

A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME: HOW SPORTS REPORTERS VIEW THEIR ROLE IN A CHANGING ECOSYSTEM

As newsroom jobs decline across the country, one of the affected departments is sports. Although it has long been considered the “toy department” of journalism, recent investigative reporting into sexual assault scandals at Baylor University and USA Gymnastics have helped to illustrate the need for robust sports coverage. In the absence of outside media outlets, teams, leagues and university athletic departments have begun hiring their own in-house reporters to fill coverage gaps. At the same time, social media and an exploding number of sports blogs and alternative websites have challenged the hierarchy and perceived necessity of independent, well-reported sports coverage. In this professional analysis, reporters from both sides of the new sports media ecosystem share their insights and experiences in the ever-shifting landscape of sports journalism and whether the future of the industry will see an even more drastic shift toward teams and leagues controlling coverage.