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Career in Sports Broadcasting

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The media has grown throughout the decades since World War II but the demand for sports in the media has increasingly grown because people view sports as a pastime and a way out of problems they may be faced with. Before most of the major sports that we know today the most popular sport was baseball and can be traced back to the early 1930's with the infamous teams the New York Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers. At that point, baseball was considered our national pastime. Sports have definitely evolved since then with the growing popularity and the amount of coverage these sports gets now there are certain channels devoted just to them. The leader in sports coverage is ESPN, the "mecca" of all sports. Because their programming is on all day 24/7 and their rights to show games stretched from the pros to college. Each major sport has its own network (i.e. MLB, NFL, NBA). This is why a huge market has opened up in this career field. As long as there is a demand for sports media and the ever-changing technology then a job will be there. I surmise that my reasoning for wanting to become a successful sports broadcaster is because these networks have taught me different tricks of the trade, new information on a particular team or player, and has deepened my love for sports.

ESPN is considered one of the main players in sports media coverage today especially because they have self billed themselves as the "worldwide leader in sports" but they also have a ton of competition now especially with rival networks NBC and CBS and other various networks. In January of 2012, ESPN was still considered to be at the top of sports media when newly elected President of ESPN and chairman of Disney Media Networks John Skipper came in. Since Skipper's short tenure as President of ESPN he has overseen big deals to acquire more sports entertainment by adding coverage of the U.S. Open tennis tournament, a huge twenty year deal with the SEC conference to

mainly show football and basketball but other sports as well and games of the WNBA. When asked about ESPN's competitors and their recent acquisitions Skipper proceeded to say that he was "surprised by the aggression of Fox on U.S. Open Golf." I believe this was a big blow to ESPN because they realize the growing popularity of the sport of golf. Skipper also talks about the positive of how NBC was able to snag Premiere League Soccer another sport that has been gaining interest in the United States (Lafayette). Later on in the article Skipper was asked, "What's the next technology that is going to affect your business?" Skipper responds by citing examples on how mobile ESPN is by saying ESPN is available on Xbox, Apple T.V. and on smartphones/ tablets. The last question to be asked is "Is sports television still a good business?" Skipper basically said he believes that it is because sports provides a social and commonality. He also said "the sports business is the most predictable growth business in entertainment" (Lafayette). This proves my point because here in an interview the President of ESPN basically says that since sports is such a growing industry that there will always be a job (see Appendix 1).

The fact that there is a pretty sizeable market for sports announcers and broadcasters is good to know but there are pros and cons to this business and a very key component is the salary. It is known that very few broadcasters make it to be extremely famous were their salary is at an astronomical number because they called the Superbowl or the Olympics. A professional broadcasters salary is based upon these criteria: sport, location and audience size (Molis). According to a survey done by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in May of 2010 the average salary for a spectator sports announcer was \$79,050 making it the highest paying industry for radio and television announcers (Molis). Another statistic that Molis cited was from the January 2012 edition of the Street

& Smith's Sports Business Journal, which stated that, Bob Costas and Al Michaels of NBC, Joe Buck of Fox, and Jim Nantz of CBS roughly made about \$5 million. Also, network broadcasters can make a lot of money as well. An example is Chris Berman from ESPN who is famous for his call "back, back, back" made \$3 million. Lastly, two contributing factors are that broadcasters popularity will affect his or her salary and that sports broadcasting jobs are continuously being created because of new outlets that are emerging the demand for on-air talent is increasing (Molis). I agree with this because if a broadcaster is good at what they do then they deserve to get a better paycheck than someone who isn't quite as good.

I believe that despite the statistics saying it's hard to make a lot of money by becoming a sports broadcaster the money can be made. I believe that it is up to the person's willpower, skill, gimmick, and work ethic to be the best broadcaster they can be. I also believe that it is the main focus of a broadcaster to not only relay the play by play of a game but to make the audience feel as if they are there. This can be accomplished by a great dialogue and a vivid description of the ongoing events. I hope that for me my career as a sports broadcaster won't be about the money but the fun I have in doing my job.

References

Chart. (n.d.). Lafayette, J. (2013). *Skipper Keeps ESPN Ship Steady As She Grows*. (2013, December 9).

Molis, J. (n.d.). The Average Salaries of Professional Sports Announcers.

Retrieved from <http://work.chron.com/average-salaries-professional-sports-announcers-3350.html>

Appendix

This chart shows the growing percentage of jobs in different fields of sports media.

