized enemy pitchers. The Yankees could have sold him or traded him but even the businesslike Yankees have occasional moments of softness and generosity. They granted Keller his outright release so that he could make his own deal.

Red Rolfe was then the manager of the Detroit Tigers and he wasted no time. He immediately signed his old teammate as a player, a transaction that raised more than one eyebrow.

"Why?" he was asked. "Keller can't possibly break into a team as young and as strong as yours looks to be."

"I signed Charlie," said Rolfe, "merely to add more class to my ball club..."

Keller seems to have the same muscular trimness he had when he first joined the Bronx Bombers in 1939. His weight still is a solid 185, and whenever he sneaks into the batting cage for some bootleg swings he still lashes line drives with much of his old authority...

2. Jimmy Burns, "Williams' Love for Baseball Continues Strong As Ever." (July 11)

ST. LOUIS - Over a period of years in which it has been my pleasure to know him, Ted Williams in varied ways has demonstrated a genuine love for baseball.

The latest example came Tuesday when the boys were getting ready for competition in the All-Star game. I'd asked Williams how it felt playing so regularly - at the time, he'd been in 72 games.

Williams elected to tell a story to illustrate the point. "Recently I went out to Fenway Park determined to tell Manager Pinky Higgins I didn't feel like playing," Ted confided. "When I got to the park, it was such a beautiful day I changed my mind. I played and went 0 for four. I should have stuck by my original plan..."

3. Bill Leiser, "Georgia Peach' Loved the Kids."
(July 7)

TYRUS RAYMOND COBB is leaving our far western community to make his final home in his native Georgia.

We dislike to see the greatest baseball player of all time getting away from us. It was a wonderful privilege, to any writer who had a baseball problem, to call up and talk it over with the one and only Ty Cobb.

Though he knew everything about baseball, and you knew comparatively nothing, he'd be patient and do his best to make you understand even if you didn't know who was on third base...

For years, up until 1954, we assisted in presentation of an all-star high school boys baseball game, and we always wanted Ty Cobb as one of the judges to determine which was the outstanding player.

The kids loved to know the great Ty was watching them. To get him, we had to wire the postmaster at Glenbrook, Nev., and ask him to request Ty to phone us. If he was at his home in that spot he created for himself on the east shore of Lake Tahoe, Ty would phone

back, and several times he flew down here, just to help us at the kids' ball game, and flew back the next morning...

4. Will Connolly, "Luque Was A Real Workhorse."

(July 5)

Adolfo Luque, who died on Wednesday at 66 in his native Havana, was more than a successful pitcher in the National League for 21 years. Once in 1923, he won 27 games and lost only eight for Cincinnati.

So he was good. He also could fill in at third base and play the outfield, and didn't pout about being used overtime. More important, he was the fore-runner of ball players from the Caribbean - the greatest, if not the first - of a long string that later ornament both major leagues...

5. Oliver E. Kuechle, "Perini Speaks." (July 14)

IN PITTSBURGH the other day, Lou Perini of the Braves struck one of the most brazen notes of all. "I'd like to see baseball have the same immunity education and religion have," he said. "I'd die if baseball were placed under the antitrust laws."

Just think of that for a minute. Here is a successful man, financially successful, with the effrontery to link a game with the two greatest forces in our lives and to suggest even lightly and figuratively the end of the world if something should happen to the game.

What in all good sense does baseball think it is? How impudent to ordinary intelligence can baseball owners get?

Perini was in wonderful form all around the other night. After conceiving his triad of "religion, education and baseball" he managed to touch a couple of other nerves.

"I'd hate to think of what would happen if cold hearted business executives were to step in and run baseball," he said.

It could be they would have permitted the "Game of

the Week" from the very beginning around the state.

"We have business men running ball clubs (warm hearted ones, of course) but they don't use much business sense."

That's what Feller must have thought the other day in Los Angeles.

"I'm in the contracting business. If I decide to buy a high powered shovel for \$75,000 I'll go all the way across the country to look at the shovel before I buy it. But in baseball, along with the rest, I'll give a youngster fresh out of high school \$100,000 on the say so of a couple of scouts."

Who, pray tell, should pass judgment on baseball flesh? The owners? Not the hired scouts? And those \$100,000 bonuses - they sure help the kids get a true perspective on life...

The author cannot move to a conclusion in this section of the chapter without mentioning the greatest personality sketch writer of them all, Ring Lardner.

Lardner, who is studied indirectly throughout this thesis because of his overwhelming influence on the writers of both eras, stumbled on a new style of writing by accident.

While on the sports staff of the Chicago Inter-Ocean in 1907, Lardner was required to write seven columns a week. This tedious job forced Lardner to hit upon the technique that was to make him famous. He had been listening to ball players talk on and off the field and one day, to fill out his column, he wrote a short, imaginary conversation between two White Sox heroes playing poker in

a Pullman car. The innovation was popular immediately and Lardner, at the urging of Charley Van Loan, a well-known writer of sport fiction, sent a sample of the diamond dialogue to the Saturday Evening Post. A check and a demand for more of the same followed promptly and Al, the famous brash baseball rookie, was born.⁷

The columnist with a flare for writing personality sketches will always be popular. Readers enjoy seeing stories from out of the past, or present, on their everyday heroes.

When the seven-day-a-week columnist runs out of material or initiative, he can always go to the newspaper morgue and find a subject within the clippings on the sports stars of the past.

E. Fans and Letters

The sports fan is a never ending source of voluminous copy. In every ball park, at nearly every sports event there is the spectator who stands out--sometimes to the extent that he steals the spotlight from the athletes.

The Brooklyn Dodgers were an excellent example of fan-participation. The Dodger "sym-phonie" orchestra,

⁷Stanley Frank, Sports Extra. (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1944), p. 123.

which became a famous landmark at Ebbets Field, began with a few enthusiastic fans bringing musical "instruments" to the ball park and quickly winning favor enough so the Dodger management felt forced to hire them for every home game.

There is always the fellow who jumps out of the left field bleacher to get a closer look at a hero, and it's a rare football season that doesn't find at least one fan chasing a ball-carrier to prevent a touchdown because "I was the closest man to him."

There seems to be a trend on the modern sports page toward giving the fan-participation stories to the columnist rather than the news reporter. Perhaps it is because of the great number of such incidents. Someday the fans will stop getting their names in print for their lack of inhibitions and such doings will stop.

Another important source of columnar material may be found in letters from the fan to the columnist. As has been mentioned earlier in the chapter, Kuechle is one of the most daring of the fifteen columnists being studied. But Kuechle feels that if he can write what he feels, the fan should be allowed the rebuttal. Therefore, many of the letters from Kuechle's fans find their way into "Time Out For Talk."

The greatest example of this give and take by the Milwaukee columnist occurred the first week in July after

an incident involving not one, but four fans jumping out of the stand to grab a spotlight and a few bet bucks. The first example is taken from the July 1 column.

SOMEWHERE there's something wrong. One guy slipping out of the stands and trying to circle the bases, yes - that can be understood if not exactly appreciated. He's the guy who bets a buck with the guy next to him he can do it and manages to slip by. There were four who did it at Sunday's double header, though, four, and four are rather hard to take. We're in the big leagues now, aren't we, and not at diamond No. 2 at Washington Park?

The occasional guy will never be stopped, and there isn't a big league field which sometime hasn't had him. He'll find a way if he has to jump off the stadium roof. Most, though, can be caught and it requires no more than alert ushering.

Lack of this invited Sunday's difficulties.

The club itself has recognized the weakness in what it has been doing, or not been doing, and Monday morning announced a tightening up all around.

"Hereafter" said ground superintendent Al Oliver, "we're going to have ushers stationed in every aisle leading to the field. There'll be no more of this..."

And that's certainly the way it should be. This is baseball isn't it? Big league baseball? The guys who want to make Al Kelly's of themselves should go to Brooklyn.

The inevitable retort came via the mailman the next day and Kuechle printed it.

DEAR SIR: I have been reading your column for a long time. Sometimes I think you're right; sometimes wrong. This time, brother, I think you've had it.

(The reference is to the piece about the four clowns who dashed out of the stands and started to run around the bases at Sunday's double header).

Who are you to condemn a couple of fellows for having a good time? What has happened to your sense of humor? You're getting old, brother. I think someone else should take over the soft seat you hold at ball games. Maybe they could give some critical comment on the baseball television ban or the crooked all-star selections. But when some overpaid square has to take cracks at a couple of fellows (who in the long run pay this guy's salary, help build a stadium, help make Milwaukee the greatest baseball town in the world and because of all this pay for Mr. Sport Editor's soft press row seat and free refreshments) who are having a good time at a ball game because he has nothing better to write about, then it's time to send the senile old gentleman to pasture.

Oh yes, Mr. Sports Editor, we are a big league town.

But let's write about sports and leave the fans alone. In fact, the crowd enjoyed their antics. And confidentially, I think the players did, too. See you at the ball game grandpa.

Carl Poethke.

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the columnist must be rock-ribbed with a flare for indifference toward such retorts. If a columnist is not brave enough to print the blast and not add an editorial note, then he should dump it into the waste can.

Another alternative was selected by Kuechle, but he was careful not to belittle the fan nor return a hot note. Too many columnists lose friends because of loosely worded rebuttals to letters. Kuechle's is commendatory.

Thanks Carl. Know of any good pastures? I still think, though, that those who want to have an infantile time of it on Sunday afternoons should use the teeter-toters, swings and merry-go-rounds in our parks and not

be running around the bases at the ball park. The cops apparently think so too. They arrested two of them. P. S. I always buy a couple of season tickets for myself.

Another modern era column devoted to the fan was written by Doc Greene for his July 5 "Press Box."

SOME SPORT fans, of course, are often more entertaining than some performers, and the whole thing perhaps should be turned around so that the ball players, whist experts, etc., have to pay to see the fans.

This is rudimentary.

It is doubtful, though, that this suggestion will be adopted immediately since everyone accepts things as they are and besides, a prominent financier named Ted Williams might object.

A favorite fan here is Lawrence Bisceglia, the retired fellow who camps at Indianapolis each year beginning in April so that he may have first selection at the parking spaces that become available in the infield on Memorial Day.

And who can forget some of the arias offered by Patsy O'Toole before his vocal chords folded? He even awed the late FDR into having him removed from ear-shot.

The fan of the moment who deserves an accolade is Harry Washer, of Cincinnati, who threatened to file petition in federal court to force Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick to mend his ways.

He demanded another bouquet over the telephone, when he found out the point of call.

"I gave you Jim Bunning," he said modestly. "He's holding your ball club together, if that's what you want to call it. I coached Bunning at St. Xavier's High School here. I was his football and baseball coach."

He mentioned that Bunning had a high school earned

run average of 0.56 and even gave Jim an assist on it...

It's a good game for hecklers. It's a fine spectacle. The receipts go to the players' pension fund. No one gains anything personally. No one cares much who wins and you have a parade of top performers doing something they do well and in a relaxed fashion...

He had heckled harmlessly.

As one who still sighs wistfully over the passing of vaudeville, the shaving mug and the flagpole sitter, a vote is in order for the harmless heckler...

McGeehan was the only 1927 writer studied to devote as much as a complete column to a particular fan. His July 2 "Down the Line" is produced in the now familiar "jargon" of the early era writers.

One-Eye Connolly 2d made the mistake of the inordinately ambitious. He tried to take in too much territory. The tradition is that One-Eye Connolly 2d had crashed every important gate in the United States, which is to say that he made his way into all sporting and artistic events that excited his interest without benefit to the box office.

Rivals and competitors of One-Eye Connolly 2d insist that this is mere tradition. They insinuate that One-Eye Connolly 2d frequently begged Annie Oakleys to prizefights or that he worked his way through the entrance in the guise of a peanut boy or a vendor of soda pop. Such gate crashers as Mr. Tammany Young and Mr. Pitts Blackman even have gone so far as to insinuate that One-Eye Connolly 2d was a mere pretender as a gate crasher and that he was in effect little better than a cash customer.

They point out the fact that the present Cyclopean gate crasher is not the original One-Eye Connolly, who was crashing gates as far back as the time of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight at Carson City. He assumed the title of One-Eye Connolly without warrant or without really qualifying. In short, they insist that he

is a mere pretender as a gate crasher without the real genius of his illustrious predecessor from whom he borrowed the name and title...

He did not know that gates in England never are crashed under any circumstances, that gates in England are there for the purpose of letting in only those who belong in and keeping out those who do not belong in. Mr. Connolly's experience, broad as it may have been, was confined to American gates, which are placed for the apparent purpose of inviting of crashing.

You can figure to yourself the shock sustained by Mr. One-Eye Connolly 2d when he failed to crash even the first gate in England, the gate at the Cunard pier at Southampton...

Mr. Connolly revealed his identity and displayed his clipping and other credentials, but these made no impression whatever upon the guard.

"It's no good, my man," he said. "You cannot come through."

There was such an air of finality to the statement that One-Eye Connolly 2d was stricken speechless. He made his way back to the steamer and complained to all who would listen, "That guy says I can't go in."

The jargonized column does not lose its punch for the 1957 reader because of the style. On the contrary, the column would probably receive more readership today than either of the other two did.

For the most defaming letter received and printed by a columnist during the study we again turn to Kuechle. The sports writer headed the following portion of his column "Dear Fathead."

DEAR FATHEAD: I'll bet it does your heart good to come up with one of the biggest piles of nothing

you've come up with in a long time. You've had to wait for a few years to really get an opportunity to get on the whole team's back rather than your usual one player at a time. (This must be in reference to a piece Tuesday on a meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to the Braves).

For one who claims to have such a thorough knowledge of baseball - you admitted the writers should pick the all-star team - how many more pitchers would you have thrown in Monday night to make things "look" a little better for something that was already lost? Or are you still trying for your "Big Ten" (may I quote thou?) letter?

Why don't you start learning from the little leaguers before you start second guessing "big time."
T. J. MADDEN.

The more typical fan letter may be exemplified in one sent to Harvey T. Woodruff and reprinted in his "Wake of the News" in the July 6, 1927 Chicago Tribune.

DEAR HARVE. Our Cubs are no longer merely a pennant possibility. They are a probability. They have surprised nearly all critics and even many of their followers. They have done this with a crippled pitching staff.

Now we see the assertion that Pittsburgh is stronger on paper. Baseball games are not played on paper. I'll admit Pittsburgh has great hitters - not greater hitters than the Cubs, but more of them. Their slab staff is not equal to ours. No team will win a pennant on hitting and fielding alone. There must be balanced strength. If the Cubs in reality are no stronger than the Pirates, they certainly are better balanced. Our team spirit is better.

So I want to predict right now that the next World's Series will be played in Chicago. Cubite.

Much to the sports columnist's relief, the above fan's letter represents the majority of the type sent in.

The fan with the complaint must not be taken too

seriously lest he produce an ulcer, but in order to avoid overlooking a legitimate complaint, the writer should read his fan-mail and consider carefully the letters with meat in them.

The letter with the sense of humor is always good. It gives the regular reader a change of written scenery, and provides the columnist with plenty of straightlines.

Grantland Rice didn't answer the following letter until a week later when he had stored up material for a rebuttal, but he liked the letter enough to print it when he received it.

Sir: As the stranger said at the wake, wherein he had strayed by chance, "If nobody wants to discuss the corpse I would like to stand up and say a few words about California. The real reason for the athletic triumphs of our glorious state is a secret which I now divulge. There is iron in the California air, iron which permeates the ozone, seeps up through the soil, filters into the blood of men and produces leaders like Jack Dempsey, William Johnston, Charles Borah, George Von Elm, Charles Paddock and Helen Wills. Here we have fighting, tennis galloping and golf. What else is there? California has just begun to take a serious interest in athletics and the outlook for the rest of the United States is dismal, for in five years from date we will probably have all the champions in all the sports, beginning with abalone spearing and going down the line to zither plunking." Yours truly,
FRANK CONDON.

The sports fan is a great source of material for the column, and the alert columnist can make interesting copy out of the ordinary spectator.

Of course, in printing and answering letters, the

columnist has the advantages of always having the last word.

It must be added, however, that "last words" are not necessary and the columnist who takes the ribbing (most of which is good natured) is better liked by his audience, and certainly is the better sport.

F. Amateurism

As long as there is a truly amateur athlete there will be argument about amateurism.

Nearly every writer who ever pounded out his once-daily has dealt at one time or another with amateurism. The subject is completely controversial, but it was felt important enough as a controversy to be handled in a separate section.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines an amateur as "one who cultivates a particular pursuit, study, or science, from taste, without pursuing it professionally; also a dabbler. In sports and especially athletics, one who is not rated as a professional."

The sports writers and sports personalities have their own ideas, as do the various presidents of the amateur athletic organizations. Even the Amateur Athletic Union cannot seem to pin down specific rules that remain satisfactory.

It is not the purpose of this section to define

amateurism, but to cite examples of what writers have to say about the subject.

The problems that exist within the ranks of amateur athletics and among amateur athletes have been the same for years. John Kieran, who was the "crusader" of the 1927 group of writers, and probably of that decade, wrote two excellent pieces on amateurism. The one of primary interest to this paper was printed in the July 4, 1927 New York Times.

Just think of the mournful wails and the outraged cries that would have gone echoing down the valley if last week's upsets in amateur sport had happened in professional competition. Bill Tilden, the greatest tennis player of modern times, lost to Henri Cochet at Wimbledon after leading 2-0 in sets and 5-1 in games in the third set. The Columbia varsity eight, rated behind Washington, California and Navy before the race started, pulled away to win a gallant victory at Poughkeepsie.

The late "Tiny" Maxwell once said, half humorously and half cynically, that an amateur is an athlete who won't take a check, but he didn't really mean it and the difference is far wider than that. It extends not only to the amateur athletes but beyond them to the followers of amateur sports and the spectators at amateur competition.

A surprise victory in amateur competition is something to be hailed with delight. A surprise victory in professional sports is met with the suggestion that the police should investigate and perhaps all the contestants should be hung.

There are other differences, but these will suffice for the moment.

The sports columnist has a golden opportunity for doing good both for the world of sports and for the world.

Two of the finest columns seen on the subject of amateurism by our writers did not appear in either of the two eras under consideration, but since they both fit perfectly into this section they cannot be left out.

Arthur Daley's November 2, 1955 "Sports of the Times" was selected as a representative column by the Pulitzer committee which awarded the 1956 Pulitzer Prize for newspaper writing to Daley.

This is an era in which the fundamental principles of amateur idealism have been warped beyond recognition. The totalitarian nations have their "state amateurs," the muscular gent's who hold token jobs but actually work at being athletes.

Nor was it particularly edifying when Lewis Hoad and Ken Rosewall, the Australian Davis Cup players, had their salaries raised by the sporting goods firms that employed them. This was done to persuade them not to turn professional as they virtually had agreed to do...

Once upon a time the Amateur Athletic Union was a favorite whipping boy of sportswriters. But the A.A.U. has acted with dignity, courage and basic idealism in suspending Wes Santee, the fastest miler America ever had, for accepting exorbitant expenses. The registration committee of the Missouri Valley Association, the policing agency of the district group, clamped on the suspension after weighing the evidence. Santee now can appeal to his district association as a whole and, if that fails, to the national body.

The firm belief in this corner is that the end has come to Santee's long-cherished dream of bursting past the Four Minute Mile barrier to join Roger Bannister and Company...

Perhaps the A.A.U. is being old-fashioned in believing that an amateur is a fellow who competes only for the fun of competing. In a world that continually bows to expediency, it's a comfort to know that at

least one organization sticks to its principles. If Santee wins reinstatement, he will have rated it.

The second excellent example was written for the same column, but by John Kieran, and for the August 22, 1930 Times.

A rich Californian in his last will and testament bequeathes \$20,000 to an amateur tennis champion and the President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Macon, Georgia suggested that funds be raised by Macon citizens for the purpose of providing Mercer College with a good football team. Once again the sore subject of amateurism in sports is being debated with sound and fury. There are some general observations that might be made.

Every player starts as an amateur. Every small boy is an amateur problem.

In a game where there are no gate receipts there is no amateur problem.

The amateur status of a player who never won a prize is never questioned. It is self-evident.

The charge of professionalism against an amateur is at once an accusation and a compliment.

Two of the 1957 columnists had their own ideas on the "sore subject of amateurism" and expounded them during the period being studied.

Emmett Watson produced the following for his "Needle" of July 10 in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

To judge by the rosy little rumbles from the Montlake Canal precinct, I would advise you to apply for tickets now and make your reservations, via UAL or Western, for Pasadena the week of December 26, 1960...

Well, to put it another way, the people out at Washington are happy over the proselyting job being done this summer. They figure the Huskies will corral

the best talent in the state, some from Oregon, even a few from Idaho, Montana, California, and other sovereign centers of football culture.

Mind you, nobody is talking like that for publication, but you pick up the idea from a knowing smile here, a nod there, and an optimistic grin someplace else...

Of course, proselyting football players is roughly equivalent to looking at a basket of eggs and counting those chicks. It doesn't always work out that way.

"Ruby's Report" for July 19 came across with some perhaps fitting remarks on the American boxing situation.

At some time back in the dark history of boxing there must have been a reason for legislators to place the amateurs in the same cell block with the professionals.

But whatever the reason may have been, it no longer exists.

The Amateur Athletic Union of the United States is one of the strongest, cleanest sports organizations in the world.

It is ludicrous to assume that the A.A.U. and its thousands of dedicated, unpaid officers is less qualified to look after its kids than a state-appointed boxing commissioner.

Judging by developments here yesterday, Kentucky may become one of the first states in the Union to recognize the great chasm which exists between the two groups, and to do something about it.

Bernard Bax, boxing commissioner, and Francis "Sam" Bauman, deputy, told representatives of the A.A.U. that they will not oppose - would even welcome - legislation removing the amateurs from their jurisdiction.

Charley Fischer, president of the Kentucky A.A.U., and Bill Moore, boxing committee chairman, immediately took steps to get such legislation started...

The sports columnist, as any other writer, is a wielder of public opinion. He is looked up to as an idol by many, and what he says in his daily column is, to many readers, "law."

The tremendous influence that the columnist holds in his ten fingers is probably not realized by most of them, but the Daleys and Kierans do realize it and have become in their respective times important figures in American journalistic history.

G. The Pre-Fight Story

During the first three weeks in July of both 1927 and 1957 there was considerable writing about the major fight of the year.

In the earlier era, Jack Dempsey was to meet Jack Sharkey for the heavyweight title, and the winner was to fight Gene Tunney. In 1957, a similar situation arose. Floyd Patterson, the heavyweight champion, was to fight Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson, with the winner boxing Pete Rademacher.

The two situations produced interesting comparisons between the columnistic style of the two periods.

Once again, the sports columnist must be careful lest he steps into the territory owned by the news reporter covering the match or his pre-fight writing. But there are

a great many interesting sidelights to be found at the ringside of the fighters, and this information is passed to the fight-followers by the columnist.

Following are three examples from each period. Although each writer handled his column in his own way, there is a definite difference in the writing style of the two eras.

First, a look at the 1927 era will show the usual tendency toward floweriness. There is no paucity of colorful phraseology and elaborate sentence structure.

The first example is taken from the Grantland Rice columns of July 5 and 6, 1927. Probably the best poet among the great sports writers, Rice turned to verse in the July 5 "The Sportlight" and came up with "Our Pugilistic Mother Goose."

Hickory, dickory, dock;
Has Dempsey still got the sock?
Maybe he hasn't - and maybe he has -
Hickory, dickory, dock.

There was a man in our town
And he was wondrous wise;
He went to see the fighters train
And lamped 'em with his eyes.
And when he saw what he had seen
He said: "The dope behooves
They both look good - but tell me, kid,
Just wottinell that proves?"

Once upon a time a fight reporter interviewed the trainers in charge of two fighters. Both trainers admitted their candidate was in poor condition, full of fuzz, and probably never would get in shape. But the story was never printed, for the fight reporter

dropped dead.

The next day, Rice moved back into the field of prose and wrote about the impending battle.

Neither Jack Sharkey nor Gene Tunney, if it goes that far, should feel depressed when the discovery is made that Jack Dempsey will be the popular favorite with the crowd when he swings into action.

Any student of human psychology can understand the reason.

Dempsey is on the come-back trail. And the great majority of the crowd is always rooting for the come-back entry.

The reason is fairly simple. The average human understands that some day the time may come when he will fall, falter, slump or even become a has been.

He may be in that fix now. And he likes to feel that it is still possible to come back. He likes to have it proved so that he can know it is true.

No one likes to feel or believe that once he slips he can never get back on his feet again. "The can't come back," has always been one of the most depressing slogans of the game...

The war is now nine years away. All the crowd remembers is a beaten champion trying to come back - one of the fallen trying to prove that a man can get back on his feet and come on again to win.

It is for this reason that Dempsey will carry a large popular backing. The other reason is that the crowd wants action, and the crowd remembers that Dempsey at least gave more action than any of the others, with something to spare, up to his last fight.

When you join the two reasons you will get the answer as to why Jack Dempsey will get the noisy reception awaiting him when he next crawls through the ropes.

This is an excellent piece of writing because it

mixes human interest with human emotion and seasons it with talented knowhow.

Harvey T. Woodruff took a look at the Dempsey-Sharkey fight and foresaw the winner-Tunney match in Chicago's Soldiers Field where, in fact, it was eventually fought.

CHICAGO may secure the championship boxing contest in September between Gene Tunney and the winner of the Dempsey-Sharkey fray on July 21. It probably will not. There are many, many angles to promoting a big bout of this kind. If all of them were ironed out we think Promoter, Tex Rickard would be glad to give this city a try-out. It might afford a profitable field when things are "squally" in the east.

The Wake did not become as indignant as some others when Tex located the Dempsey-Tunney bout in Philadelphia after announcing in this city that he would like to hold the affair here. When next we saw him, he gave us reasons why it was impossible. Those reasons were so personal they were not for publication. Furthermore, some of them would not look well in type. Possibly we were gullible. We do, however, attach sentiment to professional sport. Title bouts will go where the best money promises, be it New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago.

More than 100,000 people saw the Army-Navy football game in Soldiers' Field last fall. A ring does not occupy as much space as a gridiron. Eliminating the most distant seats, seating capacity could be 125,000 or more.

Would Chicago and the middle west pay nearly \$2,000,000 to witness a championship battle? We doubt it. In fact, we doubt whether New York or Philadelphia would pay that much this fall. Dempsey against Tunney was the best drawing card possible. Tunney and whoever is selected to meet him will not equal that bout as an attraction...

Summarizing, The Wake is in a receptive attitude. We would like to have the next heavyweight championship

decided here. We will not grieve if it is not. Sooner or later such a contest will be held in Chicago.

Woodruff was a little pessimistic. Not only was the second Dempsey-Tunney match held in Soldiers' Field, but 104,000 spectators paid the only \$2,000,000 gate in the history of boxing to watch.

The third 1927 example comes through McGeehan's "Down the Line" for July 4.

AT THE CURRENT writing the experts attached to the training camp of Mr. Jack Dempsey remain evasive, or at least non-committal. There will be no doubt as to the physical and mental condition of Mr. Dempsey two weeks from next Thursday night. At present all that can be said is that he's as healthy or unhealthy as could be expected under the circumstances.

Mr. Tex Rickard is worrying least of all about the physical and mental condition of the ex-champion. Indications are to the effect that the Dempsey-Sharkey bout will be what the boys call a "sell-out," and Mr. Rickard is concerned only with the pleasant task of sorting the certified checks into neat little bundles...

Mr. Rickard naturally is neutral, outwardly at least, but as a business man Mr. Rickard must be wishing Mr. Dempsey a very successful comeback. If that should happen, the Yankee Stadium would be all too small for the return bout between Dempsey and Gene Tunney, and it would be moved westward to Soldiers Field in Chicago, where Mr. Rickard might be able to gather a two-million-dollar gate.

Mr. Gene Tunney, the heavyweight champion, also hopes that Mr. Dempsey will be successful at this stage of his comeback, for Mr. Tunney gets the lion's share of the next heavyweight championship bout. The lion's share of a two-million-dollar gate would keep Mr. Tunney in books and lighter literature for the rest of his days. The share of Mr. Dempsey in such an event would enable him to live in the style to which he has been accustomed without any further coming back.

The earlier writers seemed to be willing to stick their necks out a little more than the columnists from the present period. Rice was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, boxing reporters of any time, and the respect with which his knowledge of the sport was held gave him a certain freedom with his verbosity.

The following examples will show a lack of this freedom. Modern writers seem to pull their punches more than they land them. The first piece is from the July 15 San Francisco Chronicle. Will Connolly wrote the column and headed it "Seattle Go May Outdraw N.Y."

Floyd Patterson, the young heavyweight champion, will defend his title this month against an opponent whose name escapes us.

All the talk is about Pete Rademacher, the Olympic Games amateur, who is to tangle with Patterson in Seattle in August, providing the champ gets over what's-his-name.

It comes to us now. He's Hurricane Jackson. Oh, sure, Jackson has been around, from pillar to post, and we should have known. But the national controversy regarding Rademacher, who has yet to make his first pro fight, has obscured Patterson's more immediate engagement...

It's a good bet that the Patterson-Rademacher will outdraw the Patterson-Jackson. At least, the cauliflower crowd is talking about it more. Poor Jackson, he's caught in the middle.

Seattle was to be the site for the proposed Patterson-Rademacher fight and Watson of the Post-Intelligencer talked about the match in six different columns.



The following example was judged his best. It is taken from the July 17 "Needle."

Well, there is no fooling about it, Mr. Jack Hurley, the well-known athletic director, has got us all in the bind. Things have now reached the point where nobody can afford to miss the Rademacher-Patterson fight.

As the man on the next stool was saying the other night, "I've got to see this fight. Now suppose it's a stinker? I've got to be there don't I, so I can say how lousy it was?"

"Then let's say this Rademacher catches lightning in a bottle. Maybe he pulls the upset, or even makes a good fight of it. A man can't afford to miss that, can he?"

To my way of thinking, the man on the next stool has it nailed down cold. We've got to be there. The only escape is to come down with an acute trip to Alaska...

John P. Carmichael of the Chicago Daily News didn't think much of either of the two impending heavyweight matches and says it better than anyone else from the modern period. Neither Jackson nor Rademacher was given a chance against the champion, and many writers thought it a foolish publicity-seeking stunt. The column is from the July 13 "The Barber Shop."

WE ARE approaching, without too much fanfare, the Floyd Patterson-"Hurricane" Jackson fist fight for the heavyweight championship of the world. The time and place is July 29 in New York and the bout may draw heavily from the ranks of those who couldn't get tickets for My Fair Lady that night.

There is something about this fight that doesn't exactly capture the imagination. Why? Patterson became a legitimate champ by destroying the durable Archie Moore. Jackson probably is as logical a

contender as some of the guys Joe Louis fought in his busy tenure of office.

What's missing? "There's no excitement to either of 'em," said Jack Dempsey recently...and then he ended laughingly: "It must be kinda tough to write a lot about 'em..."

Boxing is a great crowd-drawing sport, but it has always been handicapped by the hoodlums and gangsters of the larger cities.

The columnist is once again in a position to do something about a sporting event. It seems that many of the modern writers have turned their backs on boxing as a hopeless situation to be handled as news when news is made.

There is none of the Grantland Rice optimism about boxing among the 1957 writers. Perhaps it is a matter of not knowing how much power they do wield in their columnar opinions.

CHAPTER V

READABILITY

To do a complete content analysis of the writings of sports columnists under consideration in this study would be to write another thesis.

However, a study of a columnist's work would not be complete without going beneath the surface of the style to analyze at least readability of the writing. It goes without saying that the sports columnist who is not well-read will be told to fold up his typewriter and move on. The writer who has the large audience will always receive the red carpet treatment, not only in his office but at every sports event he attends.

The columnists of concern here are near the top of the American sports popularity list (at least in their own areas) or the author wouldn't have been interested in their work.

It is believed two aspects of readability are important to the sports columnist. The use of "jargon" will be discussed first with the primary emphasis on the difference between 1927 and 1957 jargon. Secondly, the importance of the adjective-verb relationship for readability will be discussed with a comparison not only of the fifteen columnists among themselves but sports columning

compared with other forms of writing.

A. Jargon

Writing examples used in the previous chapter show the manner in which the style of sports columning has changed in the past thirty years. One of the major reasons for this change is the decrease in the number of unneeded adjectives.

Sports writers today tend to call teams by their right names, state what sport the team is participating in, and make their writing clear and concise. The horrendous clashes of fearsome Tigers and snarling Wolverines, which usually were concluded with purple sunsets, now are taboo in the better sports sections. There is no objection to picturesque writing if handled properly, but neither the sports editor, nor the reader wishes to see a sports event smeared with wild and indiscriminate pigments.¹

Emphasis has been placed, in recent years, on making the story readable to the non-sports reader should he happen to fold back his newspaper at the wrong place. If sports pages are written in English, there is always a chance that a few unwary devotees to the financial or

¹Stanley Woodward, Sports Page. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), pp. xv-xvi.

society pages may be caught.

Sports writing today is directed toward the fan who enjoys athletic events but who may have no special knowledge concerning them. A good sports column, therefore, should be aimed at the enjoyment and information of the sportsman rather than the expert. Technical terms not understood by the average reader generally are avoided. Especially is this true since women have become more interested in athletics, both as readers and attendants.

Women now are reading the news of baseball and football, where they are spectators, as well as of bowling, tennis, and golf, in which they actively participate.²

The overly ambitious adjective, which was prominent among our 1927 writers but which has shown a definite decrease among modern columnists, has been referred to as jargon.

This section will analyze jargon used by columnists of both eras.

In making the definition of the word jargon a little more concise, it is necessary to state that for the purpose of this paper jargon will refer to those words or phrases used by writers which might be misunderstood by the

²George Fox Mott, editor, An Outline Survey of Journalism. (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1940), p. 123.

non-sports reader. As a basis for this study, the author has referred to a thesis devoted to a study of sports jargon.³

Besides a decrease in the number of jargonized words and phrases used by modern writers, another difference will be found in the manner in which colorful words and phrases are used.

Nowhere in the writing of the modern sports journalist will one find as verbose a story as the one by Grantland Rice on the Notre Dame-Army football game when "the four-horsemen rode again." (The article was referred to in Chapter II). "They (the four horsemen) formed the crest of the South Bend cyclone before which another fighting Army football team was swept over the precipice..."

Another example of jargonized writing may be the epitome of this type of journalistic effort. It is a sports news story fresh from the pages of the "Golden Age" sports section. Almost every word is jargon, and every phrase colored mercilessly.

Annapolis, Md., Nov. 17 - Navy's ship of success foundered on the banks of the Severn today, wrecked by the rugged rocks of Pittsburgh. After a safe passage

³Stanley Herman Slom, "Jargon-Free Sports Writing," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1951).

past Columbia, Penn and Notre Dame abroad, the gallant craft came to grief at its home port, sunk by the waves of Pittsburgh's power that pounded it down to defeat, 31-7...

To a lesser degree, but still of the same vintage, are the following phrases picked from among writings studied in the preceding chapter.

McGeehan wrote in a superficial style, "In order that you may appreciate the enormity of the offense of Mr. Robinson against his day and generation it is necessary to make some preliminary explanations... Sir Hall Caine, the British novelist, having discovered the manly art of modified murder..."

Kieran once led a column with, "Apropos of recent references..."

In 1927, the "cheers and enthusiasm" of the crowd became "plaudits," and the expression was well worn out by the middle of the 30's.

The repetition of names seemed important to the 1927 columnist. In McGeehan's column on "One Eyed Connolly II," the full name is used no less than ten times in nine paragraphs. Modern writers seem satisfied with using the full name in the first time reference made to an individual, and the last name thereafter.

Kieran heard "mournful wails and outraged cries" when he thought of the upset tennis match involving "Big"

Bill Tilden.

These are merely a few samples of various types of 1927 sports writing jargon.

Modern writers have their own jargon. Some of it may be judged as bad if not worse than the jargon used in the earlier era, but at least it isn't the same jargon. Thirty years from now, sports writers will be using jargon just as often, but it too, will include different words.

In one of Watson's columns, the writer used three pieces of jargon in the first four paragraphs. The Seattle columnist wrote, "Patterson will knock Rademacher bow-legged...Rademacher is a different kettle of halibut..." and "to get Pete's backers off the hook..." The novice reader undoubtedly left for other fields on the first one.

Watson added in the same column, "He'd be the biggest curiosity since Douglas Corrigan." Not all readers will recall Corrigan.

Arthur Daley, a great prolific writer, has also fallen into jargonized phrases. He wrote of a young man who had been "scarred by his jousts with Dame Fortune." The well-known "Dame" went down with the "Navy ship of success."

John P. Carmichael referred to the 1957 All-Star baseball game as "this mid-summer frolic."

Detroit's Doc Greene, who began his sports

journalistic career during the "Golden Era," but who made the style transition along with the younger writers, fell into the old way in one column from the 1957 sampling. His lead read, "The sun shone and the breeze wafted gently over the heather at Plum Hollow..."

The avid sports fan is comparable to a member of a profession or trade who understands the specific jargon of that particular trade or profession.

For example, doctors are able to talk and write to each other using technical medical terms. In fact, they understand each other more easily when they use these terms. But if a layman were to read a medical journal he probably would have a difficult time getting past the initial paragraph. If a doctor writes or speaks to a lay audience he must break down his jargon into terms more easily understood.

In the same manner, the sports fan understands sports jargon quite readily.

But a greater variety of people read the sports page than the specific group that reads medical journals. Moreover, one of the objectives of the sports page is to attract as many readers as possible, where trade and professional journals do not specifically point for "outsiders." The sports writer must write for the average reader rather than for a specific group.

This is theory. In practice, many modern sports columnists still confuse the reader with jargonized phraseology.

Colorful adjectives may help a sentence, and even make it more readable, but many times improper connotation prevents comprehension.

It seems, therefore, that the trend among sports columnists is toward use of simple phrases and a more careful use of the English language.

B. Adjective-Verb Relationship

An interesting sidelight was thrown on the subject of readability of sports columns through a study of the adjective-verb relationship of the fifteen writers and comparing them to findings of Dr. David P. Boder in his studies.

Dr. Boder, head of the department of psychology at Lewis Institute, made a study of the readability of different kinds of writings. One of the phases of his study was the adjective-verb relationship within a piece of writing. Dr. Boder feels that this aspect of writing has a great deal to do with its readability.⁴

⁴J. I. Rodale (ed.), The Word Finder. (New York: Garden City Books, 1952), pp. x-xi.

Since adjectives and verbs are of such importance to the sports writer it was decided that a supplement should be added to Dr. Boder's study by determining the Adjective-Verb Quotient (A.V.Q.) of the fifteen columnists.

Of course, the supplement is on a much smaller scale and therefore less accurate than the original, but the results of the study are quite interesting not only in the comparison of sports writing to other types of writing but also in the comparison of the 1927 sports columnist to his 1957 counterpart.

The A.V.Q. is a measure of the ratio of adjectives to verbs employed by writers. For example, an A.V.Q. of 20 means that a writer uses 20 adjectives for every 100 verbs he employs.

Dr. Boder found that of the four principal fields of writing, drama has the fewest adjectives per 100 verbs, with an average A.V.Q. of 11. Laws are next with an A.V.Q. of 20. Fiction has an A.V.Q. of 35; scientific writing, 75. Business letters, according to Dr. Boder's findings, show a relative paucity of adjectives, with only 19 to every 100 verbs.

Private letters by inexperienced writers have on an average but 22 adjectives to 100 verbs. Advertisements, on the other hand, are lavish of adjectives, with an A.V.Q. of 78. Theses written by candidates for the Ph. D. degree

are loaded with even more adjectives than are advertisements--88 to 100 verbs! Poetry has what is considered by Dr. Boder to be a "golden mean" for proportion of adjectives to verbs--an A.V.Q. of 36.⁵ (See Table I).

For this study and the supplement to Dr. Boder's original work seven consecutive columns were taken for each of the fifteen sports writers.

The average A.V.Q. for the total of 105 columns investigated was 65.7. In other words, sports columnists use 65.7 adjectives per 100 verbs in their writings. This figure is well above Dr. Boder's "mean" (36) for the writings he studied.

Of more significance to this thesis is the fact that the results of this test show a definite difference between the five columnists of the 1927 era and the ten of the 1957 period.

As could have been guessed, writers of the 1927 era use many more adjectives than modern columnists. The five early columnists used an average of 75 adjectives per 100 verbs to 61 for modern writers. (See Table II).

Although there was some overlapping between the A.V.Q. scores of the individual writers from the two eras, the three top scores came from among the 1927 group. W. O.

⁵Ibid.

McGeehan even surpassed Dr. Boder's thesis writers with an A.V.Q. of 91, an extremely high relationship.

The lowest score among the fifteen sports columnists was 48 from the seven columns of Gordon Cobbledick.

This study of the adjective-verb relationship of the sports columnists was made, in part, to have a basis for readability comparison between these writers and writers from other fields.

This test, which, it must be remembered, is only part of the total readability test given by Dr. Boder, indicates that the average sports columnist can produce readable copy as well as the average writer from most of the other fields of writing. And, it is repeated, the sports columnist may have only one chance to look at what he has written.

TABLE I
THE NUMBER OF ADJECTIVES USED PER 100 VERBS
IN VARIOUS TYPES OF WRITING

(Non-Sports Writing)

Drama	11
Laws	20
Fiction	35
Scientific	75
Business Letters	19
Private Letters	22
Advertising Copy	78
Theses	88
Poetry	36

TABLE II

THE NUMBER OF ADJECTIVES USED PER 100 VERBS
IN VARIOUS TYPES OF WRITING

(Sports Columns)

Average of all sports columnists studied	65
Average of five 1927 sports columnists	75
Kieran	74
McGeehan	91
Rice	67
Salsinger	68
Woodruff	75
Average of ten 1957 sports columnists	61
Cobbledick	48
Leiser	63
Burns	59
Carmichael	72
Daley	53
Kuechle	67
Ruby	54
Watson	67
Rives	69
Green	59

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Sports has become, over the past fifty years, of major interest to Americans. People, who never get together over other things because of a lack of common interest, become close friends during sports discussion or argument.

Every sport, whether team or individual participation, has its following. Some sports are more interesting to some individuals than to others, but nearly all Americans have some degree of interest in some sports.

Sports that are "out-of-reach" of most of the American population, such as football and basketball, draw enormous crowds. Although they don't get the physical value of body contact and teamwork, the fans do receive entertainment value which is second best.

The sports section of the daily newspaper is the go-between for the fans who cannot participate and the players who enjoy seeing their own prowess in words as well as the prowess of friends or future opponents. It may also be a scouting report for the coach or a moment of glory for a Mom and Dad.

This vital section of the newspaper is many things to many people. Because of this, it is important that the

sports writers attempt to cover as many events as possible on the local scene as well as to keep the reader posted on national happenings.

The sports columnist also must feel a responsibility to his audience by giving as complete coverage as possible. Many columnists are specialists who devote all their time to one sport. These writers may have wide readership, but it is limited to those interested in that one sport.

This thesis has been devoted to a study of fifteen sports columnists who are not specialists. Not all of them covered as wide a range of sports as others, but all of them are well-established in their own locale, and all are well-read.

The best columnist is the writer who can write a column on any sports subject. Arthur Daley has a wide readership among the women because he not only writes so all can understand, but he produces a column from time to time of primary interest to the usually non-sports reader.

John P. Carmichael is perhaps more versatile than any of the others studied because of his wide knowledge of the total sports field.

Contacts are also important to the sports writer or columnist. The popular sports columnist rarely lacks columnar material because there is always someone who provides, perhaps unknowingly, an idea for a column.

There are thousands of people who have their lives wrapped up in sports, and the more people the sports columnist knows the better writer he will become.

This thesis has been a study of this type of writer. A study of men in a profession no longer harrassed by an inferiority complex--a profession highly regarded and widely followed.

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