

Use of steroids in baseball primarily sports story

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Abstract

A content analysis of U.S. newspapers over 10 years revealed that the issue of steroids in baseball was the result of accidental events slightly more than routine ones. While both news and sports reporters covered accidental events, the news reporters' attention faded without government officials to adopt the issue and routinize the story.

Keywords

media, sports, baseball, steroids, content analysis, quantitative, sourcing, institutional news, event-driven news

Since the late 1980s, huge helmets, gigantic biceps and record-breaking home runs have come to symbolize widespread cheating in professional baseball. These decades of superstars and new milestones in Major League Baseball are known as *The Steroid Era*.¹ In the last 10 years, however, skepticism about increased athleticism intensified as more players were found guilty of using performance-enhancing drugs. Barry Bonds appeared with an asterisk on the March 2004 cover of *Sports Illustrated*, as the conversation about suspicious records got heated following a federal grand jury probe of a Bay Area laboratory (BALCO) accused of providing steroids to athletes.

During these 10 years, public and media attention to the issue rose and fell depending on the circumstances surrounding it. Among the most notable of these was the

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2013 Baseball Hall of Fame (HOF) voting, during which the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) denied entry to prominent players tied to steroids—namely Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens—in their first year of eligibility.² This decision is perhaps one of the most pronounced statements baseball media have made against the use of steroids that has plagued America's national pastime for decades.

In light of the HOF voting, this study examines the issue of steroids in baseball to uncover patterns of news coverage in American newspapers. Studying the similarities and differences among the different departments of media organizations requires a suitable issue that has attracted the attention of both news and sports journalists. Steroids in baseball provide such a setting. What makes this issue a compelling subject to study is the involvement of two institutions that generate routine news: government and baseball. In this paper, the author tracks the issue over a 10-year period to determine whether the issue became news as a result of institutional attention or accidental events and explores the role of sources in elevating the newsworthiness of the story. These assumptions are best understood using Shoemaker's and Reese's Hierarchy of Influences, a theoretical model that highlights the various influences on media content.³

Although the mass communication field can boast several decades of research investigating the relationship between media and institutions they cover, research in sports scholarship is still developing. This study seeks to contribute to extant research by bridging the gap between media research in politics and sports. The result is a more complete understanding of how journalists work, regardless of the department they belong to or the newsbeat they cover.

Theoretical Framework

As journalists go about their daily routine of reproducing the newsworthy events of the day, they actively engage in the news making process. This involves choices journalists make when they decide what is news.⁴ In other words, daily occurrences are not newsworthy events until journalists decide to communicate them to us.⁵ Here, several factors converge to raise certain events to newsworthy status while other similar ones remain invisible; however, the duration of their life in the media is still dependent on who frames the problem as a public issue through mass mediation.⁶ With various elements involved, judgments of newsworthiness become an intricate web of internal and external influences on media.⁷ Of these many factors, newsbeats are a vital systematic method for checking newsworthy events⁸ and bear considerable weight on what gets on the news agenda. Shoemaker's and Reese's Hierarchy of Influences provides an appropriate theoretical structure for this study as it explains the effect of the beat system on the journalistic routines of newsgathering.⁹ Of these routines, constraints on news production and reliance on external sources are relevant to this study.

Media and Governance

The collaboration between the government and the media has its roots in an 1841 U.S. Senate decision to assign a reporters' gallery for journalists.¹⁰ Starting this tradition of cooperation, the U.S. government played an active role in nurturing its relationship of co-dependence with the media.¹¹ This relationship mostly rests on pre-planned events in governmental beats, accidental events and journalists' own initiatives and

forms an important part of media routines in the Hierarchy of Influences. Pre-planned news is the result of a routine event, a “deliberately planned contribution to a purposely developed social structure,” such as press conferences and meetings¹² that stem from the newsbeat system.¹³ Accidents, on the other hand, are unintentional happenings and are less dependent on the needs of those in power.¹⁴ In addition to these events, reporters also engage in enterprise reporting. Investigative reporting and stories from private briefings with sources are examples of news organizations taking the initiative and originating their own stories,¹⁵ often going against the wishes of those in power.

To cope with newsgathering constraints, media organizations have developed routines that are some of the most immediate influences on media content.¹⁶ These media practices heavily rely on pre-planned or institutionally driven news that takes its cues from official activities in pre-defined arenas and survives in the media because of the constant endorsement of officials in these institutions.¹⁷ Event-driven news, another crucial component of media practices in the Hierarchy of Influences, is the coverage of spontaneous activities that are, in their initial occurrence, not managed by institutional officials.¹⁸ While this type of news gets onto the media agenda as a newsworthy event that breaks the norm,¹⁹ it quickly fades away unless government becomes involved.²⁰ To the extent that journalists mirror their views according to those of the officials in their newsbeats,²¹ they will gravitate toward a story that sits high on the officials’ agenda. Journalists’ reliance on the communicators of information in their newsbeats means they would follow these official sources as they consider the issue at times and drop it at other times.

The story of steroids in baseball presents a compelling case to study because it combines routine news with accidental news. Breaking news—such as leaked grand jury testimonies of prominent athletes involved in the BALCO case—got onto the media agenda because of its newsworthiness. The steroid story, however, became an institutional, routine event when Congress got involved, following President George W. Bush’s State of the Union address in 2004, in which he highlighted the dangers of steroid use in sports. Based on previous literature about the role official sources play in legitimizing an event to become news, the author hypothesizes the following:

H1:

In the news pages, the story of baseball and steroids will receive the most attention when government gets involved.

H2:

In the news pages, the story of baseball and steroids will reappear after an event but fade in the absence of governmental actors.

The attention the steroids issue received in both the news and sports pages provides an especially interesting arena for studying the patterns of coverage reporters engage in as they cover the same issue. While previous studies have predominantly shown news reporters rely heavily on institutional news cues, sports literature does not provide information about the sports media coverage patterns. With no prior research in this area, the following questions explore this topic:

RQ1:

In the sports pages, was the story of baseball and steroids institutionally driven or event-driven?

RQ2:

Is there a difference between news reporters and sports reporters in their coverage of the story (institutional vs. event-driven)?

Sourcing the News

The Hierarchy of Influences conceives media routines as the media's adaptation to the constraints sources impose on them.²² To produce content, the media depend on external sources found typically in the news beats.²³ As central actors in news reporting, sources can control what becomes news.²⁴ With the ability to influence reporters' understanding of an issue,²⁵ sources may also influence the public's perceptions and judgments.²⁶ News, thus, is the outcome of the interaction between journalists and their sources, as the former rely on authoritative persons in their newsbeats to provide them with official information they can turn into news.²⁷

Journalists rely heavily on officials because they see them as the legitimate sources of news, people who can speak authoritatively about their institutions.²⁸ By doing so, they restrict the range of voices in the media to a narrow tunnel of government officials.²⁹ The media's reliance on authoritative sources, especially government officials, has been documented in everyday political issues as well as special topics, such as state legislature coverage,³⁰ and in public affairs and business, such as domestic violence reporting³¹ and business crisis reporting.³² With abundant research on the dominance of officials in the news, the following hypothesis emerges:

H3:

News reporters will rely mostly on official sources in the government.

Sources in Sports News

Although the study of sources has been one of the most consistent in American journalism scholarship,³³ there is little known about how sports journalists use their sources. Textbooks talk about the special importance of sources for beat reporters, as it is extremely difficult to cover their beats without the help of sources.³⁴ Quotes from sources are valuable because they provide perspectives from key individuals in a team,³⁵ adding credibility and authority to the sports story.³⁶ Also, the extensive time reporters spend with teams either at the beat or on the road changes the relationship in a way that makes sports reporters identify with their sources.³⁷

In politics, science and business news, official sources dominate more often than not. In sports, textbooks list coaches and players as the most authoritative voices,³⁸ with no mention of sports officials, such as commissioners, union leaders and spokespersons. Besides textbooks, however, few sports research studies have examined

sourcing. One of these rare studies revealed how traditional media rely mostly on player sources, whereas online media use other media as sources.³⁹ Another study, which focused on sourcing from the gender perspective, found males are the dominant news sources in the majority of print articles.⁴⁰

Beyond the everyday coverage of games and numbers, how do sports media use their sources? When there is an issue, would players and coaches still dominate or would sports officials prevail? The following research question explores this area:

RQ3:

What type of sources did sports reporters rely on in covering the story of baseball and steroids?

Experts and Non-officials

Government officials are not always the go-to sources. Besides officials, experts are valuable sources because they are seen as credible, detached, non-partisan analysts⁴¹ who provide a news story with the objectivity values journalists constantly seek.⁴² Studies of crisis reporting have shown that the media rely on non-official sources in times of crises, such as the Virginia Tech shootings⁴³ and Hurricane Andrew.⁴⁴ Reporters could also rely equally on both governmental and non-governmental sources in certain environmental issues, such as land use policy⁴⁵ and vehicle emissions coverage.⁴⁶ In addition to fulfilling the ideals of balance, source diversity is important because it lends credibility to the story in readers'⁴⁷ minds and provides an accurate description of events.

Research on sourcing in science and health topics has indicated experts and officials dominate as information sources. In these studies, the media used health care professionals and public officials predominantly more than other types of sources.⁴⁸ Scientists were also a frequent source in a study of American newspapers, but ranked second to organizational officials.⁴⁹ While research in politics, business and science has revealed specific patterns of sourcing, sports studies lack this type of information. To investigate the diversity of sources in sports stories, the following research question asks:

RQ4:

Is there a difference in the use of sources between news and sports reporters?

Method

Data and Time Frame

Data Specifications

Data for this study came from print media. To get a representative sample, the author considered two newspapers from each of the four regions of the United States with several criteria:

- No two newspapers belonged to one state
- Newspapers needed to have considerable political and sports coverage (*The Wall Street Journal* was excluded because its sports coverage is modest as was *USA Today* because it is a national paper)
- For meaningful coverage of the steroid issue, newspapers came from states that preferably had two teams or at least one team in MLB
- When there was a deal breaker, the city with the older baseball team was chosen, if its newspaper ranked among top circulation numbers in the country.⁵⁰

The newspapers are: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (East), *The Chicago Sun-Times* and *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Midwest), *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Tampa Bay Times*, formerly *St. Petersburg Times* (South) and *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Seattle Times* (West).

Time Frame

The time frame used was between February 1, 2003, and January 31, 2013. February 2003 was the month during which Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler died of an ephedra-related stroke. Although ephedra was a legal herbal supplement at the time, the death of Bechler, a baseball player, is an appropriate time to start data collection because it coincided with a federal probe of BALCO, accidentally sparking the steroid controversy in baseball and leading to the indictment of prominent players.⁵¹ January 31, 2013, marks the end of the 10-year period under study to allow for data collection. Stories were obtained using the LexisNexis Academic and NewsBank Access World News databases. While databases may not be the most accurate methods for data collection, they are widely used in communication research.⁵²

Sample Specifications

Search Terms

The search terms used to retrieve data were “Major League Baseball” and “steroids or performance enhancing drugs.”

Sample Size

The initial search yielded a total of 5081 stories. A systematic random sampling of every fifth story reduced the population to a representative sample at 95 percent confidence level and 3.5 margin of error. The final number of stories was 563, after discarding irrelevant articles. They were as follows: *The New York Times*, 143; *The Washington Post*, 62; *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 97; *The Chicago Sun-Times*, 74; *The Seattle Times*, 99; *The Dallas Morning News*, 36; *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 18; and *Tampa Bay Times*, 34. Irrelevant articles included stories that were not related to the topic (for example, a story about steroid use in cycling that only mentions MLB), letters to the editor, book reviews, etc. Since the study focuses on substantial coverage of the steroid issue, the author only considered articles that were primarily about steroids in baseball or a section of an article that was clearly marked by a subhead.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the single news article, including news stories, editorials and opinion pieces.

Coding Categories

Each story was coded for newspaper name, date, desk, word count, news channel and sources. The categories discussed below were developed based on previous studies.⁵³

Story Channel

The study operationalizes story channel as the place where the story originated.⁵⁴ The two categories are:

- Routine: Stories coming out of newsbeats and were mostly scheduled events (such as press conferences, game interviews and hearings)
- Non-routine: Stories that happened outside the beat system, mainly based on original, creative reporting or on previous news or happenings

Sources

Coders recorded the number of sources used in each article, where each source was counted once. A source was defined as any person, organization or document that provided attributed information, with direct or indirect quotes. A source was identified with words of attribution such as “according to,” “said,” “stated” and “reported,” among others. Since a big part of the issue was related to court proceedings, attribution also included “testified,” “denied” and “admitted.” Source categories were:

- Institutionally affiliated: government officials, sports officials, business/other organizational officials, non-officials/position not specified
- Individuals: those who spoke on behalf of themselves and did not represent an organization: players, coaches and experts (academics, scientists, lawyers, therapists, etc.); media organizations (such as journalists, news media websites); and other (if a source did not fit in the above-mentioned categories)

Intercoder Reliability

Two university graduates were trained to code 59 articles (10.4 percent of the study) for intercoder reliability. This sample was drawn using systematic random sampling. Krippendorff’s α -agreement, a reliability measurement that corrects for chance agreement,⁵⁵ yielded the following results: newspaper name: 1.0; date: 1.0; word count: 1.0; section: 1.0; story channel: 0.8; and sources: 0.83.

Findings

During the 10-year period under study, the majority of stories about steroids in baseball came from the sports desks of the newspapers ($N = 482$, 86 percent), followed by the news desks ($N = 43$, 8 percent), with sporadic coverage from other sections, which included business, metro and national desks, among others. [See Table 1] The average length of the stories in the news section ($M = 1197.2$, $SD = 957.5$) was more than double those in the sports section ($M = 549.2$, $SD = 405.1$).

H1 predicted that in the news section, the story of baseball and steroids would receive the most attention when government got involved. The hypothesis was partially

Table 1
Frequency of Stories Across Sections

	<i>Stories</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Words</i>
	<i>Sports</i>		<i>News</i>		<i>Other</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>		
<i>New York Times</i>	130	90.9	4	2.8	9	6.3	143	803.6
<i>Washington Post</i>	58	93.5	4	6.5	0	0	62	519.5
<i>Seattle Times</i>	98	99	0	0	1	1	99	346.9
<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	59	60.8	25	25.8	13	13.4	97	819.6
<i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>	66	89.2	2	2.7	6	8.1	74	515
<i>Dallas Morning News</i>	25	69.4	6	16.7	5	13.9	36	402.5
<i>Tampa Bay Times</i>	30	88.2	2	5.9	2	5.9	34	455.4
<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i>	16	88.9	0	0	2	11.1	18	434.8
TOTAL	482	85.6	43	7.6	38	6.7	563	598.4

Note. The "News" section combines the news desk with the A-section. "Other" includes the following desks: national, financial, metro, editorial, opinion, review, briefing, notebook, Pasco and Bay Area.

supported. Figure 1 shows that the news section paid additional attention to the steroids issue when Congress got involved. The number of stories peaked on the days surrounding the congressional hearings of 2005 (March 16-20). The February 2008 hearings, however, received no coverage from the news desks in this sample. [See Figure 2]

H2 posited that in the news pages, the story of baseball and steroids reappeared after an event, but faded in the absence of governmental actors. To investigate this topic, this study tested whether the news media coverage stemmed from routine channels in institutions or was the results of accidental events and non-routine channels. Table 2 reveals the news section covered the steroids issue as a result of accidental events slightly more (56 percent) than routine channels (44 percent). Considering that government involvement in the issue was minimal, revolving mainly around the congressional hearings of 2005 and 2008 and the speeches of presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, it is clear the news department did respond to accidental events. The timestamp on the news stories reveals that the news reporters covered non-routine news and events but did not follow up on these stories without governmental actors to push the steroids issue. Therefore, H2 was supported.

RQ1 and RQ2 were concerned with the channel of the sports news as institutional or event-driven and whether it differed from the news stories. Table 2 indicates that the media partially relied on routine, institutional channels to report on steroids (43 percent), but they also followed up with enterprise reporting and events coverage (57 percent). The sports reporters used more accidental news (54 percent) than routine ones (46 percent). Across the different sections of the newspapers, there was a significant difference in the way they reported the story, $\chi^2(2, N = 563) = 20.51, p < .001$.

Figure 1
Frequency of Stories Across Sections (Feb. 2003 – Jan. 2007)

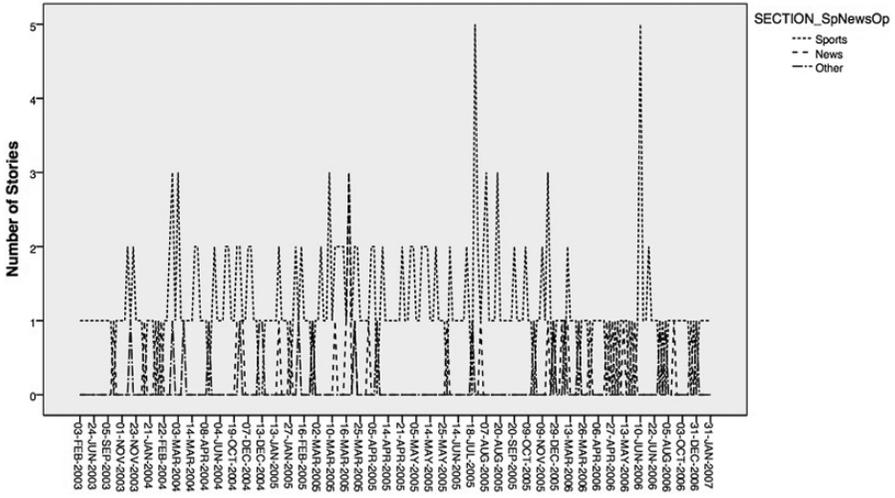


Figure 2
Frequency of Stories Across Sections (Feb. 2007 – Feb. 2013)

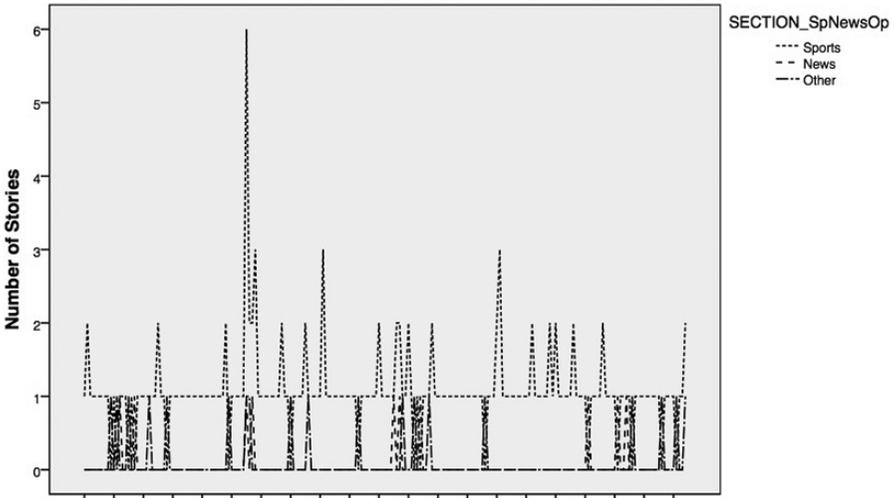


Table 2
Frequency of Story Channel Across Sections

	<i>Routine</i>		<i>Non-Routine</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	
Sports	220	46	262	54	482
News	19	44	24	56	43
Other	3	8	35	92	38
Total	242	43	321	57	563

Note: $\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 20.51, p < .001$.

H3, which predicted that news reporters would rely mostly on government officials, was not supported. In the news pages, [See Table 3] the most frequent sources were athletes and coaches ($M = 2.3, SD = 3.0$), followed by official government sources ($M = 1.6, SD = 1.7$).

RQ3 investigated the types of sources sports reporters relied on. Results indicate the most frequent category was athlete/coach sources ($M = 1.3, SD = 1.7$), ahead of sports officials ($M = 0.9, SD = 1.2$).

To answer RQ4, which asked whether there are any differences in the use of sources between news and sports reporters, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used instead of an ANOVA because the data did not meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance.⁵⁶ Results indicate the overall use of sources was significantly related to the department from which stories came, $\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 43.13, p < .001$. This relationship remained significant when controlling for the length of the story, $F (2,560) = 16.17, p < .001$.⁵⁷

Throughout the different sourcing categories, news reporters used significantly more sources than did sports and other reporters. The only non-significant differences were in the use of media and "position not-specified" sources. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test indicate significant differences between the reporters in their use of institutional sources, $\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 34.08, p < .001$, as well as individual sources, $\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 21.52, p < .001$. In the category of institutional sources, news reporters used more official sources [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 35.93, p < .001$], government officials [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 32.33, p < .001$], business officials [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 37.36, p < .001$] and even sports officials [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 17.31, p < .001$] than did all other reporters. As for individual sources, news reporters relied more on athlete/coaches sources [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 14.27, p < .002$] and experts [$\chi^2 (2, N = 563) = 13.87, p < .002$] than did the sports and other reporters.

Post hoc Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the three sections after correcting for Type I errors using Bonferroni's adjustments. The results of these tests indicated a significant difference between the sports and news sections in the use of all the following sources: government officials, business officials, athletes/coaches, experts and "other" sources. Collapsed categories of

Table 3
Frequency of Sources Across Sections

	<i>Sports</i>		<i>News</i>		<i>Other</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
All Sources	3.83	3.38	8.14	5.96	2.50	1.67	4.07	3.75
Institutional	1.76	1.87	3.50	2.49	0.89	1.18	1.83	1.95
Officials	1.64	1.79	3.35	2.46	0.82	1.16	1.72	1.88
Gov. Off.	0.44	0.94	1.56	1.70	0.32	0.66	0.52	1.04
Sports Off.	0.99	1.20	1.21	1.42	0.32	0.78	0.96	1.21
Bus. Off.	0.21	0.71	0.58	0.59	0.18	0.39	0.24	0.69
Not-specified	0.12	0.43	0.14	0.35	0.08	0.27	0.12	0.41
Individual	1.79	2.14	4.21	4.59	1.39	1.24	1.95	2.46
Expert	0.35	0.78	1.07	1.60	0.37	0.54	0.40	0.87
Athlete/Coach	1.27	1.66	2.30	3.04	0.68	0.87	1.31	1.79
Media	0.29	0.62	0.49	0.88	0.21	0.47	0.30	0.63
Other	0.19	0.49	0.93	1.78	0.34	0.53	0.26	0.71

Note. *N* = 563.

officials, institutional and individual sources were also significant between the sports and news sections.

Discussion

This study set out to explore the coverage patterns of the different sections of newspapers, focusing particularly on news and sports reporters covering the same issue. Tracking the steroids-in-baseball story over a 10-year period revealed that more often than not media coverage was the result of accidental events. This comes as no surprise considering the origin of the steroids issue was non-routine events—such as the BALCO raid, book releases, player confessions or denials—before official institutions adopted the story and routinized it. Hyper athleticism, positive test results and media coverage alerted the government to MLB's loose doping policies, which led the House Government Reform Committee to probe steroid use in baseball in an attempt to clean the league from performance enhancers. Although the media were divided in their support of governmental intervention, they nonetheless flocked to cover the hearings and all news stemming from the government. Because of the rare instances when the government involved itself in the issue, the news department's focus on the issue was also rare. Beyond the routine channels of governmental bodies, the news media responded heavily to accidental events. Without government sponsorship, however, their attention did not last, shifting the issue back to the sports department.

The sheer volume of coverage the issue received from the sports departments indicates the story of steroids in baseball was primarily a sports story.

The sheer volume of coverage the issue received from the sports departments indicates the story of steroids in baseball was primarily a sports story. The newsworthiness of the steroid issue lay in the involvement of the players, themselves, before either sports or governmental officials adopted the issue. Sports media's reliance on athletes as newsmakers also explains why accidental news prevailed over routine news, without ignoring the role of investigate reporting in increasing the quantity of non-routine news in this sample. Although athletes do belong to the sports beat that generates news on a regular basis, they are also newsmakers in non-routine events that break the flow of information from established institutions and in reporters' investigative initiatives at uncovering a story.

Apart from athletes, officials dominated the news agenda in all departments. More importantly, each department relied on its own beat sources to provide legitimacy to its stories. These findings confirm media's reliance on external sources as part of the routines in Shoemaker's and Reese's Hierarchy of Influences. While sports officials took the role of second most authoritative source for sports reporters, the second most frequent source for news reporters was government officials. News reporters also used expert sources as many as three times more than did sports reporters. Another rift between news and sports reporters was in their overall use of sources. News stories were more source heavy than were sports stories. Although this study did not measure opinion and objectivity in the stories, existing research points to the correlation between factual stories and a high numbers of sources that act as a defensive tool against criticism and as a reinforcement of reporters' reliance on objectivity.⁵⁸ Perhaps there were more factual news stories than sports ones and thus more sources per story. This, however, remains a mere speculation without an exact measurement to support it.

Conclusion and Limitations

This study focused on the issue of steroid use in MLB to analyze patterns of journalistic practices. Using the Hierarchy of Influences as a theoretical model, it revealed findings that both reinforce and contradict previous studies. While extant research on sourcing points to the dominance of officials in the news, results indicate that officials are not always the primary source. In certain situations—such as in sports—individual sources could rank higher in their authoritativeness. These results suggest reporters exercise some independence when issues move beyond government control. The news making abilities of athletes in the steroid issue imply that news happens both inside and outside the beat system, with different patterns of coverage from news and sports reporters. Similar to Lawrence's⁵⁹ theorizing of the importance of governmental actors to maintain the life of a story in the news, this research also revealed news reporters were only interested in the baseball story when the government was involved. Although they responded to breaking news, their attention waned and the story faded without public officials to adopt the issue. Regardless of the nature of steroids-in-baseball

news as institutional or event-driven, media practices stemmed from routines they have developed to deal with the daily constraints of news production. Whether they happened through the routine channels of the news beats and their officials or through accidental newsworthy events and athletes who have the power to attract journalists' attention, media routines form "the immediate environment" in which individual journalists work.⁶⁰

Despite the new findings, this study is perhaps better viewed as an exploratory study into the work practices of newspaper departments. As a rare event that attracted the attention of news and sports reporters because of an overlap of the beats, the steroids issue provided this study with suitable material to examine the work routines of different sections in newspapers. While the results indicate these departments work differently, one cannot generalize this finding to the everyday work of reporters, considering the majority of the news stories came from the *Chronicle* whose investigative reporters Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams broke the story of Bonds' involvement with BALCO, before publishing leaked grand jury documents in their book "Game of Shadows" in 2006. More studies comparing different departments are needed before scholars can confirm these patterns exist beyond one particular issue or one news organization.

Finally, this study cannot ignore the role broadcast and digital media play in sports. While this paper followed most sourcing studies by focusing on newspapers only, it is as important to examine television reporters. The legitimacy of this research, however, remains in the awareness that newspapers seem to hold their own in the age of digital media. Although the recent decline of the newspaper industry would hint at a dying medium, newspapers continue to play a central role in informing their communities of matters that affect them, much more than do newer media.⁶¹ Newspapers are also agenda setters in public health issues and a convenient source of information for health blogs.⁶² Additionally, local bloggers frequently use traditional media as primary sources for non-local issues.⁶³

Notes

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