

AN EXPLORATION OF THE FRAMING OF COLLEGIATE WHEELCHAIR  
BASKETBALL AND ABLE BODIED BASKETBALL  
COVERAGE IN STUDENT  
NEWS SOURCES

by

JOHN CHARLES WATSON

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2015

Copyright © by John Watson 2015

All Rights Reserved



Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Nanny.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Erika Pribanic-Smith, for uncompromising foundational support that dates back to when I completed her undergraduate feature writing course, to last semester's communication history, and finally as my committee chair. As a thesis student I needed organization, deadlines, timely communication, guidance, and toward the end of the process, some understanding. I could not ask for a better exemplification of these qualities than Dr. P-S.

I would also like to extend my personal gratitude to my committee: Dr. Dustin Harp, whose previous research set in motion my disability media scholarship, and Dr. Brian Horton, whose intellectually challenging course material and projects frustrated me and pushed me outside of my comfort zone, where I experienced the unique gratification only learning can provide. Thank you all for your time, hard work, and genuine interest in the success of this project.

A graduate degree is never earned without the help from your classmates and colleagues. That said, thanks to Dianne Reaux and Michael Eldridge, who each co-authored projects with me along the way. I want to personally thank two of my friends and colleagues, Juan Soto and Sasha Beshkova, for simply being great friends.

I am sincerely grateful for my mentor, coach, and friend, Doug Garner. After each of our chats I leave his office feeling a great sense of pride and determination to progress as person and in turn progress the Movin' Mavs Program. Except for the chat we had about the massive amount of team printing resources I would be consuming for my research, which, by the way, I am also grateful for.

Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Sarah Rose for her guidance as a fellow disability studies scholar. And also to The Craig H. Nielsen Foundation for their generous scholarship which provided me with the funds I needed to complete my graduate studies.

Thank you to the Movin' Mavs program for being the best teammates and friends a guy could have. I would like to personally thank those who directly helped with or influenced my thesis: Jan Gans, Jason Nelms, Austan Pierce, Andy Kraft, Jeff Sale, Dr. Darlene Hunter, and Rose Hollerman.

I would like to thank my Mom and Dad, who instilled in me a value of education and made sure I had every opportunity to achieve it.

I almost forgot, lastly and mostly, I would like to thank my sister and best friend Kathleen. Your interest in and advice about this study proved to be invaluable. You are why I have accomplished so much during these, four of the greatest years of my life. I love you Sis!

April 8, 2015

Abstract

AN EXPLORATION OF THE FRAMING OF COLLEGIATE WHEELCHAIR  
BASKETBALL AND ABLE BODIED BASKETBALL  
COVERAGE IN STUDENT  
NEWS SOURCES

John Watson, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2015

Supervising Professor: Erika Pribanic-Smith

This study used 160 wheelchair basketball and 160 able bodied basketball articles from student news sources to conduct content and textual analyses. Framing theory and the transactional model were used to explore these relationships through qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The study compared the nature of the wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball articles and photographs. By adapting previous methods of analysis, I examined metaphor use, article genre, direct quotations, and images. Findings from the present study contributed insight to the body of disability sport media research by providing an exploratory look into the collegiate wheelchair basketball student media coverage and through the uncovering of two media models, termed “content crip” and “A.B. normal crip.”

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iv
Abstract .....	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Review of Literature .....	8
1.1.1 Supercrip/Evil Avenger Media Models .....	9
1.1.2 Otherness.....	16
1.1.3 Person First Language .....	17
1.1.4 Marginalization of Paralympic Athletes in the Media.....	18
1.1.5 Marginalization of Women’s Sports in the Media .....	22
1.1.6 Collegiate Wheelchair Basketball.....	24
1.2 Theoretical Lenses .....	26
1.2.1 Media Effects .....	26
1.2.2 Framing Theory .....	29
1.2.3 Metaphor Theory .....	33
1.2.4 Image Power: Semiotics.....	37
Chapter 2 Method .....	42
2.1 Sample .....	42
2.2 Analysis Design Process .....	43
2.3 Metaphors .....	45
2.4 Direct Quotes.....	47
2.5 Images .....	49
Chapter 3 Results and Discussion .....	52
3.1 Research Question 1a: Framing Wheelchair Basketball .....	52

3.1.1 Performance .....	52
3.1.2 Physicality .....	53
3.1.3 Seriousness/ Legitimacy.....	54
3.1.4 “A.B. Normal Crip” Media Model.....	54
3.1.5 “Content Crip” Media Model .....	55
3.1.6 Supercrip Media Model .....	56
3.1.7 Tragic Disability .....	57
3.1.8 Disability Language .....	58
3.1.9 International Competition .....	58
3.2 Research Question 1b: Framing: Able Bodied Basketball.....	59
3.2.1 Performance .....	59
3.2.2 Injuries .....	60
3.2.3 Player Suspension .....	61
3.2.4 High Status Figures.....	62
3.2.5 Team Rankings .....	62
3.2.6 Figurative Language/ Literary Devices .....	62
3.2.7 International/ Professional Competition .....	63
3.3 Research Question 1c: Framing: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball .....	63
3.3.1 Performance .....	63
3.3.2 Article Genres .....	64
3.3.3 Professional/ International Competition .....	64
3.3.4 Attributes/ Statistics .....	64
3.3.5 Direct Quotations.....	66

3.4 Research Question 2a: Metaphors: Wheelchair Basketball .....	67
3.4.1 War: Wheelchair .....	67
3.4.2 Business: Wheelchair .....	68
3.4.3 Destruction: Wheelchair .....	68
3.4.4 Machine: Wheelchair .....	68
3.4.5 Performance Art: Wheelchair .....	69
3.4.6 Food: Wheelchair .....	69
3.4.7 Racing: Wheelchair .....	69
3.4.8 Family: Wheelchair .....	70
3.4.9 Illness: Wheelchair .....	70
3.4.10 Science: Wheelchair .....	70
3.5 Research Question 2b: Metaphors: Able Bodied Basketball .....	70
3.5.1 War: Able Bodied .....	71
3.5.2 Business: Able Bodied .....	71
3.5.3 Destruction: Able Bodied .....	71
3.5.4 Machine: Able Bodied .....	72
3.5.5 Racing: Able Bodied .....	72
3.5.6 Performance Art: Able Bodied .....	72
3.5.7 Journey: Able Bodied .....	73
3.5.8 Fight/ Violence: Able Bodied.....	73
3.5.9 Temperature: Able Bodied.....	73
3.5.10 Law: Able Bodied .....	73
3.6 Research Question 2c: Metaphors: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball .....	74

3.7 Research Question 3a: Images: Wheelchair Basketball.....	74
3.7.1 Athletic Action .....	75
3.7.2 Teammates Images .....	75
3.7.3 Reused Images .....	75
3.7.4 Composition .....	75
3.8 Research Question 3b: Images: Able Bodied Basketball .....	76
3.8.1 Athletic Action .....	76
3.8.2 Teammates Images .....	76
3.8.3 Composition .....	76
3.9 Research Question 3c: Images: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball .....	76
3.9.1 Athletic Action .....	76
3.9.2 Teammates Images .....	77
3.9.3 Composition .....	77
Chapter 4 Discussion .....	79
4.1 Discussion: Framing RQs.....	79
4.1.1 Supercrip .....	79
4.1.2 “A.B. Normal Crip” and “Content Crip” Media Models.....	80
4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics .....	81
4.1.4 Wheelchair Basketball Language .....	81
4.1.5 International/ Professional Competition .....	82
4.1.6 Disability Origin .....	83
4.2 Discussion: Metaphor RQs.....	84
4.3 Discussion: Image RQs.....	88

4.4 Additional Findings .....	92
4.5 Limitations .....	93
4.6 Future Research.....	94
4.7 Conclusion .....	96
4.7.1 Wheelchair Basketball Reporting Suggestions.....	99
Appendix A Image Chart.....	104
Appendix B Athletic Action in Teammate Images Chart.....	106
Appendix C Metaphor Chart.....	108
Appendix D Direct Quotation Chart .....	110
Appendix E Article Genre Chart.....	112
Appendix F Image Type Table.....	114
Appendix G Metaphors Table.....	116
Appendix H Direct Quotation Table .....	118
Appendix I Article Genre Table.....	120
Appendix J Photo: 1.....	122
Appendix K Photo: 2 .....	124
Appendix L Photo: 3 .....	126
Appendix M Photo: 4.....	128
Appendix N Photo: 5.....	130
References.....	132
Biographical Information.....	145

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Do you shoot on 10-foot-high goals like normal players? Are there fouls like in normal basketball? Do you ever crash? Do you shoot three-pointers? Do you guys keep score? Are the Paralympics the same as the Special Olympics? You can dribble and maneuver that thing at the same time?! These are some of the initial questions asked of wheelchair basketball players by people who have never seen an official game. Their only source of exposure to the sport is through mass media representations of athletes with disabilities. In some cases, athletes with disabilities are so underrepresented in the mass media that audiences are left to make generalizations based on media portrayals of non-athletes with disabilities. Much to their surprise, American wheelchair basketball is played by men and women at different skill levels ranging from prep-division to the USA Paralympic team. The sport is also played on the collegiate level in accordance with NCAA rules with few exceptions. The top athletes are awarded scholarships to play for universities that have the resources to offer the funding.

Despite collegiate wheelchair athletes' intense, equally high level of physical and mental training, the quantity and nature of media coverage of their sports seem to differ greatly from the able bodied sports articles. When I read articles in the student newspaper about my university's number one, nationally-ranked wheelchair basketball team, I noticed some glaring differences in the nature of coverage other than the grossly low visibility relative to able bodied sports. For instance, a typical able bodied basketball headline may read, "Men's basketball: MSU-Moorhead dominates Bemidji State" (Rpiet, 2015). Wheelchair basketball articles tend to focus less on the player's performance and more on the fact that they play with disabilities and in wheelchairs. For example, one of these human interest-style headlines of an article about the origin of an athlete's disability would read, "Wheelchair basketball league provides inspiration,

second chances for athletes” (Pierre, 2015). Collegiate wheelchair basketball players dedicate their lives to developing as elite student athletes and therefore deserve coverage comparable to their able bodied counterparts, focused on objectively reporting player and team performance rather than patronizing and marginalizing them in the media.

This research expands upon a pilot study I conducted, with Michael Eldridge, of the student newspaper’s coverage of the University of Texas at Arlington’s men’s wheelchair basketball team, the Movin’ Mavs, and the UTA able bodied men’s basketball team. We found that even the most elite collegiate wheelchair basketball athletes in the country are often portrayed through feature articles rather than reporting information relating to their athletic performance. Although focus group participants less interested in sports were more attracted to the feature style of sports articles, sports fans were quick to recognize the article’s shortcomings as a traditional sports article.

Not only can this stereotypical coverage alter the way audiences perceive the disabled community and reflect these perceptions, but it also shapes the disabled community’s self-identity, ultimately resulting in a society of less equality. The pilot study’s focus group interviews, in-depth interviews with Movin’ Mavs and the reporters from the UTA independent student publication called *The Shorthorn*, and textual analysis were all combined to produce interesting results. However, one of the study’s greatest limitations was the very low sample size (Eldridge & Watson, 2013). The current study expanded the sample size to include student news sources of the entire Intercollegiate Division of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA).

Wheelchair basketball began its development in America and the United Kingdom as World War II was drawing to a close. Hospitals saw an influx of veterans with disabilities, primarily spinal cord injuries. The veterans lost varying degrees of sensory and motor function

and they needed a new outlet to satisfy their insatiable desire to physically compete. Thus wheelchair basketball was born as a competitive supplement to the injured veterans' standard rehabilitation routine. Wheelchair basketball emerged on the American east and west coast in 1946 (Strohkendl, 1996). Veterans Administration (VA) programs in both New England and California claim the rights to call themselves the site of the first wheelchair basketball games.

Players from their respective hospital wards teamed up against opposing wards from the same facility (Owen, 1982; Strohkendl, 1996). During its infancy the game was played using Everest and Jennings (E&J) folding wheelchairs more closely resembling wheelchairs used in modern hospitals than a sports chair. This was a design breakthrough considering the 70- to 100-pound "wood-and-wicker affair" the wheelchair was before the 1932 invention of the E&J (Rose, 2012, p. 33; Strohkendl, 1996). The current sports chairs are lighter, faster, and customized for individual athletes and are welded from of lighter weight aircraft aluminum (Thunder, n.d.). Less advanced chairs did not equate to less physicality on the basketball court in the 1940s. In fact, official rules had yet to be developed, and the American game was played with very liberal foul calls, turning it into more of a football game of athletes slamming into each other in their "lightweight" E&J's (Strohkendl, 1996). The sport quickly gained popularity but needed organization and a strong foundation.

In 1949, Timothy Nugent established the NWBA at a satellite campus of the University of Illinois in Galesburg (Rose, 2012; Strohkendl, 1996; Owen, 1982). The league was originally organized into six teams from Chicago, Illinois; Evansville, Indian; Hannibal, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Nugent's University of Illinois team. By 1981, after experiencing lulls and spikes in growth, the NWBA was a 152-team group (Owen, 1982). The increased popularity is partially attributed to Nugent's clear objectives and ability to motivate

people around him. The NWBA is now the proud organization of 192 teams and seven divisions (History, n.d.). Nugent founded the organization upon the following principles:

What a person can achieve can only be measured by how far you challenge him or her. A disability is not necessarily a disaster but a challenge of life. An individual who overcomes his/her disability grows as a person. Persons with disabilities have the right to develop their own identity by means of trial and error. The non-disabled can assist, but only to provide a stage for this important experience. (Strohkendl, 1996, p. 15)

These philosophies were revolutionary at this time when attitudinal and environmental barriers prevented people with disabilities from receiving basic rights like the right to a college education (Rose, 2012). Nugent and his group of students at the University of Illinois made great strides toward equality.

In addition to a source of competition and rehabilitation, wheelchair basketball provided the group with an outlet to dispel myths and stereotypes that people with disabilities were pitiful and incapable. These progressive notions were mass communicated within some of the earliest publications of the disability press. Nugent's students established *Sigma Signs*, an annually distributed, national and international publication, produced by his students with disabilities. My previous examination of this yearbook-style magazine revealed media portrayal of people with disabilities and athletes with disabilities that was far more attitudinally progressive in many instances than some of the current news media despite its being first published in 1950 (Watson, 2014). Sixty-five years later, the elite skill level required of the top wheelchair basketball players in the nation is continuously marginalized in the media.

Disability sports media scholarship is very limited and is made up of studies examining the difference in the nature and quantity of Paralympic and Olympic coverage. The bulk of this research compares the amount of Paralympic and Olympic media coverage. However, there is no research that focuses on the content of the media coverage portraying athletes of the Intercollegiate Division of the NWBA.

The college division is now a seven-university league; four of the programs are represented also by intercollegiate women's teams. The three programs that have stood the test of time as the most historic wheelchair basketball programs in the country—the University of Illinois, the University of Whitewater Wisconsin, and the University of Texas at Arlington—are also the most successful. The “Big 3” account for 29 National Championships in the past 36 years. The four most recent additions to the league are the University of Alabama, University of Missouri, Edinboro University, and Southwest Minnesota State University. The intercollegiate division is made up of the best college players from around the nation and the world. The UT Arlington Movin' Mavs' 2014 roster, for instance, is made up of culturally diverse players representing five different countries: America, Austria, Egypt, Germany, and Venezuela (“Men's Team,” 2014).

Despite national success, elite skill level, and rigorous training comparable to their schools' able bodied basketball teams, the wheelchair basketball teams continue to receive far less coverage than their able bodied counterparts. This is consistent with comparative studies of Paralympic and Olympic media coverage (Golden, 2003; Chang, Crossman, Taylor, & Walker, 2011; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Davis, Busse, Enos, & Megginson, 2012). Despite wheelchair sports' coverage deprivation, the student publications' coverage of the college division is the most consistent and thorough of any division in the NWBA. The articles analyzed in the current study were written for student news sources. Many of the student journalists attend school with the athletes they cover and have varying degrees of knowledge of the game of wheelchair basketball. Their audience is made up primarily of students, faculty, and alumnus of their university. These articles likely represent most of their audience's wheelchair sports exposure, adding to the influence of the content.

Some scholars argue that media reports of athletes with disabilities serve as powerful influences to counter the inactive and physically incapable stereotypes based on the premise that athletes represent more physically superior people. Previous content analyses of disability sport news shows that the media tend to make the athletes' stories of overcoming a tragic disability more salient than their athletic performance (Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014). The portrayal of people overcoming such a tragedy provides a tempting tool for disability sport writers to tug at the heart strings of their readers. Though readers find comfort and hope in these wonderful stories of inspirational perseverance, the media outlets often fail to capture the essence of the sport and the athlete. This selective salience of overcoming disability in exchange for reduction and sometimes complete removal of coverage regarding athletic performance is known by mass media scholars as framing (Entman, 1993; Entman, 1991). The current study used different elements of frames such as metaphors, keywords, concepts, and images to conduct a thorough qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball articles.

The current study is made up of a four-part content analysis to determine the difference in the portrayal of the two sports (able bodied and wheelchair basketball). The first part of this analysis is thematic analysis. I examined the text from each randomly-selected article for repeating themes and concepts for both sports. Different themes were documented and discussed as part of the qualitative analysis. The second part of the content analysis was an examination of and quantification of metaphors from the articles. I also found patterns of the types of metaphors used within articles for each sport. Third, I quantified the themes within direct quotations from each article. The final analysis was an examination of images accompanying the articles about each sport. This coding process involved a careful focus on action depicted, visibility of disability, athletic attire or lack thereof, and whether or not players

were depicted as teammates. Each part was designed to examine the different framing attributes within the articles to inform readers about the sport, athletes, and their performances.

The framing attributes portraying wheelchair athletes represent a reflection of society's attitudes toward disability as a concept and people with disabilities. At the same time these portrayals can act as a catalyst for continued negative attitudes, stereotyping, and behavior toward not only athletes with disabilities but also people with disabilities in general. People with disabilities continue to be one of the most marginalized and oppressed minorities. The media has a strong influence and has historically represented the community in an oppressive marginal manner (Bogdan, Biklen, Shapiro, & Spelkoman, 1982). By doing so, such representations push people with disabilities further into the margins of society to make up a separate category of other than normal.

These facts and growing disability studies scholarship, including the current research, illuminate a desperate need for change. Guided by the framing and transaction theories, the current study posits that the framing of able bodied and wheelchair basketball in student media has powerful effects on social constructions and readers' schemas associated with disability and wheelchair sports. As a result, the way readers process and understand related texts in the future is affected and stereotypical notions are perpetuated. The current study supports disability media scholarship showing that people with disabilities are marginalized as inferior "others" in the mass media. The sport was comparatively framed as less physical, lacking intensity, less important, and more recreational than the elite superior skill level of able bodied collegiate basketball. However, qualitative and quantitative results also revealed some progressive elements in the student news sources.

For instance, while the supercrip media model was present in the current sample of feature articles, the narrative was generally absent from the wheelchair basketball pregame and

game recap stories. The current results also revealed two additional narratives which I termed “A.B. normal crip” and “content crip.” While I posit that these are potentially damaging stereotypes, the roots of these media seem to be grounded in and representative of a younger generation’s strive toward equality. The following review of literature is an overview of the research in this field along with a discussion of theories regarding the powerful effects of language and mass communication on the marginalization and identification of people with disabilities in the mass media.

### 1.1 Review of Literature

The NWBA’s Intercollegiate Division’s exclusivity provides a unique opportunity to analyze data from student publications representing every team in the league. Other divisions in the NWBA are made up of community teams and do not have resources to regularly report about their progress, players, and events. The seven universities’ support on campus can be largely attributed to their campus media outlets. These teams receive very little media attention outside of university media sources. Despite this support, most of the students who enroll at these universities have never seen and sometimes never heard of wheelchair basketball or any form of wheelchair athletics. Such limited exposure further empowers the media’s influence on audiences through language. Some people might only read a few wheelchair basketball articles their entire academic career and forever associate the language and images used by reporters with the sport and the players. Kramsch (2004) notes that the vast scholarship dedicated to the hypothesis stating, “language both expresses and creates categories of thought that are shared by members of a social group” (p. 237). The current study approaches this idea from a mass media perspective. Specifically I am concerned with the media’s employment of framing attributes through textual content, metaphors, and images in able bodied basketball articles and wheelchair basketball articles in online student news sources.

### *1.1.1 Supercrip/Evil Avenger Media Models*

Previous research shows that stereotyping and marginalization of the disabled community is perpetuated by language used to represent them in the media. Some of the stereotypes that superficially seem positive can be the most damaging. A commonly referenced example in disability scholarship is the representation of a person who has a disability as an “overcomer” or a “hero” for accomplishing so much “despite their disability” (Shapiro, Margolis, & Anderson, 1989). Disability studies scholars refer to the people stereotypically represented in this manner as supercrips.

Supercrip is a term coined by disability advocates to describe the way media outlets often portray disabled people. A supercrip is a person with a disability who against all odds triumphed over the tragedy of their condition (Harnett, 2000). Hardin and Hardin (2003) describe the supercrip media model as the general assumption that people with disabilities are pitiful and incapable until they accomplish a feat deemed heroic by the mainstream, thus “overcoming” their disabilities. In a study of the German and French news coverage of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games, Schantz and Gilbert (2001) found this narrative to be one of the most frequently employed by journalists. They cite an example of a journalist’s report of a horseback rider who was paralyzed in a horse-riding accident and displayed such physical and mental power demonstrated by his continued love to ride the “animals that caused his accident” (p.81).

Critics argue that the supercrip media model—as a common framework for stories about disabled athletes—serves as a device to keep people with disabilities at the bottom of the social hierarchy and deflects responsibility from its ableist society (M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004). Hehir (2005) described ableism as the discrimination based on the assumption that able bodied is the “normal human condition” and being disabled is to be inferior.

Previous studies show that the supercrip stereotype of the disabled person overcoming obstacles against all odds is especially prevalent in the world of wheelchair and disability sports reporting (Braye, Dixon, & Gibbons, 2013; Golden, 2003; Chang et al., 2011; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Davis et al., 2012). It is simple and convenient for this stereotype to be perpetuated in the media because of society's attitudes toward disability. Disability is viewed by society as a very negative aspect of people's lives, sometimes even as a death sentence. The thought of many is that they would rather be dead than alive with a disability (Shakespeare, 1997). This makes the amazing persevering through conquering of all odds an "easy sell" for reporters and publications. Much to the surprise of media outlets, the supercrip narrative is unwelcome by most of the disabled community, especially athletes, because the finely tuned athletic prowess and performance that is in the forefront of the able bodied sport stories suddenly takes a back seat to the standard heartwarming life story of athletes with disabilities (Hardin & Hardin, 2003).

The coverage of able bodied athletes' "overcoming narrative" typically follows their history of athletic success rather than preceding or overshadowing it. First, they prove their extraordinary skills and athleticism, then the media will break a story about their past or obstacles they overcame. Super Bowl XXXIV champion and MVP Kurt Warner's story of his rise from stocking groceries for five years prior to his most successful season was not covered by the media. It was only when his elite performance was widely recognized by fans and journalists alike.

Supporters of the supercrip narrative interpret these reports as stories about how the athlete was injured and prevailed. Therefore they can help inspire others to great things. In some instances this can be true. However, the essence of that life story model often takes advantage of audience's preconceived notions about people with disabilities and visual representations of

them and their equipment to evoke emotion from readers (Dahl, 1993). This, however, is not the responsibility of a sports reporter, especially in a story about a game or event. The “overcoming all odds” narrative employed by the media then becomes redundant. When audiences see a quadruple amputee playing wheelchair basketball they can easily infer that some unique challenges presented themselves to the athlete. The sports reporter’s primary job in this case is to cover the event and players’ performances. While there is a place for these uplifting features and profiles, it’s the prevalence of this framing in disability sports, especially in traditional game articles, that makes it problematic. Sports reporters operate under a code of ethics requiring them write objectively without injecting their own heartwarming narrative (“Code of Ethics,” 1996).

Operating under the guise of inspirational narrative, the supercrip media model implicitly marginalizes and patronizes. The argument can be made that it is important for young wheelchair athletes to be about an incredible play they made or strong statistical performances. When they see this coverage that emphasizes ability and athletic success like able bodied sports reporters tend to project, the younger generation of people with disabilities will become more likely to self-identify as equals rather than as other than normal (Harnett, 2000). However, without that performance-oriented coverage, the sport will be even further excluded from the mainstream if media outlets cannot change the manner in which they cover disability sports and athletes (M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004).

The media is sometimes willfully attached to this stereotypical representation of people with disabilities. Hardin (2003) illustrated the media’s blatant disregard toward presenting Paralympians as the top athletes with disabilities in the world. In this instance, reporters did so completely against the athlete’s will. Hope Lewellen, a Paralympic wheelchair tennis and sit volleyball medalist, attempted unsuccessfully to “frame herself as an athlete who was part of a

larger, culturally diverse sport world” in a CBS news report. Her attempt to use the media attention as a platform to progress the Paralympic movement was rejected by CBS, who refused to portray Lewellen as a legitimate athlete, insisting on the outdated supercrip template (Hardin & Hardin, 2003). In summation, sometimes even regardless of interviewee objections and preferences, the media’s stereotypical narratives continue to confine people with disabilities to these media models.

Although the disability conquering supercrip narrative is one of the most common themes within disability sports articles, the ‘evil avenger’ media model, most common in film and television, also perpetuates negative stereotypes of disability and people with disabilities (Harnett, 2000; M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004). Norden (1994) first referred to this character representation as the ‘obsessive avenger,’ who was usually a physically disabled or disfigured “egomaniacal” adult male seeking revenge on able bodied characters whom he places blame on for his physical differences. This villainous portrayal of characters with non-normative bodies dates back as far as the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Shakespeare’s (2009) Richard III whose arm was “withered” and spine was deformed by scoliosis. The evil avenger character portrayal reached increased popularity among film makers and audiences during the late silent and early sound eras and continued into more contemporary film and television through characters like Batman’s vengeful villain named Two-Face (Harnett, 2000; Norden, 1994).

In comparison to the supercrip, this popular stereotype of disabled people in the media can have a more obvious and similarly negative impact on society’s perception of disabled communities. For instance, the evil avenger model, like the supercrip model, can be harmful to children with disabilities’ self-image. Albert Bandura’s (1969) social learning theory states that social behavior is attained vicariously through observation of others “...without having to build up the patterns gradually by trial and error” (Bandura, 1971, p.2). Furthermore, he posits that

emotional responses to painful or pleasant experiences are also learned through observation of one's fellow man (Bandura, 1971).

When impressionable children observe disability being portrayed as deviant, tragic, and detrimental in media and witness the emotional responses and surrounding behaviors, they learn vicariously through these social behaviors and adopt them as their own (Bandura, 1969; Harnett, 2000). It is important to note that such psychological functioning is neither a helpless reaction nor driven solely by inner forces, but rather a perpetual reciprocal relationship between behavior and its controlling conditions (Bandura, 1971). The application of this theory to the current research supports the notion that the marginalized representation of wheelchair athletes can have adverse effects on the emotional state and behavior of audiences of all ages but especially the younger generations.

Bogdan et al. (1982) were among the first disability studies scholars to note the demonization of people with disabilities. They argued that one of the media's favorite images is of the dangerous disabled person. When these images of physical and mental differences are linked to characters who murder, steal, and terrorize, "the media creates, at the same time as it perpetuates, society's prejudices that result in fear of the handicapped and ultimately in their systematic and intentional exclusion from society" (p.32). Their research on the negative disability stereotypes primarily examined television shows, horror films, comics, gangster movies, and even Disney movies which featured villains like Captain Hook (amputated hand) from Peter Pan. Bogdan et al. (1982) note the danger of impressionable children learning at an early age that The Evil Queen, for instance, must turn into a witch with a wart on her nose who is hunched over to commit evil. The news media is discussed briefly in this qualitative study as a catalyst to the negative stereotyping of disabled people. They note headlines from the *New York Times* to illustrate the unnecessary emphasis on disability. One of the examples from the study uses

blatantly ableist language, “Crippled Man Charged in Bomb Attack” (p.35). In this news story, the suspect’s disability is not relevant to the crime but is still mentioned, implying that his disability somehow played a role in his criminal behavior (Bogdan et al., 1982).

The hazardous nature of stereotypical media models affects groups beyond the disabled athlete fraternity. Damaging media portrayals of people with disabilities can further isolate the disabled community as others. A supercrip’s otherness (a term further discussed in its own subsection) status for instance, can be reduced, thusly normalizing them to a certain extent thanks to their socially revered athletic prowess. Their physical attributes and/or success resulted in large part to economic, social, cognitive, and physical resources. Some people with disabilities simply do not have access to such means whether innate or otherwise.

For instance, a person who has suffered a severe stroke is not likely to have the physical resources enabling them to bench press 400 pounds or run a marathon. Thus, Davis (2006) argues, the supercrip image normalizes a minority of the disabled population and consequently further marginalizes the majority of the community, largely because they lack the resources to “overcome all odds.” Additionally, the supercrip can leave some disabled audience members with a sense of impossible achievement and lack of self-worth (Howe, 2011).

When Erik Weihenmayer became the first blind person to summit Mt. Everest in 2001, Kathi Wolfe, a blind journalist, wrote about her experience with this issue. She said that after Weihenmayer’s climb she was approached by people who genuinely wondered when she would climb Mt. Everest too. She maintains that these people meant well and were not trying to make her feel inferior, but she made the point that, “The supercrip exacerbates the already difficult challenges that people with disabilities face. If we hear enough such stories we may feel defeated by comparison” (M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004, 1.3). The media frequently frames stories

using the supercrip model and inaccurate, generalized identities, and expectations of the entire disabled community are formed.

Why is this supercrip model so popular in the world of sports? In our pilot study we discovered that readers love to hear about the wheelchair basketball players' background stories about the origin of their disability. Almost the entire focus group of 20 students expressed an interest in learning about how the wheelchair basketball players became disabled (Eldridge & Watson, 2013). In a letter to the editor of the *Practical Horseman* magazine, a reader expressed disappointment with the publication's exclusion of Paralympic equestrian coverage. She goes on to explain her disapproval of the magazine and her own desire for a supercrip modeled article: "These athletes have overcome extreme adversity...I hope that you will cover their triumphs and incredible stories in a future issue" (p.10). Although the reader's opinion section does mention that the Paralympians are "valid athletes" and "worthy of coverage," the request demonstrates more of an interest in the background stories than the athletes' elite performances (Flamand, 2009). Different disability origins (horseback riding accident, birth defect, car accident, etc.) are plugged into the same journalistic equation. Tragic story of disability origin plus rise from the rubble determination and hard work minus information about personal merits equals glorified persevering supercrip. As this narrative is told within article after article, it can become stale and offensive.

In summation, the intended impact of the current research extends beyond increasing inclusion of disabled athletes in the media to disabled people in general. Another goal is to help create awareness among coaches, athletes, and the media about the nature of this coverage and the potential impact of the media's portrayal of the disabled athlete community on the audiences. Constantly portraying them either as needy victims, villains, or heroes leaves no room

for normalcy (Bogdan et al., 1982). The media has the power to include disabled people in their reports without excessively glorifying them.

### *1.1.2 Otherness*

Disability studies scholar Leonard Davis (2006) explained that the concept of the “other” refers to the categorization of people as objects of our own experience instead of considering everyone as part of a whole human experience. We can all view people as others, but too often this view is asymmetric. A group in power, more able to qualify themselves as the “human paradigm,” can and often does use that power to tailor the social environment, thus validating their own experiences (Davis, 2006). Sonwalkar (2004) argues that the media uses the idea of “us” to symbolize the “national mainstream” or what the media perceives as their readership’s general outlooks. So the use of terms like they, them, us, and we—which serve to separate the others from the mainstream—becomes a concrete representation of society’s “central value system” (Sonwalkar, 2004). The conceptual otherness itself is rarely concrete, though. It is usually demonstrated through implicit subtleties within media text, images, and other signs (Batziou, 2011).

In the years following the civil rights movement, history and other humanities scholars have regularly and passionately studied the unequal treatment of groups because of their race, gender, and ethnicity. However, disability rights scholarship is relatively scarce at best (Longmore & Umansky, 2001). People with disabilities’ almost silent history in the margins has contributed to their social construction not only as the “other,” as Clapton and Fitzgerald (1997) distinguish, but also as “the other” of “the other” because people with disabilities are also marginalized by other historically marginalized groups. This can be partially understood through some historical context. The concept of disability itself was used in the American history to justify the discrimination of such groups. For instance, those in favor of oppressing women alluded to their

supposed male deviant physical and intellectual abilities (Longmore & Umansky, 2001). Disability scholar Harlan Hahn (1996) argues that while women and minorities have eliminated such irrational assumptions, people with disabilities continue to struggle with ableist ideas that their inferior status can be rationalized through the supposition of innate biological inferiority.

People with disabilities also frequently represent failure of the human body, medicine, and science to protect people (Davis, 2006). The notion that disability is a horrible personal misfortune perpetuates some of these prejudicial attitudes toward the disabled community (Hahn, 1996). This concept of disability as a tragedy makes the previously mentioned supercrip model especially tempting for media outlets to follow because stories about these super heroes can restore able bodied people's sense of security in regaining normal control over their own bodies (Davis, 2006). "They" (people with disabilities) are thus portrayed as inspirations for "us" (the normal able bodied population) to look up to, further categorizing people with disabilities in their own inferior otherness ironically under the guise of the powerful supercrip. Among other themes, the current study is concerned with how the wheelchair basketball athletes are reported as other than the norm.

### *1.1.3 Person First Language*

The impact of the disability rights movement and Americans with Disabilities Act has increased awareness of the language we use when communicating about disability. For instance, the previously mentioned ableist "crippled bomber" headline will probably not be printed in 21<sup>st</sup> century newspapers. Some scholars focus on the news media coverage's progress over time and praise the media while others discuss the marginalization of people with disabilities (Krossel, 1988; Bogdan et al., 1982). One of the more common and subtly offensive types of language used to describe people with disabilities is "disability first language." The disability and origin of the disability is not only conceptually given priority in stories, in many cases the disability literally

precedes the person in sentence structure. The plea for “person first” language has been echoed by disability advocates for decades now. A person who uses a wheelchair is sometimes described as a wheelchair guy or girl. Joan Blaska (1993) argues that referring to the disability before the person conveys a message of disability taking precedent over the person. She challenges the reader to think about how they might introduce their friend who is not disabled to help provide context. One may respond, “This is Hani and she is from Germany,” or, “She is a painter” (Blaska, 1993).

Some scholars suggest that the disability should be completely omitted when irrelevant to the conversation (Blaska, 1993). A recent critically acclaimed documentary, *Vital Signs* interviewed disability scholars, comedians, and artists about different aspects of crip culture. Mary Duffy, a poet and performance artist, describes person-first language as a trend that the community has moved past and argues that disabled has evolved into a more unifying term. Disability studies scholar and disability advocate Harlan Hahn agrees, adding that he identifies as disabled because it is a very positive term and considers using the term as an act of self-identification of the disabled movement (Mitchell & Snyder, 1998). While I agree that disability and sense of community are important and positive aspects and language can contribute to the unification of a group, the current master’s thesis is written using person first language. As this is a formal research paper, I consciously conformed to what is currently considered by many style guides as proper etiquette. The use of different identification terms in the wheelchair basketball article sample were noted in the results and discussion section.

#### *1.1.4 Marginalization of Paralympic Athletes in the Media*

The Paralympic movement has played a strong facilitating role in the disability movement as a whole. Most scholars agree on the high degree of importance of participation in and awareness of the Paralympics and other disability sport events. One perspective rejects the

notion of disability sports as an invaluable advocacy tool. Wedgwood (2014) examined the opposing views of disability rights advocates Ludwig Guttman and Harlan Hahn. Guttman, widely considered the primary pioneer of disability sports, developed one of the first ever organized disability sporting events in Stoke Mandeville. His objective at the time was to reintegrate injured WWII veterans back into the general public, and he saw sports as the key to completing this objective (Anderson, 2003). Hahn explains that critics in the disabled community believe that when athletes with disabilities perform at sporting events, they are not only doing so to display their own exceptional talent but also to mimic the able bodied obsession with athleticism, strength, and agility. While these critics do not deny the importance of physical activity, they do feel that physical, mental, and emotional investment in disability sports would be more wisely spent on the community's political and social movement toward equality (Hahn, 1984). Wedgwood provides a third perspective that disability sport is neither a magic cure as Guttman suggests nor a "monolithic disabling institution" as Hahn implies. Wedgwood views disability sport as "politically, socially, and historically complex phenomena" and the Paralympics as "an excellent political platform for the disability rights movement" (Wedgwood, 2014).

Some disabilities studies scholars have dedicated research to the media's coverage of the Paralympics. The Olympics and Paralympics both feature the world's most elite athletes from their respective qualifying countries competing internationally with great national pride. The Paralympics' name even draws from the word "parallel" to represent the events' synonymous qualities. Theoretically, the only difference is the Paralympic athletes' disabilities. These presumably analogous events provide a platform for researchers to examine some of the inequalities involved especially in regards to media coverage (Braye et al., 2013; Golden, 2003; Chang et al., 2011; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Davis et al., 2012).

In Tynedal and Wolbring's 2003 analysis of the *New York Times'* coverage of the Paralympics from 1955-2012, they found an obvious difference in the number of articles dedicated to the events which by name are supposed to be parallel. They counted 246 total articles referring to the Paralympics, which is less than 3% of the 10,287 articles about the Olympics. Despite the Paralympic Movement's social progress, even in the years 2008-2012 the number of articles covering the Paralympics (82), was less than 5% of the Olympic articles (2,091) (Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003). Golden (2003) also found a massive disparity in the amount of American media coverage dedicated to the 2002 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. Searching the Lexis-Nexis Universe, she quantified the coverage of the Games in high circulation newspapers. In the *Los Angeles Times*, the ratio of Winter Olympic to Paralympic articles was 533:0.

In order to examine the cause of the invisibility of the Winter Paralympics and the elite athletes who compete in them, Golden's 2002 study included a thematic analysis of 20 qualitative interviews of Paralympic and Olympic reporters. Her findings echoed common themes in disability sport media scholarship. Olympic reporters perceived the Paralympics as logistical problems, lacking audience intrigue, and illegitimate athletic competition. An American broadcast reporter said:

They [the Paralympians] can't compete on the same level as the Olympic athletes, so it's a bone they throw to them to make them feel better. It's not a real competition, and I, for one, don't see why I should have to cover it. It's like the WNBA [Women's National Basketball Association]. The women can't compete on the same level as the men, so they gave them their own league, but it hasn't really caught on. (Golden, 2003)

Paralympic reporters discussed their desire to raise awareness, the Games' newsworthiness, and their experience with the successful National Paralympic Committee public relations campaigns. A Japanese reporter discussed disability culture in his country and his publication's desire to raise Paralympic awareness:

In Japan, the disabled are not seen. They are in their apartments, they are alone. My editor wanted me to cover the Paralympics so that the readers could learn more about them. He [the editor] covered the Paralympics in Nagano, and he feels strongly that it should be covered as a real competition. (Golden, 2003)

In addition to a reporter's perspective, this quote provides insight into the issue of the marginalization of disability in eastern culture. Interviewees also revealed that as Paralympic reporters, though very few in number, they made a conscious effort to "write in an enlightened manner," by focusing on the Paralympics as a sporting event rather than the athletes' disabilities (Golden, 2003).

A result of Thomas and Smith's (2003) study of the 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games reveals a common pattern of exploration on the levels of coverage between the two athlete types. They stated that 68% of Britain's adult population of 46 million, at the time, read a national newspaper on a daily basis. They examined four national newspapers that would span the coverage of over 36 million viewers in their readership (Thomas & Smith, 2003). The media coverage presented in the study of the two forms of athletes showed that there was less than a 30% average of coverage for athletes with disabilities compared to the articles published about able bodied athletes during the Olympic Games. The articles were examined through a textual analysis of the documents in search of key words such as "Courage," "Despite," and medical terms. The results revealed that the athletes were labeled without athletic terms but rather for their disability (Thomas & Smith, 2003). Another study examined people with disabilities' opinions of Paralympic coverage. The thematic analysis of these perspectives revealed an overwhelming response that the portrayal of the Paralympics and Paralympians creates a negative stereotype (Braye et al., 2013).

### *1.1.5 Marginalization of Women's Sports in the Media*

No published research has examined the representation of college-level wheelchair basketball in student news sources. However, some limited research has examined the representation of women's sports in student newspapers. Much like wheelchair sports, women's sports has proven underrepresented when compared to men's sports in terms of overall quantity of coverage (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Melvin, 1996; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). Unlike wheelchair sports, female collegiate athletic programs benefit from Title IX, an administrative policy designed to encourage gender equality in women's sports. Since the institution of Title IX, a dramatic increase was observed in scholarships awarded collegiate female athletes, and participation in women's college sports experienced similar changes. However, a study of campus broadcasts and newspaper coverage indicated that media coverage of women's sports failed to mirror this trend (Huffman et al., 2004).

Research shows that collegiate women's sports are drastically underrepresented in the media compared to men. Specifically the quality or length of articles and number of images depicting female athletes further marginalized the group of athletes (Melvin, 1996; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). However, a much smaller group of articles revealed contradicting results. Women's sports articles were afforded a generally similar amount of coverage as men's sports (Huffman et al., 2004; MacKay & Dallaire, 2009). While these studies provided insight into the quantity of the coverage, the researchers did not examine the content of the stories. This current study intends to examine the text for framing attributes of wheelchair basketball articles and able bodied basketball articles.

While the previously mentioned studies focused on presence of women's sports in the media, others examined the context and language in articles about female athletes (Angelini &

Billings, 2010; Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2009). The authors agree that language and images projected in the mass media of these sports played by women reflect society's identification of women in general. What some may consider subtle or insignificant words or phrases can reduce the status of women or portray them as others. Blinde et al. (1991) conducted a textual analysis of women's and men's intercollegiate basketball telecasts. They recorded several coverage differences related to performance description as well as "non-parallel" and sexist language used to identify players. For instance, the female players were consistently referred to as "girls" or "ladies" while the male players were never referred to as "boys" or "gentlemen" (Blinde et al., 1991).

Whisenant and Pederson (2004) examined the coverage through a theoretical lens of hegemony. Hegemony, a theory introduced by Gramsci (1975), is the process of controlling groups through societal, educational, political, and economic resources. This process of control is perpetuated because groups with limited power (in this case women) accept this as a norm or "commonsense their subordination."

Sports and the mass media are discussed as two of the most hegemonic practices in western society. This article discusses the marginalization, subordination, and identifying female athletes as a category of "others" who are dominated and controlled by men (Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). The same idea can apply to wheelchair athletes competing in a society dominated and controlled by able bodied people (Hardin & Hardin, 2003).

Whisenant and Pederson (2004) surveyed a group of college athletic directors, 88.9% of which were male and only 11.1% female, about their attitudes toward the quantity and quality of media coverage of men's and women's sports. They found that male hegemony is perpetuated; the athletic directors knew it and seemed to accept this fact. Interestingly these results were similar for male and female athletic directors (Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). A more recent

study showed that the student journalists are however not aware of this inequitable campus sports media representation. Schmidt (2013) echoes the hegemonic ideology from Goffman's work in 1959 and suggests the journalists are subconsciously marginalizing women's sports.

In Kian et al.'s 2009 comparison of *Sports Illustrated* magazine and *Sports Illustrated for Women*, they found that women were "glaringly ignored or marginalized on the pages" of the publication. After examining the images they concluded that female athletes' talent, performance, and accomplishments were "trivialized" by non-action photos, sexualized images, and frequent depictions of the athletes wearing makeup, jewelry, and revealing feminine clothing. Research of the text in *Sports Illustrated for Women* again indicated a lack of interest in athletic performance. In an article about Karen Smyers, triathlon champion, details of her accomplishments in an extremely physically demanding sport were replaced with details of her struggle with breast cancer. The headline uses a play on words to blatantly overshadow her athletic achievements, "Karen Smyers, wife and mom, will do whatever it takes to win a tougher race—against cancer." One observation remains constant, similar to our findings regarding wheelchair athletes' media portrayal, female athletes are also framed in stereotypical manners which supersede their athletic abilities (Eldridge & Watson, 2013; Kian et al., 2009).

#### *1.1.6 Collegiate Wheelchair Basketball*

Similar to Paralympic and women's sports media scholars' findings, Eldridge and I (2013) found evidence of marginalization of disability sports in UTA's independent student newspaper, *The Shorthorn*. The pilot study compared *The Shorthorn's* coverage of the university's able bodied men's basketball team and the UTA Movin' Mavs, the wheelchair basketball team. The historically successful Movin' Mavs have won seven national championships and placed in the top three teams in the nation since 2011. The UTA able bodied team has yet to win a national

title. Despite their lack of national success, the able bodied team is awarded with more extensive media coverage than the wheelchair basketball team.

We conducted a textual analysis of four of the most recent articles from the 2013-2014 season. Although this was a very low sample size, the analysis revealed reporters' tendency to write a more feature style of article about the wheelchair basketball team. These articles framed the wheelchair athletes as very hard working rather than highlighting their performance on the court (Eldridge & Watson, 2013). Player introductions contributed to the theme of framing the Movin' Mavs articles as a human interest piece rather than a traditional sports report. While the UTA able bodied players were introduced using the structure class-position-name (junior guard Lonnie McClanahan), the wheelchair basketball players were introduced with their major in school instead of their position on the court using the structure major-class-name (visual communications senior Ruben Mauricio Jr.). This structure is commonly used in intramural sports reporting in *The Shorthorn* and consequently marginalizes the elite level of competition the wheelchair basketball athletes play on.

This seemingly minute difference in language can discredit the sport and the athletes themselves (Eldridge & Watson, 2013). "Disability sport has not been viewed as legitimate sport but rather as something less...opportunities, rewards, public recognition and the like have not been afforded to athletes with disabilities" (DePauw & Gavron, 2005, p. 12). To some, even those that consider themselves avid sports fans, the mere thought of a person with a disability or using a wheelchair seems ridiculous (Howe, 2011). This thought was echoed in the results of in-depth interviews with *Shorthorn* reporters who wanted to ask why the wheelchair athletes even pick up a basketball (Eldridge & Watson, 2013).

It is important to note that the previously mentioned Paralympic scholars interviewed professional reporters and examined their articles written about world class athletes competing

at the highest level. The current study will examine articles written by non-professional journalists with less experience. Also, while a marginal percentage of intercollegiate athletes do represent their countries' national teams and compete in the Paralympics, most do not. The teams are, however, made up of athletes that are the most elite and highly trained college wheelchair basketball players in the United States, making their games equally or more newsworthy than able-bodied teams.

## 1.2 Theoretical Lenses

### *1.2.1 Media Effects*

The study of effects of the mass media on society and audiences has interested communication scholars since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Textbook authors agree that the discipline has gone through different phases and paradigm shifts. Media was first thought to have very strong effects, then research showed that it had hardly any effect, and then it was again discovered to have stronger effects. While this tri-phase shift is accepted by many, other scholars feel that this is an over simplification (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Over a century of theorizing has passed and there is still debate over how much or even if the media affects audiences and society at all (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976).

Scholars have, however, developed four models that focus on different driving forces of media effects: the direct effects, conditional effects, cumulative effects, and the transactional effects models. The direct effects model, for instance, focuses on the media content having a direct effect on audiences. This model, also known as the magic bullet model, posits that the audience is powerless when it comes to digesting mass media messages and consequently accepts all of the information transmitted (Griffin, 2012). The transactional model is more complex and focuses on both the media content and the audience's schematic processing as key variables, which aligns with my theoretical understanding on the topic (Bauer, 1964).

Perse (2000) explains that the main key to the transactional model is the schema. Schemas are the knowledge already stored in memory. Cognitive psychologists argue that when reading new information, it interacts with different schemata and creates a new mental space for it or alters an existing memory “home,” and this is how we comprehend (Anderson & Pearson, 1998). Some schema exist independently, and others are related. Perse (2000) uses a simple word association test to demonstrate the closer linkage of some concepts. She asks the reader which is easier to remember: a blue bird or a blue frame? The signs blue and bird are more closely linked in our minds than blue and frame. Schema are part of all domains like group schemas (disabled vs. able bodied) and role schemas (what a police officer does).

The author explains how cognitive organization of knowledge can influence how we interpret media stories. We apply our group schema for instance to anticipate how a disabled person ought to act or anticipate what a police officer on the TV show Cops will do next. Rosenblatt (1994) posits that there is no such thing as a generic reader and emphasizes the fact that each reading of a text is a different experience based on time, place, and other diverse and complex dynamics. She highlights the importance of factors like the reader’s gender, socioeconomic status, and different cultural environment (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Perse (2000) notes that the manner in which a news story is framed, including its headlines and images, influences the readers’ different schemas used to interpret the information and determine which existing schema new knowledge is associated with. Schemas’ organizational properties also help reduce uncertainty about how to behave and what to expect from foreign circumstances (Perse, 2000). Therefore, it can be deduced that the media representation of groups like people with disabilities can influence the manner in which people interact and approach situations with them.

The transactional model identifies two ways the audience processes information: automatic and controlled processing. Automatic processing, identified in earlier cognitive psychology research as automatic detection, is a generally fast and effortless way to process information. It is not under conscious or direct control of the individual and usually performs well developed skills that have been consistently practiced. Controlled processing is the slow deliberate process of often new and unique information (Shiffrin & Schneider, 1984). A person who is well versed in the realm of wheelchair basketball is more likely to engage in controlled processing and concentrate on integrating the information from an article about the sport with their own existing schemas. However, much media consumption is done with more relaxed motives and for entertainment purposes, and a more automatic approach is employed (Perse, 2000). Automatic processing is difficult to modify once learned, while controlled processing can be changed with less effort of the individual (Shiffrin & Schneider, 1984).

The type of processing used to consume media affects the level of influence the information has on individuals. When an individual is automatically processing information, media becomes more potent. Media messages can more easily activate or prime certain schemas. When a schema is primed it moves to the “top of the mind” only for a short period of time, but the more it is primed on different occasions, the more energy builds and is consequently more likely to return to the foreground of one’s focus (Perse, 2000). The current study is a content analysis of student newspapers in which the information is frequently consumed in a leisurely manner by students and alumni. Although no studies directly examine the media effects of college newspapers specifically, they are influential and have a large readership, especially on the growing digital platform (Preston, 2013). It is important to note the likely potency of these articles on student newspaper readers.

The habitual nature of automatic processing also makes schemas very difficult to modify (Perse, 2000). Ramasubramanian (2007) explains that this is also true for stereotype schemas which are primarily activated automatically by implicit stimuli. She suggests developing skills in critical media engagement in order to seek stereotype-disconfirming information to proactively reduce stereotypes' activation at the subconscious level (Ramasubramanian, 2007). The current research intends to expose the explicit but also the implicit meanings within the media coverage of wheelchair basketball by comparing them to able bodied basketball articles.

Based on the transactional model, the stereotype reduction can be approached not only through changing media content but also by changing the way audiences consume media. Therefore the data generated by this study can be used by disability and mass media scholars for future research. It will also serve as a reminder to wheelchair sports writers, although they may not realize, that the content they produce can have real effects on the marginalization of people with disabilities. Finally, this research also intends to emphasize the readers' responsibility to read critically in order to recognize and reject stereotypical frames communicated with photographs, general text, and metaphors.

### *1.2.2 Framing Theory*

"The entire study of mass communication," McQuail (2010) wrote, "is based on the premise that the media have significant effects" (p. 454). This premise McQuail refers to is derived in part from framing theory introduced by Goffman (1974). The theory is referenced by scholars from a variety of social sciences ranging from psychology to sociology and economics (Goffman, 1974; Tversky & Kahneman, 1986; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Entman, 1993). Entman (1993) provides a description of framing theory employed by other scholars based on the concepts of salience and selection:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/ or treatment recommendation for the item described. (p. 52)

One of the more often cited examples of framing involved a study that presented two different groups of respondents with a hypothetical situation and gave each group their own set of two responses to choose from. The situation, developed by Tversky and Kahneman (1981), essentially involved America preparing for an inevitable outbreak of a foreign disease expected to kill 600 people. The respondents were asked to select between two programs each with their own set of consequences. The death tolls were the same for both groups, but they were worded differently. The first group was asked to choose between program "A" framed as "200 people will be saved" and program "B" framed as "there is a 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved and 2/3 probability that no one will be saved." Seventy-eight percent of these respondents chose program "A" when the consequences were stated using the positive terms. The second group, presented with the same situation, was asked to choose from the same consequences as the first group's choices but stated using negative terms. This time only 22% chose the program framed as "400 people die," and 78% opted for the program framed as "there is 1/3 probability that nobody will die and 2/3 probability that 600 people will die" (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998) categorize this type of framing as *risky choice framing*, one of the three categories they define. *Risky choice framing* is the standard category of framing. The general concept is that people are more likely to make more risky selections when options involved are worded to focus on "chance to avoid losses" than when the options are worded to focus on the "chance to realize gains" (Levin et al., 1998).

Researchers define a second category of framing which affect information processing as attribute framing. Attribute framing is when information is framed as an evaluation of a

characteristic instead of the risky choice's outcome-based frames (Levin et al., 1998). For instance, a commonly cited example from Levin and Gaeth (1988) involved respondents assessing a consumer product (ground beef) framed in two different ways. The beef was described as "75% lean" or "25% fat," and their evaluations were made on scales of greasiness, taste, quality, etc. Researchers concluded that favorable responses were significantly associated more with the percent-lean frame than the percent-fat. In addition to favorability, evaluations can be based on scales ranging from completely unacceptable to completely acceptable, good to bad, or yes to no (Levin et al., 1998). The structure of attribute framing methods is standard; once the respondents evaluate the positive and negative frames, researchers compare the results to determine the framing effect.

Finally, goal framing evaluations can be used to examine the effects of positive and negative frames on persuasive communication perceptions. An issue can be framed to draw attention to its benefits (positive frame) or its ability to help avoid undesirable outcomes. The key question for researchers to answer is not which frame is more favorable or acceptable but which is "the more powerful enhancer" (Levin et al., 1998). One of the seminal examples of goal framing was Meyerowitz and Chaiken's 1987 study of college aged females' behavior when exposed to alternatively framed breast self-examination pamphlets.

Subjects were either issued a pamphlet that used benefit oriented language, loss oriented language, non-argumentative language, or no pamphlet at all. "Benefit pamphlets" emphasized the advantages and positive aspects of conducting the breast self-examinations, while "loss pamphlets" emphasized the danger and consequences which neglecting the exam can pose. Four months after reading the pamphlets, or not in the case of the control group, the researchers contacted the subjects in order to examine the behavioral impact of the experiment. Results of the study supported the researchers' hypothesis in that the loss oriented pamphlet

maximized the subjects' likelihood to conduct a BSE (Meyerowitz & Chaiken, 1987). These results reinforced the idea from Kahneman and Tversky (1979) that loss framing maximizes risk-seeking behavior. The risk in this case is the possibility of discovering a lump and stressing the losses associated with not performing the exam. In summation, the language used to frame an issue can affect readers' or viewers' attitudes and behaviors. These studies demonstrate that people are more conservative when results of their behavior are framed as gains to be acquired and are willing to take more risks when the negative or consequential aspects of a decision are more salient (Meyerowitz & Chaiken, 1987; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Much scholarship is dedicated to exploring the effects of news media framing. There is a general consensus that says the ways news stories are framed can affect perceptions of issues and people in the news (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2001). The content of the mass media can influence anything from political race results to public's attitudes and behavior toward people of different races, sexualities, genders, and disabilities (Bystrom, Robertson, & Banwart, 2001; Nelson et al., 1997; Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014; von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Angelini & Billings, 2010; Hardin & Hardin, 2003; Von Sikorski et al., 2012). The president of the National American Federation of the Blind reported an example of the news media framing disability stereotypically. Reporters were invited to a press conference on a highly political topic. They ignored the issue at hand and used the time to photograph and emphasize the various walking aids, lead dogs, and other stereotypical symbols of blindness (Dahl, 1993). The media framed the press conference as a story of life with vision impairment instead of reporting the political issues.

Disability and gendered sports scholars established framing as an appropriate platform to analyze the nature of media content (Angelini & Billings, 2010; Levin et al., 1998; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Angelini and Billings (2010) discussed three ways sports reporters frame their

stories: selection, emphasis, and exclusion. For instance a reporter may *select* a “line of attribution”: the player played a great game because he overcame so much adversity in life. Then the sports reporter *emphasizes* this explanation. He therefore *excludes* alternate explanations like the player’s gifted athletic abilities. As mentioned above, athletes with disabilities, for instance, are commonly framed by sports journalists as supercrips who have overcome life’s obstacles and will stop at nothing to achieve their dreams (Hardin & Hardin, 2003).

Most of the disability sports media scholarship compares Paralympic and Olympic news coverage (DePauw & Gavron, 2005; Howe, 2008; Golden, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Peers, 2009). There is a general consensus that when they are not completely invisible to news media audiences, the athletes are framed as incredible overcomers as if a disability is a terrible misfortune, better-off dead, sinister horrific freaks, evil criminals, maladjusted, their own worst enemy, an inconvenience to society, or unable to live a happy, productive life (Bogdan et al., 1982; Shakespeare, 1997). The current standard media frames of people with disabilities can pose real threats to the social reputation of people with disabilities (Longmore, 2003). Thus:

RQ 1a: What framing attributes are employed by journalists reporting on intercollegiate wheelchair basketball?

RQ 1b: What framing attributes are employed by journalists reporting on able-bodied college basketball?

RQ 1c: How does the framing of the two sports compare?

### 1.2.3 Metaphor Theory

Metaphors are often regarded as tools to liven and dramatize poetry and rhetoric. While this may be true, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor’s influence extends far beyond coloring language. A metaphor is the conceptual mapping from one semantic source domain (ex. Argument) to a separate target domain (ex. War). As part of their milestone work,

Lakoff and Johnson regard metaphors as ubiquitous molds which shape our thoughts and behavior (Santa Ana, 1999). The every-day use of certain expressions can explain the easily overlooked magnitude of their presence. The researchers define the “essence” of metaphors as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing or experience in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008).

The metaphor “argument is war” is demonstrated through expressions like, “I *demolished* his argument; He *attacked every weak point* in my argument; and your claims are *indefensible*” (p. 454). Thus, our culture understands the concept and the activity of argument in terms of war and consequently the language is metaphorically structured. Metaphors also structure how we think of more abstract notions like love. For instance, a common metaphor “love is war” is demonstrated through literal expressions and idioms like, “He *won* her hand in marriage; or she pursued him relentlessly.” The authors posit that because love is an emotion and not a concrete concept, we naturally resort to metaphors to understand and express the concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

They also claim that the metaphors used will be consistent with the “most fundamental values in a culture,” but they clearly state that not “*all* cultural values coherent with a metaphorical system will exist” (p. 465). For instance, in western culture, more is better is consistent with more is up and good is up. So we use metaphors like “the crime rate is up” when crime rates are increasing. Less is better, on the other hand, is not consistent with these examples. Other cultures value centrality and balance far more than in western cultures (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

These cultural values are especially evident in the media’s sometimes unconscious selection of metaphors. Norman Fairclough (1989) articulates this concept. While the structure of the metaphors themselves is dependent partially on the culture and society that they are

developed in, they in turn affect those same societal structures (Fairclough, 1989, p.23). This sort of cyclical model posits language and culture as two parties that feed off each other.

Mass media research tends to focus more on how the use of language can effectively characterize and marginalize individuals and groups of people. One of these most valuable tools of journalists, especially sports writers, is the metaphor. Chilton and Ilyin (1993) explain that because metaphors require receivers of the message to infer the relevance to the communication situation, metaphors are not only used to explain abstract ideas but also to “avoid direct reference to a face-threatening phenomenon” (p. 9). The hearer or receiver of the metaphoric language is left to their own cultural and language devices from which they derive meaning or make their own inferences (Chilton & Ilyin, 1993). Furthermore, the user of a metaphor can opt to highlight a particular element of the target domain. This is the case oftentimes in political and media oriented rhetoric (Howe, 1988).

In Otto Santa Ana’s 1999 study of the *Los Angeles Times*, after examining data from more than 100 articles over a two-year time period, the researcher found that metaphor was repeatedly used to characterize undocumented immigrants in America. The author uncovered multiple metaphors like immigrants are debased people, weeds, and commodities. One phrase employing the “immigrants are weeds” metaphor from the sample says, “...take children [of immigrants] and their dream hostage in crude scheme to *uproot* their parents” (p. 204). By referring to the immigrants using the term *uproot*, most commonly associated with plants or weeds, the language dehumanizes and degrades the immigrants because, as discussed earlier, metaphors are more than figures of speech, they are a conceptual framework.

The most present metaphor employed by the journalists in the study’s sample was the “immigrants are animals” metaphor. This metaphor was far more prominent. The continuous use of the metaphor was interpreted as racist toward Hispanic people, who make up the bulk of the

immigrants referred to in the study. Even though it is not as blatant as the racism that the western culture is used to discussing or hearing about, America's racist society is still "mirrored" in the newspaper's choice of language (Santa Ana, 1999). This metaphor is a conceptual correspondence mapping the structure of the domain, in this case the animal, onto a completely different target domain, the immigrant (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Santa Ana, 1999). In one example, "The truth is, employers *hungering* for really cheap labor *hunt out* the foreign workers," the immigrants become animals which are hunted for by employers through the use of metaphoric framing (p. 201). The author concludes by pointing out that these metaphors are not as deeply rooted in our lexicon as spatial metaphors like up is good and down is bad or metaphors used to describe abstract ideas like love. In a final declaration of hope, Santa Ana (1999) noted that social and political metaphors are not as deeply engrained or impervious to change.

The present analysis of college newspapers' representation of wheelchair and able bodied basketball players will examine the metaphors used to characterize the athletes, the sports, and the events in the articles with Santa Ana's hopes of change in mind. This study intends to draw attention to the metaphors in able bodied basketball and compare them to those found in wheelchair basketball sports writing. These metaphors will provide insight into how society truly views disabled athletes and sports, disability as a concept, and people with disabilities. The main objective, however, is to increase awareness of language in the media and perhaps act as a guide to changing the stereotypical manner in which people with disabilities are portrayed. Thus:

RQ 2a: How are metaphors employed by reporters to portray wheelchair basketball?

RQ 2b: How are metaphors employed by reporters to portray able-bodied basketball?

RQ 2c: How do the reporters' metaphor use to portray the two sports compare?

#### 1.2.4 Image Power: Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs. In 1916, Ferdinand Saussure (2000) described the linguistic sign as a unifier of a concept and a sound-image. The sound-image he refers to here is not the material noise or picture but the “impression that it makes on our senses” (p. 26). Saussure coined the term “sign” to represent the whole that results from combining the concept or the signified and the sound-image, denoted as the signifier. Because the sign simply represents an association of the signified and signifier, the sign itself is, by nature, arbitrary (Saussure, 2000). Roland Barthes (2000) employed Saussurean and structural principles to develop the semiological system of myth. Barthes’ system emphasizes connotation and its importance to meaning unlike the more literal approach of Saussure (Barthes, 2000; Saussure, 2000). Cultural experiences influence the meanings of these connotations, many of which are recognized by most individuals who are part of the same culture (Barthes, 2000). For instance, wearing glasses connotes intelligence in western society.

In his book *Mythologies*, published in 1957, Barthes used his classic example, the cover photo of a weekly French news magazine, to demonstrate his theory. The photo depicts a young black French man in a military uniform and beret looking upwards and saluting. Barthes then explains what the photo signifies to him, and likely most of the other readers of the magazine: “That France is a great empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than by the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors” (p.415). Barthes posits that the young saluting uniformed man is the signifier, “...the purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness” is the signified, and there is an existence of the signified through the signifier (p. 415). Therefore, not only do photos depict images and notify, in contrast to writing, they “...impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it” (p. 411). This

unwavering imposition of language on our reality and understanding is the core concept of structuralism.

Barthes was well known for looking beyond the surface meanings of signs into the true meanings of mass media messages. He spent much of his time deciphering and labeling the ideologies imposed on the recipients of the media's images (Griffin, 2012). An ideology is defined as "knowledge presented as common sense or natural, especially when its social construction is ignored or suppressed" (p. 338).

A study of images in physical education textbooks revealed a grossly low percentage of people with disabilities represented. In fact, of the 59 text books examined, 1.5% was the highest percentage of the total images in any single book that depicted a person with a visible disability. The photographs usually depicted the people with disabilities receiving assistance from authority figures or peers (B. Hardin & M. Hardin, 2004). These images, just as Barthes argues, depict the dominant values of the culture. The ideology here is that disabled people are inferior and helpless. A semiotician would likely explain that these images connote that people with disabilities are different than their peers and less able to participate in sports, therefore reinforcing the media ideology that sports are a realm for able bodies and people with disabilities' cultural status is inferior because of their "substandard bodies" (B. Hardin & M. Hardin, 2004).

As a founding figure of cultural studies, Stuart Hall would likely endorse this type of research. One of his primary goals was to reveal the power imbalances in society. Hall argued that the mass media plays a key role in encoding these dominant ideologies of our culture. This process that takes place as seemingly natural ways of interpreting the world become ideologies was defined by French philosopher Michael Foucault as discursive formation (Hall, 2001; Griffin, 2012). An example of such formations was revealed through his studies on the mental illness in

different historical eras. Foucault states that after the Renaissance, “In the classical age, for the first time, madness was perceived through a condemnation of social idleness and in a social immanence guaranteed by the community of labor” (Foucault, 1988, p. 58). It was within this “*other world*” that “the sacred powers of labor” permitted the applications of the stigmas and the segregation we now associate with madness (Foucault, 1988). As these ideologies perpetuated themselves through continued reference, so did the people in power’s right to create meaning. This power translated, in this case, into the power to identify people as insane or not (Hall, 2001; Griffin, 2012).

A look back at the history of Martha’s Vineyard from the seventeenth to the twentieth century shows that when people of power are less discriminant, the lines between normal and other can completely disappear. During the nineteenth century, one out of every 5,728 Americans was born deaf, but Martha’s Vineyard was home to a surprisingly high hereditarily deaf population: about one in every 155. The deaf population, however, was seamlessly integrated into the society to the extent where they were not even thought of as disabled or different. The key difference was the widespread use of sign language. In other cultures, deaf people were idealized as physically, mentally, and socially inferior (Groce, 2009). These ideologies are formed primarily through cultural experiences and are highly influenced by those in power, including media outlets.

One of the more powerful tools for enhancing media influence of the masses is the image or photograph. The power of photographs to create meaning in the media makes photojournalists and publication editors’ work extremely important. In an empirical lab set study in which they systematically altered news coverage, Domke, Perlmutter, and Spratt (2002) found that photos in the news influence the way audiences process information. This may be especially

true for news stories about minority groups, like people with disabilities, who are drastically underrepresented almost to the point of annihilation (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

A study examining three years of the monthly publication *Sports Illustrated for Kids* (SIK) sampled over 7,000 photos and found only 24 depicted people with visible or obvious disabilities (Hardin, Hardin, Walsdorf, & Walsdorf, 2001). If the public is only generally exposed to a few images of people with disabilities, the minimal exposure, along with their own experiences with disability, make up most of their understanding about disability. These few media representations thus become even more powerful.

This influence extends to people with disabilities themselves, especially children (Bandura, 1969; Bandura, 1971). They do not have many disabled role models to look up to in the media. If they do not live near a wheelchair sports program they may not know any athletes and are left wondering if they should even attempt to participate in sports. This can result in a perpetual cycle of less active people with disabilities. The authors of the SIK study also coded the context depicted and despite, as they noted, the almost complete exclusion of disabled athletes, they were able to draw some generalizations. The photos showed the athletes with disabilities usually segregated from able bodied peers and participating in individual more than team sports.

In their discussion, Hardin et al. (2001) explained that these representations reinforce notions that people with disabilities should remain marginalized rather than integrated with their able bodied peers. The authors also noted that there were no pictures of people with disabilities in leadership roles such as coaching or officiating, further demonstrating failure to promote positive images in sports (Hardin et al., 2001). They employed the social learning theory to argue the highly influential nature of children (Hardin et al., 2001; Bandura, 1969). Therefore photos, just like text, can assist in characterizing and forming identities of and attitudes toward individuals. Thus:

RQ 3a: How do the photographs from wheelchair basketball articles depict the sport and its players?

RQ 3b: How do the photographs from able bodied basketball articles depict the sport and its players?

RQ 3c: How do the photographic depictions from both sports' articles compare?

## Chapter 2 Method

### 2.1 Sample

Articles in online student news sources that report on each team in the NWBA's college division were randomly selected in order to remain objective. The target sample size for each season was five articles about the universities' able bodied men's programs and five about their men's wheelchair basketball program. The articles were randomly selected from the schools' online archives of the past five seasons ('09-'10 through '13-'14). I drew the sample of articles written by student journalists from independent student publications and some from the universities' athletics websites. In order to ensure random selection, every relevant article on the school news source's online archive published in a given season was sequentially numbered from first to last. The range of time I used to encapsulate a season when sampling from the databases was April 1 of the first calendar year of the season and March 31 of the following calendar year. For example, articles from April 1, 2010-March 31, 2011 were selected at random from the school news source's data base to represent the '10-'11 season.

Then a range depending on this total was entered into a random sequence generator on random.org (<https://www.random.org/sequences/>). This tool generates a list of numbers, each within the range without repeats, in random order. The first five numbers are used to randomly select the corresponding article from the site. For example, if the first five numbers in a sequence are 24,6,30, 9, and 22 the corresponding articles published within that season on the student news source's archive were the articles selected for analysis. The process was repeated for the able bodied basketball articles.

The student news sources examined are: UTA's *The Shorthorn*, UA's *The Crimson White*, UWW's *The Royal Purple*, and UI's *The Daily Illini*. EU's athletics website and SMSU's athletics websites are managed by the university. These publications were selected because their archives

contained a high enough volume of coverage of both types of teams to satisfy the sample. MU sports is covered by two student publications, *The Columbia Missourian*, “a community news organization managed by professional editors and staffed by Missouri School of Journalism students,” and *The Maneater* (“About the Missourian - Columbia Missourian,” n.d.). In order to meet the target sample size, both publications were randomly sampled from. *The Maneater* was sampled from first, and if five articles were not available, *The Columbia Missourian* was randomly sampled from.

As previous studies noted, I found that wheelchair basketball is not as present in the mass media as able bodied basketball, especially in the case of more recently established teams. As a result the target sample size was adjusted. This shortage was only experienced when sampling wheelchair basketball articles, likely a result of the underrepresentation of the sport in the media. The same number of able bodied basketball articles was randomly selected from each source. For example, only four wheelchair basketball articles were available on *The Maneater* online archive representing the '09-'10 season. Thus, those four were analyzed and four able bodied articles were randomly selected from the same source. Then one article was randomly selected from the *The Columbia Missourian* archive's '09-'10 articles for each sport. The seasons with sample shortages are listed in the *Limitations* section below. The total number of unavailable articles is 15 combined with the equal number of corresponding removed able bodied articles. Thus the total sample size analyzed was 320 of the 350 target sample.

## 2.2 Analysis Design Process

Four methods of both quantitative and qualitative content analysis were used in order to objectively examine differences between the textual representation of wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball teams in student newspapers: an analysis of metaphor use, article

genre, direct quotations, and images. The researcher collected qualitative data consisting of themes and patterns that were not quantified and will be discussed in the following chapter.

The methods were developed after conducting the pilot study, a review of previous literature, and what Hall refers to as a “long preliminary soak” of the material, reading the articles three and sometimes four times (Eldridge & Watson, 2013; Hall, 1975, p.15). I carefully examined articles representing both sports as objectively as possible. For instance, I noticed the wheelchair basketball articles content consisted of comparatively much less figurative and creative writing. Specifically, the able bodied basketball articles examined were made up of a noticeably substantial frequency of metaphoric language. After a review of previous research which also examined the use of different metaphors, their linguistic and cultural influence, and the implications of the findings, I found that a closer examination of the figurative language in the current sample of articles would provide an important look into the nature of disability sports coverage (Chilton & Ilyin, 1993; Dahl, 1993; Holt, 2000; Howe, 1988; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Santa Ana, 1999; Segrave, 1997). In order to remain objective and have a basis for comparison, I examined each basketball article, wheelchair and able bodied, and counted each metaphor occurrence within the appropriate domain.

Previous research revealed a significant presence of feature style human interest articles about athletes with disabilities and a lack of performance related game coverage (Golden, 2003; Chang et al., 2011; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Davis et al., 2012). Thus, quantifying the genre of article was also important. Additionally, the presence of some themes was stronger in feature stories and vice versa, thus, the categorization also contributed to the comparison of qualitative data.

Categorizing the articles by genre also guided the direct quotation analysis because the current study examined direct quotes from performance oriented game recap stories and pre-

game articles. The direct quotation analysis was part of the pilot study and was expanded for the current study after the initial soak and a further review of previous research. The method was also indirectly informed by a previous media study on gender bias in Olympic news coverage (Kinnick, 1998). The direct quotation analysis also provided quantitative and qualitative data.

Again after a review of literature and an initial soak I found the opportunity to examine the images accompanying the articles (Buyse & Borcharding, 2010; Buyse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin et al., 2001; Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2005). The method employed to analyze images was directly informed by a disability sports media study and women's sports media study (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin et al., 2001). It is important to note that the image examination was the only analysis which was not conducted as part of the pilot study (Eldridge & Watson, 2013).

### 2.3 Metaphors

To answer research questions 2a-2c, I examined a sub-sample of articles and noted words and phrases that were not literal, then determined categories based on the figurative referents. Spatial metaphors like "up is good" or "down is losing" were not counted because they are so deeply engrained and impervious to change (Santa Ana, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Token is the term used by Santa Ana (1999) to denote an instance of metaphor use. In the current study, if the same category of token was used multiple times in one phrase, for example, "He is a key *piece* to *building a strong foundation* of the program," the token was only counted once, in this case, in the *construction* category, in order to avoid overrepresentation of a category. During the examination of the sub-sample, if a token was not closely associated with any of the already developed categories, a new category was created. For instance, I came across the phrases like "...has *pulverized* opponents..." and "...*demolished* the University of Alabama...." These phrases can be used to figuratively reference war, but given the lack of military reference

and the destructive nature of the terms, I created a separate *destruction* metaphor category. The frequency of tokens in each category recorded for able bodied articles was compared to the frequency of the tokens in wheelchair articles categorized with the same method.

Although more prevalent in able bodied basketball articles, the dominant metaphor category in both wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball articles was war. I found numerous terms such as squad (short for squadron), captain, fired a shot, veterans, and recruiting, which I categorized as war tokens because they are terms frequently used in the military. Terms like "...will *battle* Lewis University..." were counted in this war category. One category can be made up of different metaphors. For instance, "...will *battle* Lewis University..." references the metaphor "a game is a battle" and was counted in the overarching *war* category. Another term, "...Illinois has two *sharpshooters*..." still suggests that the sport is war and was counted in the *war* category, but the more appropriate and specific metaphor the phrase represents is "players are soldiers." This method was used to consolidate a number of metaphors into categories for comparative purposes. The 14 less dominant categories and examples of each are:

*Business*: "...proved his *worth* at both ends of the court."

*Food*: "...*hungry* for a chance to repeat."

*Temperature*: "...provided a *spark* to the team's *hot* start..."

*Animal*: "...using *swarming* defense..."

*Performance Art*: "...grabbed the *spotlight* for the game..."

*Machine*: "Frogley *engineered* the team..."

*Destruction*: "UTA `has *pulverized* opponents..."

*Racing*: "...team started *fast* and never *looked back*..."

*Journey*: "...their ticket to the Final Four was punched..."

*Fight/Violence*: "...by clobbering UW-Stout..."

*Law*: "...after being issued a technical foul..."

*Science*: "...dissect the game defensively..."

*Family*: "It (the team) is a brotherhood..."

*Illness*: "...something that has plagued the team..."

Other, less present domains are *animal, royalty, religion, puzzle, gambling, madness, school, life, politics, other sport, dream, and amusement*. Although these categories are not discussed in details they are included in the data table.

#### 2.4 Direct Quotes

Each direct quote in game recap and pre-game stories was categorized. Features were excluded to specifically examine performance related articles. Articles without direct quotes were also excluded. I categorized quotes from 41 articles about both wheelchair and able bodied basketball games.

The 16 categories and examples of each are below:

*Player Performance*: "Kris did a great job coming off the bench and brought great energy."

*Strategy/ Prep*: "We have worked on a lot of individual reads on the press."

*Skill Set*: "He's got a quick first step."

*Specific Recap*: "[Alabama] shot 36 percent, 15 percent from three, got out-rebounded by 12 rebounds- listen folks- and won."

*Team Performance*: "...we didn't guard the ball as well."

*Self-Performance*: "I was just in my zone again."

*Goals:* "The goal is always to make it to the championship game..."

*Opposition:* "We knew [Edinboro] would struggle with the transition."

*Cohesiveness:* "...We are all so different but we really came together."

*Referee:* "I thought they were terrific."

*Injury:* "If he's physically able to be there, he'll be there on Saturday..."

*Predictions:* "We'll definitely be competing for a national title next season."

*Insight:* "I can definitely confirm it's hard to win a first one, but it's really hard to win back-to-back."

*Player Suspension:* "He's our brother and we hate that it happened..."

*Comparisons to Able Bodied Basketball:* "It's definitely more physical and there is definitely more banging around than you would see in an able bodied basketball game."

*Disability/Stereotype:* "This is one of the reasons I came to Mizzou...People around campus don't look at you differently."

The last two categories were only populated with quotes from the wheelchair basketball articles.

If a quote is split by an attribution like Michael Jordan said, the entire quote is still coded together. For example, "We won the game," Jordan said, "That is all that matters." If an interviewee's response references multiple categories, the quote will count once in each of the corresponding categories. For example: "Wisconsin-Whitewater, they had a lot better players than us individually, but we were a much better team than them. They couldn't touch us because we were such an unstoppable force- a unit." This quote references opposition (they had a lot better players), team performance (we were such an unstoppable force), and team cohesiveness (an unstoppable force- *a unit*) and was counted in all three categories. If a quote did not reference an existing category, a new category was developed. For instance, 12 articles into the

analysis, I came across a quote from a player who commented on his injury status. Subsequently I added the injury category. To ensure fair representation I coded an equal number of articles for each sport. Some game recap and pre-game stories had no direct quotes. The university school news sources of EU and SMSU did not quote players and coaches within the articles.

## 2.5 Images

Different from the pilot study, I coded the images included in the articles. The coding method was borrowed from two studies and adapted to accommodate the current research. The first study examined the depiction of women basketball players in sports magazines, and the second examined depiction of people with disabilities in *Sports Illustrated for Kids* (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin et al., 2001). The coding methods were integrated and employed for the current study. Again bias was carefully avoided in order to determine how able bodied basketball and wheelchair basketball players are depicted in student publications.

Fink & Kensicki (2002) used a coding method established in 1998 that was historically used to categorize sports photos as active and non-active poses and competitive and non-competitive scenes. This method also served to objectively determine whether the images of female athletes conformed to or challenged dominant ideologies (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). The method was employed and altered for the current study with the same intentions in mind. For example, an image of a wheelchair basketball player in athletic action constructs a reality that challenges the ideology of wheelchair athletes as other than the norm and inferior or inactive in comparison to able bodied athletes. Also, if a coach was depicted on the sideline or in a huddle, the picture was coded as athletic action because this depicts the coach *in action* even though he is not out on the court.

Comparing the coding results regarding the able bodied basketball photos to the wheelchair basketball photos enabled the researcher to objectively answer research questions

3a-3c. One of the image categories specific to the study by Fink and Kensicki (2002), *pornographic/sexually suggestive*, was removed and replaced by a category from Hardin et al. (2001), titled in the current study as *Teammate (s)*. In their study on the depiction of athletes with disabilities in SIK, the researchers found that the athletes with disabilities were rarely pictured as team players and concluded that segregation and deviance from the norm was promoted (Hardin et al., 2001). The current study examined how often able bodied players are pictured with their teammates in comparison to wheelchair players.

Within the pool of articles coded for textual analysis, 92 wheelchair basketball articles and 97 able bodied basketball articles were accompanied by at least one image. To ensure equal representation of each sport's photos, the same random sampling method was used to generate a random sequence of 97 numbers and the articles corresponding to the first five (the difference in total number of articles) were removed from the able bodied image sample. All 92 wheelchair articles with images were coded. Some articles included multiple photos and only the largest, most dominant image accompanying a particular one of these articles was individually coded. Photos of inanimate objects were not coded. For instance, an article about a coach's "turbulent" journey was accompanied by a photo of an airplane for creative purposes, and the image was removed from the sample. Images of logos, text boxes, and other clip art were removed from the sample because they are not images of the athletes which the current study is concerned with.

In addition to categorizing activity levels, attire, setting, and team images as previous studies have, the photos were analyzed for recurring patterns or themes. In order to develop categories specific to this analysis I examined a sub-sample of 10 images (five for each sport). Two additional coding categories were added. After this initial examination I recognized a need for a *portrait* category; multiple images accompanying able-bodied and wheelchair basketball articles depicted a single player from the neck or chest up to the head. I also noticed that the

same image sometimes accompanied multiple articles on separate occasions. Thus, each instance in which a photo was reused, the instance was counted. Some were duplicated more than once, so each time the photo was reused it was counted again. Any other patterns during the image analysis were noted and discussed in the following chapter. This is a list of each of the six operational definitions of the coding categories after the initial examination:

*Athletic action:* Person(s) actively engaging in a sport and dressed in athletic apparel (e.g., image of an athlete playing a game).

*Dressed but not in action:* The person(s) are dressed in athletic apparel but posed for photo but not engaging in athletic activity (e.g., portrait or team photo).

*Non-sport setting:* Person(s) dressed in nonathletic apparel and depicted in a non-athletic setting (e.g., photo of athlete at a hospital).

*Teammate (s):* The person(s) depicted with one or more teammates (e.g., a photo of a player passing the ball to his teammate who is also in the photo or a team photo).

*Portrait:* Only the neck or chest to head are visible (e.g., a portrait of a player with his name as a caption when he had a good game).

*Reuse:* The same photo accompanies more than one article (e.g., a photo of a coach talking to a player on a sideline is used in a game story in one season and then the exact same photo accompanies an article about the coach in the following season).

## Chapter 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Research Question 1a: Framing Wheelchair Basketball

#### 3.1.1 Performance

Research question 1a explores the framing attributes employed by journalists reporting on intercollegiate wheelchair basketball. Contrary to previous studies of disability sport in the media, specific performance-related articles were moderately well represented in the article genre analysis. The game and pregame articles made up about half (49.4%) of the total sample of wheelchair basketball articles (see Appendix I).

However, within these articles a strong theme emerged of lack of detail of player and team performance, like in game statistics. Reports without statistics resort to interviews with players and coaches or game notes. While this information is sufficient enough to create a game story or player feature, statistics can provide a more clear and accurate depiction of athletic performances and are the norm in sports writing. A statistical recorder is responsible for recording stats as events happen (play-by-play), preparing usable final stats for league records, keeping the official score, preparing final and mid-game summary reports for media representatives, and staying current with statistical scoring rules. The most common performance detail reported was the scores of the wheelchair basketball games. Most of the time this was the only statistic mentioned from any given game. Even less frequently, the individual performance of players was reported. However, such details were not completely absent from the wheelchair basketball coverage. For example a sports writer details multiple athletes' performance in a game story as follows:

“UTA Freshman forward Anthony Pone had 15 points on 7-of-9 shooting. Newcomer Jacobus Velloen had a double-double with 14 points on 13 rebounds.”

It is important to note that the author of this quote wrote 80% (12/15) of the UTA wheelchair basketball articles sampled from '09-'10 to '11-12'. In the following season that writer was the dominant reporter of the able bodied basketball articles sampled and a new writer became the wheelchair basketball beat reporter. There was a strong thematic presence of more thorough coverage for all schools' news sources whose sports writers wrote multiple articles about wheelchair basketball. While some of the more consistent wheelchair sports beat writers included some statistical performance details, the wheelchair athletes were rarely framed as performing on a high mental level despite the cerebral attributes necessary to succeed on the college level.

It is interesting to note that the most populated domain of the wheelchair basketball quotation analysis was the strategy/preparation category (53 referents). These referents made up a great majority of the overall references (quotations and reporters' own comments) to strategy in the sample (see Appendix D).

### *3.1.2 Physicality*

A game was rarely framed as an intense physical competition. The only time the physical nature of the game was referenced was by a player in a direct quote. Most of these interviewees compared dominant physicality of wheelchair basketball to the inferior physical nature of able bodied basketball:

“With wheelchairs, it’s a lot harder to get into different areas of the court...It becomes a lot more of a physical sport then. I didn’t expect it to be so intense.”

“It’s definitely more physical and there is definitely more banging around than you would see in an able bodied basketball game.”

While these quotes emphasize the intense physical nature of the sport, the direct quote and genre analysis reflect a contradicting theme. Despite the numerous injuries a team deals with

throughout a season, there were zero wheelchair basketball articles which primarily reported on an athlete's or athletes' injury, recovery process, and effect on the team. The direct quotation analysis showed only one reference to an injury with no additional details other than the player was out with an injury (see Appendix D).

Also detailed physical attributes were rarely mentioned. When they were, the description was vague:

"...big man Bobbie Nickleberry..."

### *3.1.3 Seriousness/ Legitimacy*

Some interviewees framed the sport as being more physical than able bodied in a manner that also frames wheelchair basketball as other than normal. For instance, an athlete compared the physicality of the game, "It's a rougher sport than *actual* basketball..." In this quote the athlete is framing wheelchair basketball as the more physical sport, but by referring to able-bodied basketball as "actual" basketball; by comparison wheelchair basketball is also framed as a less legitimate or official sport and other than the norm.

### *3.1.4 "A.B. Normal Crip" Media Model*

This theme of otherness was also present in the representation of the athletes, especially in wheelchair basketball feature articles. It is important to note that these media models were rarely, if ever, present in game or pre-game genre articles. The first of these media models I termed the "A.B. normal crip" (able bodied normal crip). The wheelchair athletes were often explicitly framed in this narrative as "normal" or just like the rest of "us," the "us" being able bodied people, hence the name A.B. normal crip.

In an article about a wheelchair basketball player who was also in a fraternity, the main theme of the article was how there isn't anything different or abnormal about him *except* his disability, and an entire article was devoted to sharing this story. The article's lead paragraph

explains the “normal” college activities he is involved in and concludes with the sentence, “Linsky has Cerebral Palsy.” This emphasis on his disability frames the student athlete as other than the norm. One of the fraternity members is quoted saying “...he’s just a normal funny guy.” This ironically contributes to an identity that is not “normal.” Comments from additional articles contributed to the strong presence of this theme:

“...these athletes are just like all the other athletes on campus.”

“Because they have a physical disability doesn’t mean that they are any less or any different than any other of our students.”

“...hopes the exhibit will show people the players on the wheelchair basketball team are just like everyone else on campus.”

This theme was also echoed by wheelchair athletes themselves:

“...we want to show the campus there is no real difference between us...”

“We’re really not much different from everyone else...”

“...He believed disabled people had trouble socializing, but discovered they are like anyone else.”

### 3.1.5 “Content Crip” Media Model

Wheelchair athletes were also framed in student news sources as what I call the “content crip.” This model also had a strong presence in the wheelchair basketball feature stories. The “content crip” is represented as proud of their disability and happy to be and/or often prefer to be a disabled person. Most of the prideful “content crip” framing attributes were found in direct quotes from the athletes:

“I don’t wish I could change anything or choose a different path, because I’m lucky...It’s the best thing that happened to me, hands down.”

“...said this (his disability) is one of the ‘best things’ that ever happened to him.”

“Because of my accident it has made me who I am today. I’m pretty happy with where I am.”

One athlete interviewee suggests that people without disabilities are missing out and in jest explains that they too can become disabled and take advantage of the positive aspects of getting around in a wheelchair.

“I get to skip lines of security at the airport—life is easier. I’m telling you, if you want to cut off a toe; just like that, the world opens up.”

### *3.1.6 Supercrip Media Model*

The third and final narrative framing wheelchair athletes in feature stories was the most researched in disability media scholarship, the supercrip. It is important to note that this overcoming-against-all-odds frame was not found in any of the game related articles and was only present in feature stories. As noted by the extensive list of examples, the supercrip frame was a strongly present theme:

“...*achieved* all this in a *wheelchair*...”

“Wheelchair basketball players don’t let their disabilities hold them back from their natural athletic intensity...”

“...played for the wheelchair basketball team...despite having cerebral palsy since birth”

There were also instances when the athletes themselves conformed to the supercrip media model.

“It shows people we can still be active (despite our disabilities)...”

Sometimes the supercrip narrative is more implicit. In this example the author does not use blatant terms associated with supercrips like despite or against odds. The feature article’s subject’s disability is mentioned in a manner which implies that it hinders him from waking up early to train:

“MU freshman James Bohnett wakes up at 4:30 a.m. every weekday. A double-leg amputee, he practices wheelchair basketball from 5:30-7:30 a.m....”

In another article a head coach acknowledges the supercrip stereotype and attempts to dispel the myth.

“Everyone should come to watch the NIWBT because it is not about these athletes overcoming adversity, it is not about rehabilitation,” Lade said. “The tournament is about elite athletes doing what they do best, playing basketball.”

This quote demonstrates that the supercrip frame is rejected by some of the disabled community. However, the rejection of the frame is not necessarily meant to completely reject the inspirational effect the athletes can have on readers. For instance, in a feature about a legendary player who passed away, the reporter identifies him as an inspiration. But this piece is not a representation of the inspirational supercrip model because there is no mention of him inspiring people around him *because he overcame his disability*. There is a single sentence about how he acquired his disability for informative purposes. The main focus of the article details his multi-sport Paralympic achievements, character attributes, and successful career. His merits were a source of inspiration for those around him.

### 3.1.7 Tragic Disability

Disability was frequently framed as a tragedy and even torture in some instances. For instance, in an article about the social responsibility of a team and the work they do in the community, the author frames disability as a cause of suffering:

“The program consists of bringing members of the Warhawk wheelchair basketball team to a school or community to discuss the *disabilities the athletes have endured*.”

By framing the disability itself as a tragedy or source of suffering, the person with the disability is consequently framed as a victim.

“...the challenges he has experienced as a *person confined to a wheelchair*”

The term confined to a wheelchair frames the wheelchair user not as a person with agency or control but as person who is forced into a device by their disability. Again the wheelchair user is framed as a victim of their tragic disability. One of the head coaches interviewed provided his own perspective about the matter.

“Our disability is a very visible obstacle in our lives, but we try to show that everyone has obstacles, big or small; the key is to not let the obstacles overcome anyone.”

### *3.1.8 Disability Language*

For the most part wheelchair sportswriters used person-first language when referring to the athletes. In one feature story the reporter seemed to be experimenting with different language to describe the students. In this instance the writer used eight different terms in one article, including the disabled (in the headline), students with disabilities, people in wheelchairs, disabled students, students who use wheelchairs, and students in wheelchairs. Two terms used by this writer, the disabled and disabled students, were not person-first language.

### *3.1.9 International Competition*

By including many articles about intercollegiate athletes going on to compete internationally and especially the Paralympics, reporters framed the intercollegiate division as a league that transcends national boundaries and prepares athletes to continue their careers. Reports of other leagues' teams, such as the International Wheelchair Basketball Federations (IWBF) teams, also contribute to the strong theme of diversity in competition level beyond the college division. For instance, the USA under-23 (U23) national team, a team of the nation's top players under the age of 23, is frequently referenced by the wheelchair basketball sports writers. Players from multiple schools were mentioned as having success on the international level with the USA U23 team, USA and other countries' Paralympic teams, and professionally for

international club teams. Two coaches from EU and SMSU were mentioned, often times within full articles about their selection and coaching success of the USA U23 team. Over the course of two seasons of MU coverage, three full articles by three different student journalists covered the wheelchair basketball coach's selection to coach team USA. The sport is also framed as transcending boundaries in articles about colleges hosting other national teams for camps and skills clinics. EU hosted a camp for the French national team in the '09-'10 season. Women's Paralympians are also referenced in articles from this sample (more on this in *Additional Findings*). Other domestic wheelchair basketball leagues, though much less often than international leagues, were also referenced. Reporters mentioned championship division, division III, women's, and junior division leagues.

### 3.2 Research Question 1b: Framing: Able Bodied Basketball

#### 3.2.1 Performance

Research question 1b explores the framing attributes that are employed by journalists reporting on able bodied college basketball. The able bodied articles were framed as very typical basketball articles. The athletes were framed as skillful, smart, and athletic individuals who occasionally run into off-court issues. The sport was framed as physical, intense, and dramatic. For instance, specific reference to physical size of players had a strong presence in able bodied basketball articles. The sports writers framed the athletes with very many detailed statistics to convey a more precise depiction of their performance. The following examples are quoted directly from the able bodied articles sampled and include both individual and team stats. Some of them include very detailed information on game flow and scenarios:

"SMSU (6-9, 3-8 NSIC) led 54-45 at the 10 minute mark before NSU answered with a 12-0 run over the next four and a held minutes to take a 57-54 lead. SMSU regained the

lead at 50-57 with 4:52 remaining, but NSU took the lead for good at 61-59 with 3:54 left in the game.”

“The Crimson Tide (12-6, 4-1 SEC) outscored the Wildcats (12-6, 3-2) 35-22 in the second half and held them to 29.6 percent shooting from the floor, 39.3 percent total for the game.”

These are examples of comprehensive statistical record and representation of players’ performance history.

“...a career high 33 points...”

“13<sup>th</sup> double-double of the season....”

This theme of precise, detailed recap was echoed in the quotation analysis. Two of the most populated categories of the able bodied basketball sample were specific recap and team performance (see Appendix I). These quotes frame athletes not only as showing strong statistical performances, but also as being knowledgeable of the specifics and how they affect the game. Another strongly present theme in the able bodied article sample was the reporting of the mental performance of the athletes. These quotes help to illustrate that the sport is not only physically but also mentally demanding. These quotes also demonstrate the athletes’ performance under these demanding mental pressures of the game. Again these examples refer to team and individual performance quotes taken verbatim from the articles:

“...has such *great awareness*...It’s a gift.”

“...have to play *smarter*...keep our *heads* in the game.”

### 3.2.2 Injuries

Another theme was the presence of entire articles about the injury or injuries of players. The theme was significant to develop a new genre category for a more accurate analysis. The

sample included six total injury features written about player injuries and the recovering process, treatment details (sometimes in great detail), and when the players are expected to return (see Appendix I):

“...dealing with a back injury...”

“...bulging disc...pain flares up often and causes swelling...mobility on the court has been limited...”

“A thick layer of sticky white athletic tape is wrapped snugly around the base of his left hand...conforming to the arc of his hand...woven between every finger...miniature straightjacket for the thumb.”

### *3.2.3 Player Suspension*

The unique theme of player suspensions was also present in able bodied articles. This was not a high frequency theme, but there were enough referents to mention it. The reasons for players to be suspended in the articles sampled were usually off-the-court issues and were sometimes not disclosed (see Appendix H). The off-court issues include:

“Rape allegations...”

“...stealing electronic equipment...”

“...allegations of criminal trespass and disorderly conduct”

“...academic issues...”

“.....was arrested and charged with four felony counts of manufacturing/selling marijuana, one misdemeanor count of possession of marijuana and one misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia...” \*When the article was published the person had not yet stood trial.

Other references were less specific and cited vague descriptions like breaking team rules.

### 3.2.4 High Status Figures

The representation of coaches as high status figures was another unique but not strongly present theme found in the able bodied basketball articles.

“Alabama’s basketball coach Anthony Grant *addressed the media...*”

This statement frames Coach Anthony Grant as a very important figure who is paid attention to because what he says in his address to the media is also very important.

### 3.2.5 Team Rankings

Another unique theme in able bodied basketball articles was a strong emphasis on team rankings. Entire articles were written to update readers on the team performances compared to the other teams in their league or conference. The team’s season is thus framed as an intense competition with the other ranked teams. This theme of teams winning every game they can to stay on top of the league is not nearly as present in wheelchair basketball articles. This theme of competitive ranking was strengthened by references to the rankings’ impact on tournament seeds. March Madness and other tournaments are referred consistently throughout the able bodied articles.

### 3.2.6 Figurative Language/ Literary Devices

In addition to the vast metaphor use (discussed below) in able bodied basketball stories, there was a strong theme of other figurative language and literary devices. The strongest of these sub-themes was the authors’ use of idioms.

“...one of the few *bright spots...*”

“...*hang our hats* on defending...”

The *hang our hat* idiom was used on multiple occasions. The writers also used puns to liven their pieces. For instance, in an article about a player’s hand injury, the headline read, “English not as *handy* as usual...” Similes were also employed.

“...were celebrated *like* kings...”

“...trade blows *like* a heavyweight fight...”

I also noted two literary references, one to “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and another to “The Invisible Man.” Finally, able bodied sportswriters also incorporated imagery to improve the quality of their descriptive writing.

“It bounced up, not out, then hung in the air before plopping through the net...”

In addition to the detailed imagery, interestingly, the *plopping* onomatopoeia is used to stimulate the audience’s sense of sound too.

Also, there was one instance where the reporter incorporated mild swearing into the story.

“*Hell* it’s impossible to know which team...”

Swear words, while generally considered taboo in journalistic writing, can convey a writer or interviewee’s message or character more vividly and accurately. In this case the writer is venting his frustration with the team’s inconsistency with the use of mild cussing.

### 3.2.7 International/ Professional Competition

One less present theme still worth noting was the mention of players moving on to play professionally after college. The able bodied stories also refer to players’ futures playing domestically in the NBA after college and internationally.

“...a brief stint in the NBA.”

Players were noted as playing in China, the Czech Republic, and Spain.

## 3.3 Research Question 1c: Framing: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball

### 3.3.1 Performance

Research question 1c explores the comparison of the wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball framing attributes employed by the sportswriters who covered them in student news sources. There were fewer performance oriented stories in the wheelchair

basketball sample; 49.4% of wheelchair articles were stories about specific games (pre-game or game stories). Over half (56.9%) of the able bodied basketball articles sampled were stories about games (see Appendix E). This is not a vast difference (Appendix I). However, the lower number of wheelchair basketball articles contributes to the framing of the sport as less serious, demanding, physical, and important than able bodied basketball.

### *3.3.2 Article Genres*

As reported above, six able bodied basketball features articles were about players' injuries. There were no injury features focusing entirely on wheelchair basketball players' injuries. There were two article genres Charity and Camp Features which were present in the wheelchair basketball sample but completely absent in the able bodied basketball sample (see Appendix I).

### *3.3.3 Professional/ International Competition*

Also both leagues were framed as stepping stones to international play but able bodied basketball articles also talk about futures playing domestically in the NBA after college. There was no mention of able bodied athletes moving on to play at the Olympic level, whereas entire articles from the wheelchair basketball sample reported the Paralympic accomplishments of their coaches and players. In summation, wheelchair basketball was more often framed as transcending national boundaries through Paralympic competition while able bodied basketball was framed as more of a stepping stone to a career in the NBA. Some able bodied players moved on to careers on the international level, but competing in the Olympics was not mentioned at all.

### *3.3.4 Attributes/ Statistics*

Both sports reference physical attributes of players, but the sportswriters for able bodied basketball are more precise and detailed when describing. This size description theme

had a much stronger presence in the able bodied basketball articles. They are framed larger than life, overpowering athletes.

“Thanks to a *big man’s* game from the *6-foot-6inch, 224 pound...*”

“The six-foot-eight McLaurin....guarding Boilermakers seven-foot center...”

The wheelchair basketball reporters rarely reference size or players’ physical attributes, and when they did, they would just refer to them as big. In only one instance the reporter referenced a player’s height when he stands up from his basketball chair. There were also scarce references to the physical conditioning of the players. Following is one:

“Junior forward Josh Rucker...didn’t come out for a single second during both games.”

Perhaps the most intensely present theme related to the framing of the players and teams as serious competitors was the obvious absence of detailed statistics in wheelchair basketball reporting. The able bodied reporters not only used statistics much more often but they also used more in-depth and detailed statistics when writing about a game. These reporters consistently used team and individual statistics to provide a more accurate depiction of the game and performances. Some articles about wheelchair basketball showed that sportswriters reported the score and no individual or team statistics at all. Another group of articles reported the score and the stats of the top performer on the team, usually only the number of points they scored. An even smaller group of wheelchair basketball articles included the most common stats like points, rebounds, and assists and sometimes even some situational references:

“...were able to get the lead up to 14 points with 6:40 left in the game.”

On the other hand, able bodied basketball articles were full of team, individual, career, and situation-specific stats. The presence of detailed statistics in able bodied articles was much stronger than in the wheelchair article sample.

These examples show consistent record of player and team performance throughout their season, careers, and history. Again this historical record of performance is not nearly as present in wheelchair basketball articles.

“...but not near his season average of 17.4 points per game.”

“Since 1986, only three Illinois teams have assisted on 50 percent of its baskets: 1994-95 (48.2 percent), 2012-13 (42.5 percent) and 2013-14 (41.8 percent)”

“...won its three pre-season games by an average of 34.3 points.”

“...the Tigers’ career leader in assists (580) and steals (196)...”

The following statistics illustrate game flow and help illustrate the game to the audience. While these types of statistics were present in wheelchair basketball articles, the presence was not as strong. Also, in terms of quality, they were not as detailed or illustrative as the game flow stats from able bodied articles.

“...starting the second half with a 14-2 run in the first four minutes...”

“...four-for-five from long range.”

“...17 steals and 38 points off turnovers.”

The able bodied sports writers also more often framed the sport as mentally demanding. The athletes’ mental performance was referenced more frequently than in the wheelchair basketball articles.

### *3.3.5 Direct Quotations*

The quotation analysis showed that able bodied athletes referenced specific recap of the games including statistics 42 times while the wheelchair basketball interviewees referenced it only 13 times. Another disparity was in the number of referents to the interviewees’ self-performance. Able bodied athletes and coaches referenced their own performance 20 times and wheelchair athletes and coaches only referenced this 5 times in the sample. Finally, wheelchair

basketball interviewees referenced strategy and preparation 53 times; this was more than twice as often as the able bodied interviewees who only referred to it 26 times (see Appendix D).

### 3.4 Research Question 2a: Metaphors: Wheelchair Basketball

Research question 2a explores the use of metaphors in the wheelchair basketball articles sampled from the school news sources. The dominant metaphor domain in wheelchair articles was the war metaphor category. The ten most populated domains are reported with examples in this section. Out of the 443 total instances of metaphor in these articles (see Appendix G) 176 were categorized as war metaphors (see Appendix C).

#### 3.4.1 War: Wheelchair

War metaphors in these instances provide conceptual mapping from one semantic source domain (wheelchair basketball) to a target domain (war). It is important to note that not all of the metaphors domains are included in this metaphor section for the wheelchair articles or the able bodied articles, but they can be found in Appendix C. The first war metaphor, *the game is a battle*, was present. Through examples like, “...*avenging* their only loss” and “...the men were victorious,” the game becomes the target domain of meaning transferred from sources associated with battle. Within the wheelchair basketball sample, one example, “...coach Ron Lykins *barks orders...*,” transfers meaning from the term “barks orders” associated with drill sergeants to the coach of the team; thus the metaphor, *the coach is a drill sergeant*, is constructed. The examples “...appealing to top *recruits...*” and “...the men’s *squad* began tournament play...” transfers meaning from military recruits to the target domain, the players, and the result is the *players are soldiers/ recruits* metaphor. The *team is a group of warships* metaphor is conveyed by terms like “...*piloted* the ‘Hawks...’” and “...first year at the *helm*.” Meaning from references to *warships* is transferred to the team’s players and coaches. Two more examples of war metaphors I found were the *players are weapons* metaphor. Through the

inclusion of these direct quotes, “...a ton of *defensive weapons* on our team...” and “Some teams have these huge *tanks* of players...,” meaning from the terms weapons and tanks is transferred to the players.

For the most part these war metaphors referred to the sport, players, and coaches. However, a unique feature article about the founder of UI’s program contained eight war metaphors, all of them referring to the disability rights movement. For example, the metaphor *the disability rights movement is war* is constructed with examples like “...the *turf battles* Nugent *fought* but never had to *serve* as his *reinforcement*” and “It was a *battle* in the Civil Rights Movement...,” which transfer meaning from military battles to the struggle for disability rights.

#### 3.4.2 Business: Wheelchair

Of the 443 metaphors in the wheelchair basketball articles, I categorized 37 of them as business or finance related metaphors. Although this secondary category is much less present than the war domain, the category is still found to have a notably strong presence. For example the *winning is profitable* metaphor is present in the tokens “...took care of *business*...” and “...*payback* against Illinois....” They transfer meaning from business success to success in the game.

#### 3.4.3 Destruction: Wheelchair

A third category also consisted of 37 tokens. The title of this category is *destruction*. The *winning is destroying the opposition* metaphor is present in the tokens “...*demolished* the University of Alabama...” and “...*dismantling* the Scots.” They transfer meaning from destruction referents to winning games against opposing teams.

#### 3.4.4 Machine: Wheelchair

The *machine* category is the fourth most populated domain, made up of 29 tokens. The *team is a machine/structure* metaphor is present in the tokens “Frogley *engineered* the team...”

and “...had to completely *rebuild*....” They transfer meaning from referents to machines and/or structures to the target team. This mechanistic meaning is also transferred to individual players through tokens like “...team members *clamped down*....” Meaning is transferred from language associated with transportation machines, especially cars, with the metaphor *players are cars*, exemplified by tokens like “Movin’ Mavs go 2-1 in pre-tournament *tune-up*” and “...gave them the green light.”

#### 3.4.5 Performance Art: Wheelchair

Three less populated metaphor domains’ token totals were all slightly over 20. These categories were *performance art*, *food*, and *racing*. The *performance art* domain is made up of 22 tokens. For example, the *players are actors* metaphor is present in the tokens “...Kraft was the *star of the show*...” and “...find their *roles*....” They transfer meaning from performance art domains to the players.

#### 3.4.6 Food: Wheelchair

The *food* domain is made up of 21 tokens. For instance, the *winning is nourishment* metaphor is present in the token “...*hungry* for a chance to repeat.” Another token in the food domain “...a new *batch* of world-class athletes...” references the *athletes are food* metaphor. In both of these examples meaning from terms normally associated with food is transferred respectively to success in the sport and the athletes themselves.

#### 3.4.7 Racing: Wheelchair

The *racing* domain is made up of 20 tokens. For example, the *Players are runners/racers* metaphor is present in the tokens “...again *paced* the Mustang offense...” and “...halftime lead and *never looked back*.” Meaning is transferred from racers to the wheelchair basketball players.

#### 3.4.8 Family: Wheelchair

Three metaphor domains' totals were between 10 and 15. These categories were *family*, *illness*, and *science*. The *family* domain is made up of 13 tokens. For instance, the *team is a family* metaphor is present in the tokens "...his real *family* is the Movin' Mavs..." and "It (the team) is a *brotherhood*..." Meaning here is transferred from family signs to the team. The *university is home* metaphor is present in the tokens "...*bringing home* another championship..." and "...*hosted* the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual..." In these cases meaning is transferred from terms related to a home to the team's university.

#### 3.4.9 Illness: Wheelchair

The *illness* domain is made up of 12 tokens. For example, the *mistakes are contagious/diseases* metaphor is present in the tokens "...turnovers *plagued*..." and "...not *immune* to cold streaks." Meaning is transferred from diseases or contagious illnesses to mistakes or poor performance.

#### 3.4.10 Science: Wheelchair

The *science* domain is made up of 11 tokens. For instance, *team performance is a chemical reaction or physical property* is present in the tokens "...the importance of team *chemistry*..." and "...gained all the *momentum* in the world..." Meaning is transferred from chemistry and physics terms to team performance.

### 3.5 Research Question 2b: Metaphors: Able Bodied Basketball

Research question 2b explores the use of metaphors in the able bodied basketball articles sampled from the school news sources. The dominant metaphor domain in able bodied articles was the war metaphor category. The ten most populated domains are also reported with corresponding examples in this section. Out of the 1,150 (see Appendix G) total instance of metaphor in these articles, 398 (see Appendix C) were categorized as war metaphors.

### 3.5.1 War: Able Bodied

War metaphors in these instances provide conceptual mapping from one semantic source domain (able bodied basketball, players, coaches, etc.) to a target domain (war). One example of a war metaphor, *the game is a battle*, was extremely present in able bodied basketball articles from the sample. Through examples like, "...surrendered six of their 17 turnovers..." and "UTA held its ground in a dominating second half," the game becomes the target domain of meaning transferred from sources associated with battle.

### 3.5.2 Business: Able Bodied

Of the 1,150 metaphors in the wheelchair basketball articles, I categorized 133 (11.6%) of them as business or finance related metaphors. For example, the *players are products/valuable commodities* metaphor is present in the tokens "...proved his worth at both ends of the court" and "How do you put a price tag on menacing an opposing big man..." They transfer meaning from terms associated with goods bought and sold to the players. Also, the *winning is profitable* metaphor is present in the tokens "They just took care of business" and "The game turned out to be as good as its advance billing..." These tokens transfer meaning from terms associated with business success and transfer it to success in the sport. Finally, the *points are money* metaphor is present in "...chipped in with 10 points" and "...cut the deficit to..." These tokens transfer meaning from the source domain, money, to the target domain, points.

### 3.5.3 Destruction: Able Bodied

A third category, *destruction*, consisted of 127 tokens. The *winning is destroying the opposition* metaphor is represented in tokens like "UTA has pulverized opponents..." and "...crushed the Maui invitational field and flattened the likes of Purdue..." Meaning is transferred from words frequently associated with destruction to the target domain, winning.

The *player is a force of nature* metaphor is present in tokens like “...an *earth shattering* dunk over Thomas Robinson” and “...came *storming* back...” Meaning is transferred from forces of nature to the players.

#### 3.5.4 Machine: Able Bodied

The *machine* category is the next most populated domain, consisting of 89 tokens. For example, the *score is a structure/building* metaphor is present in tokens like “...Scots *constructed* a 17-2 run...” and “...*built* a 9-8 lead.” In these examples terms associated with buildings or construction transfer meaning to the score of the game. Another mechanistic metaphor, the *Teams/ Players are machines* metaphor, is present in tokens like “...crowd’s intensity *fueled* him...” and “...*propelled* them past the Wildcats.” In these examples, terms commonly associated with machines transfer meaning to the players and team. Finally, the *teams/players are cars* metaphor had a noticeably strong presence in the able bodied basketball sample and was represented in tokens like “...*jumpstarted* the big Boro run...” and “...a small losing *skid*.” These tokens show meaning transferred from signs associated with cars to the teams and players.

#### 3.5.5 Racing: Able Bodied

The *racing* domain also had a strong presence in the able bodied basketball articles, and it was made up of 62 tokens. For example, the *game is a race* metaphor is present in the tokens “...team started *fast* and never *looked back*...” and “...would get the Mustangs *right back in front*...” Meaning is transferred from racing related terms to the game.

#### 3.5.6 Performance Art: Able Bodied

The domain *performance art* is made up of 60 tokens. For instance, the *game is a performance art* and *the players are actors/performers* metaphors are present in the tokens “Maverick *star* forward...” and “...look to bring that *groove* to Texas Hall...” Meaning is transferred from terms associated with performing to the game and its players. Also, the *court is*

a *stage* metaphor is present in the tokens “...grabbed the *spotlight* for the game...” and “...before they take the *stage*...” Meaning is transferred from terms usually associated with a performance stage to the basketball court.

#### 3.5.7 Journey: Able Bodied

The *journey* domain is made up of 33 total tokens. The *season/game is a journey* metaphor is present in the tokens “One of those threes *inched* Missouri *closer*...” and “...their *ticket* to the Final Four was *punched*...” Meaning is transferred from these terms associated with traveling on a journey to the basketball season and game.

#### 3.5.8 Fight/ Violence: Able Bodied

The *fight/violence* domain is made up of 30 total tokens. For example, the *player/ team is a fighter* metaphor is present in the tokens “...by *clobbering* UW-Stout...” and “...the Tide *fought hard*...” Meaning is transferred from terms associated with violent fighters to the players and the team.

#### 3.5.9 Temperature: Able Bodied

The *temperature* domain is made up of 24 tokens. For instance, the *cold is negative performance* metaphor is represented through the tokens “The Illini went *cold*, missing nine...” and “...*cold* streaks.” The more present *hot is positive performance* metaphor is represented in the tokens “...provided a *spark* to the team’s *hot* start...” and “...shot a *blistering* 72 percent...” These metaphors transfer meaning from high and low temperature to positive and negative game performance respectively.

#### 3.5.10 Law: Able Bodied

The *law* domain is made up of 23 tokens. For example, the metaphors *referees are officers of the law* and *rules are laws* are present in the tokens “...after being *issued* a technical

foul...” and “...set an *illegal* screen....” Meaning is transferred from legal terminology to referees and the rules.

#### *Science: Able Bodied*

The *science* domain is made up of 23 tokens, too. For instance, the *team performance is chemistry* metaphor is present in the tokens “Saw UTA’s offense continue to *fizzle*” and “...an extra *dose* of toughness....” Meaning is transferred from chemistry terminology to the teams’ performance.

### 3.6 Research Question 2c: Metaphors: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball

Research question 2c compares the metaphors in wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball articles from online student news sources. The grand total of metaphors for each sport, 443 in wheelchair basketball articles and 1,150 in able bodied articles, illustrates a large difference in the metaphors used by sports writers to report news about the athletes, programs, coaches, games, and sports. Although the able bodied articles were written with more than double (2.59 times) the metaphoric language, the dominant metaphor domain for both sports is *war*. It is important to note that *business*, *destruction*, and *machine* referent metaphors respectively followed *war* as the most populated domains for both sports’ samples. However, the theme of highly disproportionate frequencies of metaphor use, in favor of able bodied basketball, is also present in these four most dominant domains. The only domain in which wheelchair basketball articles produced a higher frequency was the *family* category (13-7 tokens). Implications of these results are discussed below.

### 3.7 Research Question 3a: Images: Wheelchair Basketball

Research question 3a explores the images accompanying the sampled articles and how they portray wheelchair basketball players, coaches, and the sport itself.

### 3.7.1 Athletic Action

Most of the images (62%) depicted *athletic action*. The images from 16.3% of the sampled images depicted players as *dressed but not in action*. The photos coded as *portraits* and *non-sport setting* each represented 10.9% of the wheelchair basketball image sample (see Appendix F).

### 3.7.2 Teammates Images

The team image analysis showed that 62% of the wheelchair basketball image sample depicted wheelchair athletes with teammates. Of the 57 *teammate* images, only 37 of them depicted these teammates in *athletic action*. This is 64.9% of the teammate images and 40.2% of the entire sample (see Appendix F).

### 3.7.3 Reused Images

One theme with a strong presence was the reuse of wheelchair basketball images accompanying articles. I noted seven instances in which images were repeated in the sample. One photo accompanied three different articles over the course of two different seasons. Thus, at least one of the photos was taken at an event separate from that which the article represents.

### 3.7.4 Composition

Other themes were not as strongly present in the sample but are patterns worth noting. Some of the photo journalists were very creative when composing the wheelchair basketball images. For instance, a photo of a team huddle was taken from a low angle with players' wheels framing the shot in the foreground (see Appendix M). Perspectives higher than the athletes were more common than these progressive, low angle shots. Another theme was subjects (athletes) in action, but they were wearing non-sport frame glasses. Finally, two images depicted athletes who had fallen and are working to get back up, one from an equal angle and one from a very high perspective (see Appendix L).

### 3.8 Research Question 3b: Images: Able Bodied Basketball

Research question 3b explores the images accompanying the sampled articles and how they portray able bodied basketball players, coaches, and the sport itself.

#### 3.8.1 Athletic Action

A very high percentage of the images (82.6%) depicted *athletic action*. The images from 10% of the sampled images depicted players as *dressed but not in action*. The photos coded as *portraits* represented 9.7% of the able bodied basketball images sampled. The images of *non-sport settings* represented 4.3% of the sample (see Appendix F).

#### 3.8.2 Teammates Images

The team image analysis showed that 69.6% of the able bodied basketball image sample depicted athletes with teammates. Of the 64 *teammate* images, 59 of them depicted these teammates in *athletic action*. This is 92.2% of the teammate images and 64.1% of the entire sample (see Appendix B).

#### 3.8.3 Composition

A theme with a very strong presence in the sample was photos of players playing competitive strong defense. An example is a player making a move to dribble past a defender. Another common scenario is a player shooting the ball with a defender jumping to block the shot. Also, in *athletic action* photos, the basketball itself was almost always in the picture. The perspective was frequently from a low angle looking upward toward the athletes.

### 3.9 Research Question 3c: Images: Comparisons- Wheelchair and Able Bodied Basketball

#### 3.9.1 Athletic Action

Research question 3c compares the images accompanying wheelchair basketball and able bodied basketball articles from online student news sources. The athletic activity depiction portion of the image analysis demonstrated a significant difference in the frequency of pictures

showing the athletes and coaches in action. Images of able bodied athletes depicted the subjects of the photo in athletic action in over 20% more images than in the images of wheelchair athletes (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the *athletic action* shots of able bodied basketball depict more physical and competitive action (see Appendix K). The strong theme of up-close and physical defensive play was also more present in the able bodied sample of images. On the other hand, the wheelchair basketball *athletic action* shots depicted athletes engaged in a huddle during a game or on the court with no defenders in sight. Some of these images of less physical action were reused within the sample, accompanying more than one article. It is important to note these duplications are included in the quantitative data.

### 3.9.2 *Teammates Images*

Finally, the able bodied players were pictured in 11 more instances with teammates. They are more frequently shown interacting with each other especially in *athletic action* shots. Of the 64 images of able bodied players interacting with teammates, 59 of the photos (92.2%) were *athletic action* photos. On the other hand, of the 57 wheelchair basketball images depicting players with teammates, only 37 (64.9%) were *athletic action shots*. Thus, almost 30% more of the able bodied teammate images depicted the teammates in *athletic action* (see Appendix B).

### 3.9.3 *Composition*

Images depicting wheelchair basketball players in non-sport settings were more than 2.5 times as present as those depicting able-bodied players (see Appendix F). Qualitative findings echo this disparity in the level of athletic competitiveness depicted. I found the less present theme of images of athletes in action wearing non-sport framed glasses in wheelchair basketball images was not present at all in the able bodied basketball sample. The basketball itself was more present in the able bodied images. This fundamental element of sports photograph

composition depicts a more competitive scene, thus adding more drama, and makes the shot more interesting to the audience.

## Chapter 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Discussion: Framing RQs

Previous studies suggest that the media frames wheelchair sports as a less serious competition than able bodied basketball. The strong presence of the feature style wheelchair basketball articles implies that stories about the athletes, their disabilities, and their life story are more newsworthy than stories about their performance in games. Frequently framing these college athletes as subjects of a biographical narrative devalues their athletic accomplishments and performance. These findings support those from previous studies which primarily examined Paralympic and Olympic coverage (Braye et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2012; Golden, 2003; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Chang et al., 2011). The framing of these stories as triumph over tragedy affects the audience's perceptions of disability (Gamson et al., 1992; Price et al., 1997; Reese et al., 2001; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

#### *4.1.1 Supercrip*

Previous research found the supercrip narrative a common media model when reporting about Paralympics and other disability sport events (Hardin & Hardin & Hardin, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003). However, through categorizing the articles of the current sample by style (game, pre-game, player feature, team feature, etc.), I discovered an interesting pattern in the salience of such stereotypical frames. While I discovered a strong presence of these frames in feature style articles, which supports previous findings, I found no instances of the supercrip narrative in the wheelchair basketball articles related to the specific tournaments or games.

Without further knowledge of these student news sources and student journalists, it is difficult to interpret these findings. However, there are key differences between the reporters from the current sample and the Paralympic/ Olympic reporters other than the obvious level of reporting experience. Current college courses, especially in journalism are discussing issues of

race, gender, sexuality, and disability more often. I would also posit that younger, college-age generations may also have a more progressive interest in issues of equality.

#### 4.1.2 *“A.B. Normal Crip” and “Content Crip” Media Models*

In addition to this previously researched supercrip model, my results revealed two new media models used by student reporters to represent people with disabilities in feature style articles. First, the “A.B. normal crip” mold is filled when the reporter goes out of their way in order to frame the subject as normal or just one of the guys. Implicitly, by explaining that despite having a disability the person is normal, the reporter suggests that disability is somehow abnormal.

The second narrative, the “content crip,” frames the athlete as a person who is content with their situation and happy to be disabled. Again, implicitly, just by including information about this person being content with their disability suggests that a story about a person with a disability, who is actually happy when a normal person would be suffering, is newsworthy or momentous. Because stereotype schemas are activated primarily by implicit stimuli, these media models are especially powerful (Ramasubramanian, 2007).

Although these media models are stereotypical representations of people with disabilities, both the “content crip” and the “A.B. normal crip” seem to be attempts at narrowing the gap of normality and equality. Although these two media models are stereotypes, their roots seem to be grounded in a sort of strive toward equality and normality. The “A.B. normal crip” media model seems motivated to directly address the stereotype of the abnormal person, and the “content crip” model’s likely motivation is to present disability in positive frame by again directly rejecting the notion that disability is a tragedy. This paradigm shift toward progressive narratives was strongly present in college newspapers and is likely a result of the open mindedness to social progress of the younger collegiate communities. The argument can be

made that these models are appropriate catalysts for social change. However, I maintain that through such explicit contradiction of the stereotypes, the narrative is counterproductive and implicitly perpetuates such stereotypes.

#### *4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics*

Statistics in sports articles are another valuable sports performance reporting tool to frame athletes. Statistics help sports reporters make performance related comparisons and summarize sporting events. While direct quotations and game scores provide enough information to create a game story or player feature, statistics can provide a more clear and accurate depiction of athletic performances (Bruce, 1998). Previous attribute framing research suggests that because these performance descriptive statistics are less salient in the communicating text of wheelchair basketball articles, the athletes are less frequently perceived as possessing the level of athleticism attributed to able bodied athletes (Entman, 1993; Levin et al., 1998).

#### *4.1.4 Wheelchair Basketball Language*

Another interesting theme was the use of wheelchair basketball specific language. Throughout the entire able bodied basketball sample, basketball specific jargon and strategy referents were extremely common. When it came to the wheelchair articles, jargon specific to the sport and its own strategies was far scarcer. Almost every instance noted was part of a direct quote from a player or coach.

*“They were a pretty quick, big team, and we’re kind of a smaller younger team, so just getting up on chairs and stopping chairs was probably the biggest thing we did...”*

*“...we have been sagging a lot and we don’t chair people up...”*

*“...will allow us to put a versatile lineup on the court because of his classification and talent...”*

“We just got to be out there hands in faces and stopping chairs...”

“...it’s all about chair positioning...”

If reporters took more time to grow accustomed to the sport and culture they could contribute these sport-specific referents rather than relying entirely on the players’ and coaches’ insight. The direct quotation analysis showed most of the strategy and preparation related referents from wheelchair basketball articles came directly from players. This theme likely suggests a lack of reporter knowledge of the sport or absence from the game or event entirely. However, the attempt was clearly made to include information about the strategic planning and preparation of the wheelchair basketball players and coaches. The comparatively high frequency of direct quotes about strategy and preparation in wheelchair basketball articles shows what the writers attempted to compensate for their lack insight by including coaches’ and players’ own analysis.

#### *4.1.5 International/ Professional Competition*

Despite the history of marginalization of wheelchair basketball, in comparison to previous research of professional news sources’ Paralympic and other disability sports coverage, the current study’s sample of student news sources exhibited some progressive components (Braye et al., 2013; Davis et. al, 2012; Golden, 2003; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Chang et al., 2011). For instance, many reporters referenced and recognized athletes for their accomplishments on the international level in the Paralympics, Parapan (the regional qualifying event for the Paralympics), U23 teams, and other European and international club teams. The content of the articles also included content about domestic men’s, women’s, and junior’s leagues which form the NWBA. These references illustrate the dynamics and magnitude of the wheelchair basketball movement and demonstrate to the audience that the sport is played on all levels. Also, although drastically marginalized, compared to the media visibility of able bodied college basketball, sampling over 300 articles in only a five season time

period representing seven teams would not be possible for any other leagues in the nation. Collegiate wheelchair basketball is ahead of the national curve compared to other leagues, but this also raises a red flag in desperation for wheelchair sports journalism on all levels.

While these are all signs of progress both for the sport and the media framing of the sport as a progressive, international sport, in comparison to the able bodied basketball, there is a clear gap in financial opportunity in wheelchair sports. After college, there seems to be no opportunity to make money or even progress on the elite level of the sport without going overseas or reaching the pinnacle, the Paralympic level. Able bodied players have opportunities to play in the NBA or overseas for well-paying, many times extremely high-paying, careers. The international aspect of wheelchair basketball is thus more salient in reports because, other than making the USA Paralympic team, there are no real chances to make money domestically and hardly any opportunity to develop skills on an elite level unless players play internationally.

#### *4.1.6 Disability Origin*

The origin of athletes' disabilities was a present theme in 11 of the wheelchair basketball articles. Some of the writers placed stronger emphasis on the origin of the disability by leading into the article with the referent or referring to it throughout the feature style pieces. Other reporters did not mention disability at all. One story about a player's journey from his home Japan to play wheelchair basketball never references the player's disability. Our pilot study's focus group analysis showed that audiences are very interested in the origin of the athletes' disability (Eldridge & Watson, 2013). Feature stories are a more appropriate platform on which to report on this topic. The presence of disability origin referents in game and pre-game stories was present but not strongly. Reporting about the disability origin in a game story awkwardly takes attention away from the athletic performance. However, the specific limitations of a player's disability and/or how they adapt and essentially master their disability are

interesting and informative aspects of the game. By explaining these physical differences in terms of performance, sportswriters can help progress their own profession and wheelchair sports in general.

Some reporters did attempt to explain the classification of athletes based on their body's level of function, another unique aspect of wheelchair basketball. One particularly unique story about three teammates who were coincidentally each injured in motorcycle accidents and shared a continued passion for bikes demonstrated an appropriate instance to report the origins of their disabilities.

#### 4.2 Discussion: Metaphor RQs

I found the most dominant or 'ruling metaphor' of the study in both sports to be war (Kress, 2010). However through the metaphor analysis, it was very clear that the able bodied basketball domains of the most salient metaphors were almost always more populated than the wheelchair basketball domains (Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2005). Two exceptions are also discussed in this section. Based on previous research of metaphors' semiotic potential or 'meaning potential,' I am not only positing that the greater salience of these metaphors continue to reinforce the competitive, strong, masculine, and serious identity of able bodied basketball and its athletes. I also posit that the great disparity in the metaphor use in each sport's sample naturally reflects social attitudes of disability and disability sport.

Many of the ruling metaphor domains found in the current study correspond with previous metaphor analyses of sports media. Sports fans, writers, analysts, broadcasters, and the athletes themselves refer to signs of their own lexicon. This sport oriented language has been referred to by scholars as sporting lingo, sportspeak, sporting lexicon, and the more word playful, sportuguese. In his qualitative study of "predominant types of metaphorical convention," Segrave (1997) explored metaphor use, specifically in football and baseball reporting, and found

a strong presence of some of the metaphor domains in the current study, especially violence and machine (mechanistic) metaphors. In his “masculinist analysis” he also notes the presence of war (warrior), business (finance), art, and animal metaphors in sports writing (Segrave, 1997). His interpretation of the presence of these categories helps make connections to implications of the same domains from the current that were more populated in the able bodied basketball sample.

The ruling war metaphors are tools used by authors describe able bodied athletes as warriors and their opponents as enemies. The mechanistic metaphors metaphorically transform well-oiled performance machines and devices into basketball players. The performance art metaphors paint a picture of athletes as skillful artists who create a beautiful performance on stage for audiences. Violence metaphors semantically turn players into killers seeking revenge through the destruction of their enemies. By much more frequently using these metaphors in able bodied articles I posit that these metaphors begin to transfer these said meanings.

The terms within these metaphors change over time. For instance the once more salient “the player ran out of *steam*” was used to note that a player was getting tired has changed over time with industrial technology to the more contemporary “the player is *gassed*” or “low on *fuel*.” Though the words used have changed, the overarching *player is a machine* remains consistent (Segrave, 1997). Exploration of these changes in signs through history strengthens the claim that metaphors reflect our reality.

What do these metaphors in sports writing reveal about our culture and society? Segrave (1997) posits that the salience of these metaphors in sporting context exposes our masculinist society’s “quest for existential control” (p. 218). The language of machine and violence, for instance, “... reflect a male view of the world, impersonal and technical with a focus on the other” (p.215). The disparity in metaphor use between the two sports reflects society’s marginalization of people with disabilities (M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004; Longmore & Umansky,

2001; Hehir, 2005). Segrave (1997) also explains that the ruling metaphors of sports are often the language of control of environment and nature. This notion was reinforced by the current study, especially by the high frequency of nature and destruction related metaphors of the able bodied basketball sample. It is through social constructs like sports that we can triumph over nature and reclaim our desired sense of control over our environment and mortality.

The disparity in metaphor salience found in the current study in combination with previous research of disability in the media may also reveal some insight into the media's representation of wheelchair athletes (Braye et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2012; Golden, 2003; Segrave, 1997; Thomas & Smith, 2003; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2003; Von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Chang et al., 2011). The notion of playing a sport despite a disability satisfies the need to articulate control of the environment or triumph over it (M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004; Harnett, 2000; Schantz & Gilbert, 2001; Segrave, 1997). The athletic performance of the players and teams consequently falls by the wayside as a secondary theme of the article, overshadowed by the athletes' ability to conquer the forces of nature by simply *playing* basketball. It becomes unnecessary to emphasize athletic performance through metaphor. Through applying Segrave's argument that metaphors sometimes represent a human need to control nature, the act of simply *playing* basketball in a wheelchair and with a disability itself becomes the source domain of its own metaphor, *playing wheelchair basketball is immortality*.

The minimal use of metaphors in wheelchair basketball also suggests a view on disability and athletes with disabilities contradictory to that of able bodied athletes. Thus athletes with disabilities are characterized as they represent a less masculinist identity (Segrave, 1997). The results of the current metaphor analysis support previous claims that the sport is viewed as inferior, less serious, or less relevant.

The *family* and *food* domains are the only categories more populated by referents from the wheelchair basketball sample. The ratio of *food* tokens from wheelchair basketball articles to able bodied basketball articles is 21:20. The *family* domain, however, revealed a more significant difference (13:7) between the two sports – with the occurrence being nearly double. When examining these results within the framework of a traditional public/private dichotomy, the nature of reporters' coverage, through the use of alternative metaphor source domains, places the wheelchair basketball players in the position of feminine (Harp & Tremayne, 2006). This is not to be confused with the biological term female but the social construction of feminine. The ideology at work here is the "patriarchal notion of public/private dichotomy" as it relates with male/female (p.249). This idea suggests that women belong in and are accountable for the private sphere of life including home and family responsibilities. The public sphere is made up of commercial organizations, politics, and government. All of these spheres are understood to be dominated by men and are therefore conceptualized as masculine.

The difference between the wheelchair and able bodied basketball *family* domain is not nearly as large as the disparity between more masculine or public related categories like *business* (133:37). However, the fact that the private sphere associated *family* category was one of the only categories out of over 20 with more tokens in the wheelchair sample suggests the presence of this public/private dichotomy in the wheelchair sports media. This dichotomy helps to illustrate and explain the marginal coverage of disability sports reinforced by the everyday experiences of people with disabilities in the same way that the concept explains the marginalization of women (Harp & Tremayne, 2006).

Language, especially metaphors, constructs identities and realities of the athletes. They also revealed some of the disability ideologies present in western culture. Metaphors are often used by writers to enhance the quality of their work. The great disparity of metaphor use in favor

of the able bodied articles not only helps liven the reports and make them more interesting to read, but it also constructs realities about each of the sports, athletes, and coaches. Able bodied athletes in the study are more often framed metaphorically far more often than wheelchair basketball players as warriors who to battle their enemies to the death, serious businessmen, destructive forces of nature, primal beasts who are hungry and out for blood; who are on a journey, a race to become the most well engineered and fueled machine; to be crowned as basketball royalty. Through this comparative metaphor analysis it is clear that wheelchair basketball is not held to these same standards by media and society; it is a less serious, masculinist, physical, competitive, and rewarding sport.

#### 4.3 Discussion: Image RQs

The image analysis supported previous claims that wheelchair and disability sport is marginalized (Buysee & Borcharding, 2010; Hardin et al., 2001). The analysis of the activity level and attire of the subjects revealed a strong theme with the able bodied basketball players more frequently depicted in athletic action than the wheelchair basketball players. Another strong theme among the athletic action shots of both sports was the depiction of physical, intense, competitive action in able bodied basketball images. For example, an able bodied offensive player almost always was depicted with at least one defender playing close defense and sometimes even making physical contact (see Appendix K). On the other hand, wheelchair basketball players from the sample were more likely to be pictured more close-up, cropping defenders out of the frame, and they are casually dribbling the ball down the court (see Appendix J).

The minimal intensity depicted in these photos and general lower frequency of athletic action shots can have important effects on the audience perception of the wheelchair athletes and their sports. Roland Barthes highlighted the poses of subjects as important connotators of

meaning. There is an unwritten “dictionary” of poses, and their definitions are known by everyone who is exposed to mass media (Van Leeuwen, 2005). For instance, a scowling player drenched in sweat, dribbling the ball past a defender connotes intensity, aggression, physical exertion, and serious competition. Photos like this only signify because of the existent wealth of stereotypical attitudes of the audience (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

In addition to poses, Barthes highlights objects as the second important element of image meaning connotation (Van Leeuwen, 2005). Capturing moments involving the ball itself, for instance, can contribute to the composition of sports photographs. These objects are an extension of the players’ action. Inclusion of the ball in shots helps clarify these actions and dramatize the moment. The ball can connote a variety of sometimes opposing meaning, including conflict, value, success, and failure (Krages, 2005). In the current sample of images, the ball was much more often included in the composition of able bodied basketball action photos. This important element of sport photograph composition made the able bodied pictures more dramatic and interesting (Krages, 2005). The wheelchair basketball photos, which often lack this key component, are consequently bleated of life, action, and competitiveness. The remains are photos of the stereotypical less active, less physical, less serious, less competitive wheelchair athlete.

The wheelchair itself is another semiotic resource with great meaning potential, especially in the mode of photography. The chair can connote sometimes opposing meaning depending on context and perception. For instance a wheelchair can symbolize both freedom and confinement. Traditionally a wheelchair is an object of confinement restricted mobility, especially from the able bodied perspective (Barking & Dagenham Centre, 2001). However, in a photograph of a wheelchair basketball player, tilting up and shooting the ball on one wheel to create distance from the defender, the chair becomes an extension of the player’s body,

enhancing his or her freedom and individual agency. The current sample, though not completely deprived of more action-packed depictions, was primarily made up of less action-packed shots.

Finally, distance from the subject and the angle of the shot connote meaning within a photograph (Harrison, 2003; Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2005). Visual social semiotics is a tool for analyzing images in the media. Point of view is often a significant aspect of a photograph. For instance, depicting the subject of a photo at a high vertical angle from the viewer glorifies the subject by emphasizing grandeur and power. This is how the able bodied athletes were more frequently depicted. The wheelchair athletes were usually depicted as level with the viewer and to a lesser extent from the bird's eye view. Visual social semioticians would likely read this "level" perspective as suggesting that the viewer see things from the wheelchair athletes' perspectives (Harrison, 2003; Kress, 2010). The bird's eye view of wheelchair athletes depicts them as vulnerable and less powerful, and this reinforces the narrow stereotypical idea of people with disabilities as objects of pity (Harrison, 2003; Wedgewood, 2014). One photograph in particular connotes this idea. It was taken from a very high angle, and the focal subjects of the shot had fallen and were lying face down on the court (see Appendix L). Only two images from the entire sample were taken from a lower point of view. This angle noticeably empowers the athletes depicted (see Appendix M).

In a previous study of the photographic representation of athletes with disabilities in *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, of 7,092 photos coded, only four depicted people with disabilities with their teammates (Hardin et al., 2001). Even though I found a much higher frequency of images of wheelchair basketball players with teammates, the current study partially supports the previous findings. Only about 7% fewer wheelchair basketball images were depicted with their teammates in comparison to the able bodied athlete images.

However, further examination of the results revealed that compared to the wheelchair basketball sample, a much higher frequency of the able bodied *teammate* shots were also *action shots*. Thus, able bodied athletes were depicted competing together, while many of the wheelchair basketball images depicted the athletes posing for team pictures (see Appendix B). The isolation or segregation of wheelchair athletes was not nearly as strong of a theme as in the previous SIK study. This can be attributed to the current study's focus on a team sport, whereas SIK covers a variety of individual and team sports. However, the current study partially supports the previous finding that wheelchair athletes are not team *players*. The fact that able bodied athletes were far more frequently depicted as competing with their teammates contributes to the theme consistent in every section the study—the theme of framing wheelchair athletes as less competitive and active teammates.

The theme of reused images was strongly present in the wheelchair basketball sample. This seems to suggest neglect of the inferiorly perceived sport. The able bodied basketball photos almost always depicted a moment from the same event covered in the article while these repeated wheelchair basketball images depicted previous events, sometimes from previous seasons. An extreme case of this unrelated image theme, although not a reused image, involved an image of an able bodied softball player in the outfield accompanying an article about the wheelchair basketball team's recent tournament (see Appendix N). This was the only instance of such a careless mistake, but it did contribute to a strong pattern of neglect of wheelchair basketball photo journalism.

In conclusion, Barthes considered the act of looking at photographs similar to the act of looking into reality. Although the moment captured is smaller, flattened, and sometimes drained of color, he considered photos to be providers of "...point-by-point correspondence with what was in front of the camera..." when the shot was taken (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 38). If more

sports photographers focused on capturing the intense, cohesive, physical, competitive moments in a game of wheelchair basketball, the images would likely have a stronger, more progressive effect on the realities constructed about athletes with disabilities.

#### 4.4 Additional Findings

It is important to note that writers often merged women's wheelchair basketball game stories with the men's into a single sports report. Intercollegiate wheelchair basketball tournaments are generally a meeting of all of the teams who have the resources to attend the particular event. Due to exclusion from Title IX of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, wheelchair sports budgets are far more limited than their able bodied counterparts. Most programs travel with a men's and a women's team to the same tournaments. Expensive charter buses are packed with two wheelchairs per player: a day chair to get around and a sports chair to compete. Because the teams operate on such a limited budget, these events are organized to hold as many games as possible so teams can play each other multiple times during their limited meetings.

The joint tournaments provide reporters with the temptation to lump men's and women's wheelchair basketball games or tournament reports together, thus reducing the total number of wheelchair basketball articles. The quality of content also suffers. The teams (men's and women's) experience different outcomes and storylines over the course of a tournament. Condensing them into one article drastically limits the likelihood of a thorough and accurate report. Therefore messages about each team's unique identity and performance are sacrificed.

Although the current study does not focus on gender discrimination, it is important to note that this "dual coverage" is rarely ever equal. One team, usually the women's team, receives significantly less thorough coverage and is mentioned at the end of the article. These findings support previous studies that show that female athletes' talent, performance, and

accomplishments are trivialized (Kian et al., 2009). The current findings also support the widely held notions of women's sports media research which explores the marginalization, subordination, and identifying female athletes as a category of "others" who are dominated and controlled by men (Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). In only one instance from the sample, the men's coverage was shorter and appeared later in the report. This dual-sport-article trend was non-existent in the able bodied game recaps and pre-game articles from the current study. This is at least partially a result of the able bodied teams' superior financial resources and dominant social position.

#### 4.5 Limitations

Time was a limiting factor for some of the content analyses, especially the coding images. The current study only coded for athletic action and team presence. I did not quantify elements of composition like angle of power, distance, and focus (Kress, 2010). Also, correlations between text and the image chosen are important to fields of visual and linguistic social semiotics, but such a qualitative analysis was not quantified (Harrison, 2003).

As previously mentioned, wheelchair basketball is drastically underrepresented in the media. Some of the student news source online databases were very limited when it came to the wheelchair basketball articles. Here is a list of the article source breakdown by season for the two Missouri publications.

'10-'11: *The Maneater*-2; *The Columbia Missourian*-3 articles

'11-'12: *The Maneater*-2; *The Columbia Missourian*-3 articles

'12-'13: *The Maneater*-3; *The Columbia Missourian*-2 articles

'13-'14: *The Maneater*-3 *The Columbia Missourian*- 1 articles

The UI and Missouri samples were short by one wheelchair basketball article each. UWW was missing two and the UA was missing 11 from the target sample. All combined there was a shortage of 15 wheelchair basketball articles from online archives.

It may be possible to supplement these shortages through access of physical copies of the student news sources. However this alternative was hindered by geographic and financial limitations. A more representative sample may have been achieved with resources to travel to the schools' archives or purchase scans of articles and sample from the print editions

The scope of this study was limited to men's collegiate wheelchair basketball. Although gender related themes were noted there was not a strong focus on the marginalization of women's wheelchair basketball players. There was also not a focus on other team and individual collegiate sports. Disability sports outside of the scope of the current study include men's and women's wheelchair tennis and wheelchair track. The sexuality of the athletes was also not considered.

#### 4.6 Future Research

If they want to play professionally, wheelchair basketball players from the USA must play overseas. A qualitative exploration of wheelchair basketball or other disability sports media coverage in European and other professional leagues could provide an interesting look into different social constructions of the sport and athletes.

The current study was limited to content and textual analysis of college news sources. These results at least partially supported previous studies that found a trend of marginalization of wheelchair sports when compared to able bodied sports. This trend was noted with examination of the amount of coverage and the nature of the coverage. The next logical step is to examine the question of *why* wheelchair sports are marginalized. The research field would benefit from in-depth and focus group interviews.

The current study qualitatively notes a positive correlation between amount of articles one reporter wrote and the performance focus, thoroughness, and overall quality of that coverage. Previous studies, including the pilot study, have interviewed student reporters and editors, players and coaches, and the audience, who all have different perspectives on this issue. A similar approach to the study of collegiate wheelchair basketball media would be beneficial to the exploration of social constructs of disability. The reporter perspective can provide insight into the resources that are available to them for reporting, their level of knowledge of the game, experiences with athletes and coaches, as well as why they stopped reporting wheelchair sports news or why they continue to do so. It would also be beneficial to interview them about the content of wheelchair sports in comparison to able bodied sports. Some of the themes from the current study can guide these future interviews.

The current examination of student news sources provided a small portion of a foundation for future research of collegiate wheelchair basketball. Communication technology continues to advance, and social media is frequently used by teams, organizations, and audiences to produce and consume information. Further studies of collegiate wheelchair basketball in broadcast media, documentaries, film, television, and other forms of media can also contribute to disability sports media scholarship.

Not only are women wheelchair basketball players marginalized even more than the men in the media, but they are also under represented in disability media scholarship. This calls for closer and further examination of the portrayal of women with disabilities in the media. Previous studies have focused on how able bodied women, especially athletes, are sexualized in the media (Bernstein, 2002; Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004). The paradigm would benefit from examining if, how, and why the women's wheelchair basketball coverage is different. A similar comparison to men's wheelchair sports would also help progress the body of research.

Wheelchair sports programs are increasingly awarded sizable government funded grants to support disabled veterans who play sports. It would be interesting to study the influence these players have on the nature and quantity of media coverage of teams made up partially and entirely of veterans with disabilities.

The coverage of different types of disability can provide insight into how society views these disabilities. A future study can examine the newsworthiness of types of disabilities and length of time living with disability, whether disabled from birth, during childhood, or later in life. How often are the different types of disabilities portrayed? Also, insight into how they are portrayed and how they project themselves to the media outlets would also help progress the discourse. Sports coverage provides a platform on which to study these differences in coverage.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

Guided by the framing and transactional theories, the current study posits that the framing of able bodied and wheelchair basketball in student media has powerful effects on social constructions and readers' schemas associated with disability and wheelchair sports. The way readers process and understand related texts in the future is consequently affected, and stereotypical notions are perpetuated. The current study supports disability media scholarship showing that people with disabilities are marginalized as inferior "others" in the mass media. The sport was comparatively framed as less physical, lacking intensity, less important, and more recreational than the elite superior skill level of able bodied collegiate basketball. However, qualitative and quantitative results also revealed some progressive elements in the student news sources. For instance, while the supercrip media model was present in the current sample of feature articles, the narrative was generally absent from the wheelchair basketball pregame and games recap stories.

Reasonable mass communication resources are especially important for raising awareness of such a marginalized athletic community. While NCAA sanctioned sports are often afforded these resources, wheelchair basketball remains marginalized as a “club” or “recreation” sport. Title IX was implemented to prohibit discrimination in federally assisted programs on the basis of gender. Female and male wheelchair athletes remain excluded from such regulations and are left to fight for the right to the educational and activity program benefits afforded to able bodied athletes. With a fraction of the resources provided to able bodied athletes, collegiate wheelchair sports would benefit from more consistent quality media resources like photographers and writers.

Reporters from the sample allude to and sometimes make a blatant plea for fair representation of the wheelchair basketball. In an editorial about the underrepresentation of sports on campus, including wheelchair basketball, the writer addresses the issue, “...it can be easy to slip into that mindset that that UW-W is just a football school but that does a disservice to the great work that gets done on other parts of our campus.” Another writer acknowledges the marginalization of their school’s championship caliber wheelchair basketball team, women’s soccer, volleyball, and rugby teams, declaring that they “...don’t get enough love from the student body as they should.”

While the student body or the federal government has the ability to begin making changes, other parties involved should remain conscious of the mass media and language’s power to construct reality. Without the reasonable accommodations able bodied sports enjoy, collegiate disability sports’ opportunity for growth is stifled. Hidden behind walls of discrimination, the community struggles to raise awareness and attain equally representative coverage.

The media visibility of the sports was not a focal point of the current study, but lack of wheelchair basketball coverage was very apparent. School news sources covered most of the able bodied games from the season (including pre- and postseason games), rarely missing a game. Online archive wheelchair basketball searches produced much more limited results. Even though game stories and feature style articles were included, nine seasons worth of searches were still unable to satisfy the five articles per season sample size. Based on the findings from studies on media coverage of women's sports, not only does the invisibility promote disregard instead of awareness of the sport, an implicit message of inferiority is also sent to the audience (Huffman et al., 2004; Melvin, 1996; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004).

A similar theme of disregard toward wheelchair athlete coverage was present in image analysis. News sources recycled images while able bodied articles were accompanied by a photo directly relevant to the content of the article. There were no instances of repeated images coverage neglect in the able bodied basketball article sample. If the reporter were not covering games they wrote full features about player injuries or a coach's latest popularity poll on campus.

The results of the metaphor analysis and the direct quotation analysis also suggested a disregard toward disability sport. The reporters used much less descriptive and performance related language in wheelchair basketball articles. When they did include more performance and strategy related language, it was often within direct quotes from players and coaches. These trends suggest either a reflection of stereotypical notions, a lack of effort, passion, knowledge, and awareness of the sport they are covering, or any combination of explanations. However, again, resources also play a role in the quality of the coverage. Reporters do not always have access to thorough information about the game like statistics simply because this sort of

personnel is not always afforded to the wheelchair basketball teams. They are sometimes not able to travel with teams to attend the games at all because of team budget cuts.

This is not to say that pouring a thick layer of money on the issue and assembling a team of dedicated reporters are the only solutions or even solutions at all. If the disabled community continues to be framed as inferior and marginalized, especially in the media, no amount of money can purchase equality. Athletes and coaches in the disability sport community also have a responsibility to recognize these stereotypical frames and how to avoid contributing to them in interviews and other interactions with the media.

The media is constructing a reality of people with disability as objects of pity, inactivity, other than normal, supercrips, evil avengers, content crips, A.B. normal crips, etc. The argument can be made that these models are appropriate vehicles for social change. However, I maintain that through such explicit contradiction of the stereotypes the narrative essentially overcompensates and implicitly perpetuates such stereotypes and damages the community's chance progress toward equality. When audiences, including the athletes themselves, conform to these media constructed realities these ideologies are reinforced.

Finally, according to the transactional model, the audience is also responsible for reading critically and with a discerning eye not just wheelchair sports articles but any mass media source. Kress (2010) offers audiences an alternative to conforming to the role of media consumers. Subjecting media messages to critique allows consumers the opportunity to challenge and refuse the imposition of power (Kress, 2010). Thus critique becomes a catalyst for the shift from consumer to agent of change.

#### *4.7.1 Wheelchair Basketball Reporting Suggestions*

Wheelchair basketball sportswriters who are less familiar with the sport and the surrounding disability culture face many challenges. It can be very difficult for someone who is

not immersed in disability culture to understand why some of these stereotypes should be avoided. In some cases, supercrip narratives, for instance, are the only media stories journalists have been exposed to. It is important to note that the reporters are not always making conscious selections of these archetypes. These very powerful and inspirational pieces are popular and easily emulated. Simply put, audiences love these stories and they make them feel good.

Reporters without heightened awareness of and exposure to the sport and disability sports culture and are probably more likely to focus on and glorify the fact that the athletes can play basketball despite their disabilities rather than their elite performances. Thus, unknowingly, reporters project these stereotypes on the athletes and damage the competitive spirit of the sport and take away from what the athletes actually work and play for. Once reporters begin to immerse themselves as a wheelchair basketball beat reporter, they will likely start to see that it is in fact the elite skills, performance, and rigorous training regimens that are inspirational. Again this is not to say that disability should be ignored. Instead it should be embraced as a unique dynamic of the sport to report about and pull readers into the story.

It is important for journalists, especially in traditional game recaps, to relate the type of disability to the athletes' performances and how the diverse abilities affect the game. For instance, a player whose leg is amputated very high on one side likely has issues with balancing and needs to adapt by positioning their chair or body differently when reaching for a rebound or defending an opponent. Reporting about how different players "master" their disabilities can inform audiences about the unique aspects of the niche sport. Additionally, the reporter can detail adjustments made to expose the perceived limitations of the opposition. Again this is another unique aspect of the sport that should be embraced and emphasized, not shied away from or avoided by sportswriters, but the key is to focus on the manner in which the disability affects the game and player performance. It should also be noted that these elements of the

sports require the keen eye of a sports reporter and some general information on different disabilities which can be developed through immersion in the sport and sports reporting.

On the same token the level of disability can make for interesting feature stories. This can be achieved without the stereotyping supercrip and “content crip” or “A.B. normal” narratives. In intercollegiate wheelchair basketball, each player is classified by level of functionality on the court, ranging from class 1 (the least functional) to class 4.5, by half-point increments. And each team is allowed 14 total points on the floor at a time. So if a player is classified 1 point or even a half-point higher or lower, the lineup a coach can run can change drastically. Sometimes a team will petition an opposing player’s classification and the player may be reclassified. A story about a team petitioning a player’s classification can make for a very interesting, informative, and unique feature topic and still maintain a focus on performance. Also, each athlete’s chair is customized to their different bodies and functions to maximize their performances. This presents another opportunity to discuss changes players make in their chair design, new technology in the industry, and how different chair set-ups effect player attributes.

The current study also found that players’ physical attributes like height and weight were a much stronger theme in able bodied basketball articles. While the height of players plays a huge role in able bodied basketball, the height a wheelchair basketball player can reach to can be extremely advantageous as well. Thus, wheelchair basketball sports writers can include information about player reaches or wing spans, highlighting physical attributes of the players to add interesting details to their articles. This can even be done in the form of a text box with all of the players listed as a reference or within the text. For instance, “He reaches 4 inches higher than every player on the court, and in combination with a strong pick and roll game, he grabbed 19 rebounds and scored 17 points in the paint.”

Although audiences are not as familiar with wheelchair sports, some of the sport's most prominent terminology can be made for more colorful and dramatic sports articles. Terms like "chair up," used to describe playing physical defense, can convey a sense of physicality and intensity. Reporters can be sensitive to people less familiar with the sport by placing such terms in sentences that the context helps define. For example: "The opposing offense was unable to get past his physical defense as he chaired them up every time down the floor."

However, most of the terms from able bodied basketball transferred to wheelchair basketball, and a seasoned basketball reporter can quickly learn wheelchair basketball jargon. The metaphors from able bodied basketball can also seamlessly transition into wheelchair basketball articles, as demonstrated by the current study. However, the lack of frequency of metaphor use calls for more descriptive writing about the sport in general. The current study also showed comparatively less focus on statistical performance. Stats can be used just as they are in able bodied sports to highlight excellent or poor physical and mental performances.

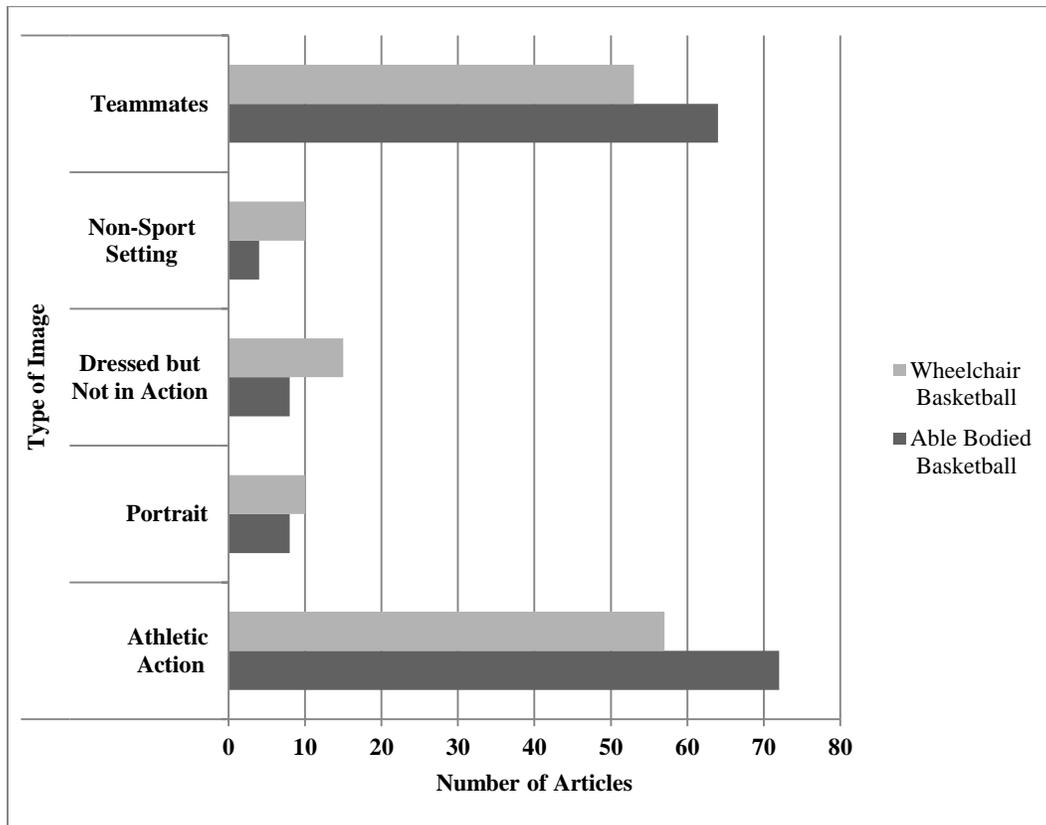
Photo journalists who cover wheelchair basketball are also often presented with the unique challenge of immersing themselves in the culture and sport. Sports photographers can approach a wheelchair basketball game similar to the way they would an able bodied game. They may need some time to learn how to anticipate different moments and adjust to the height of the players, but the same general recommendations apply: a focus on the ball, action, physical contact, and dramatic or confrontational moments can make for good shots. As long as photojournalists are sensitive to the messages different angles can represent, they should experiment with lower, higher, and other creative perspectives.

In summation, contrary to previous research, the wheelchair basketball journalists of student news sources of the current study generally avoided the supercrip and other stereotypical narratives in the game and pre-game articles which shows great progress. However,

some other trends show a need for immersion or at least some consistency on reporting personnel in order for the reporters to grow accustomed to reporting disability sport and develop their own unique style while incorporating some of the fundamental sport reporting elements. In turn, the sport's portrayal as a competitive, performance-oriented sport with its own identity will act as a push in the direction of equality.

Appendix A

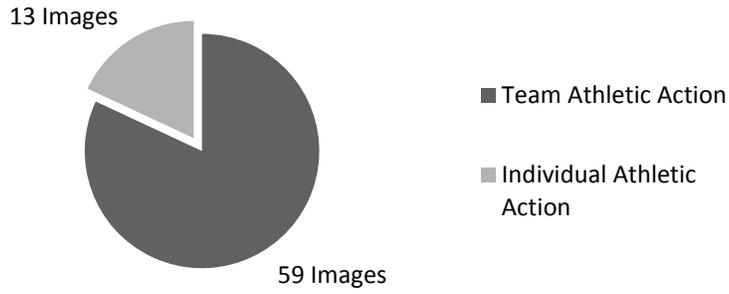
Image Chart



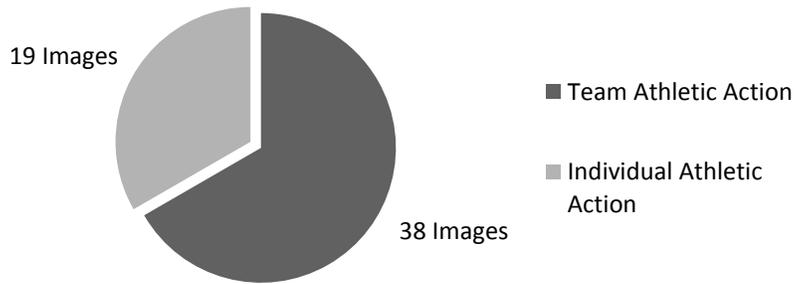
Appendix B

Athletic Action in Teammate Images Chart

### Able Bodied Basketball Team/Individual Action Chart

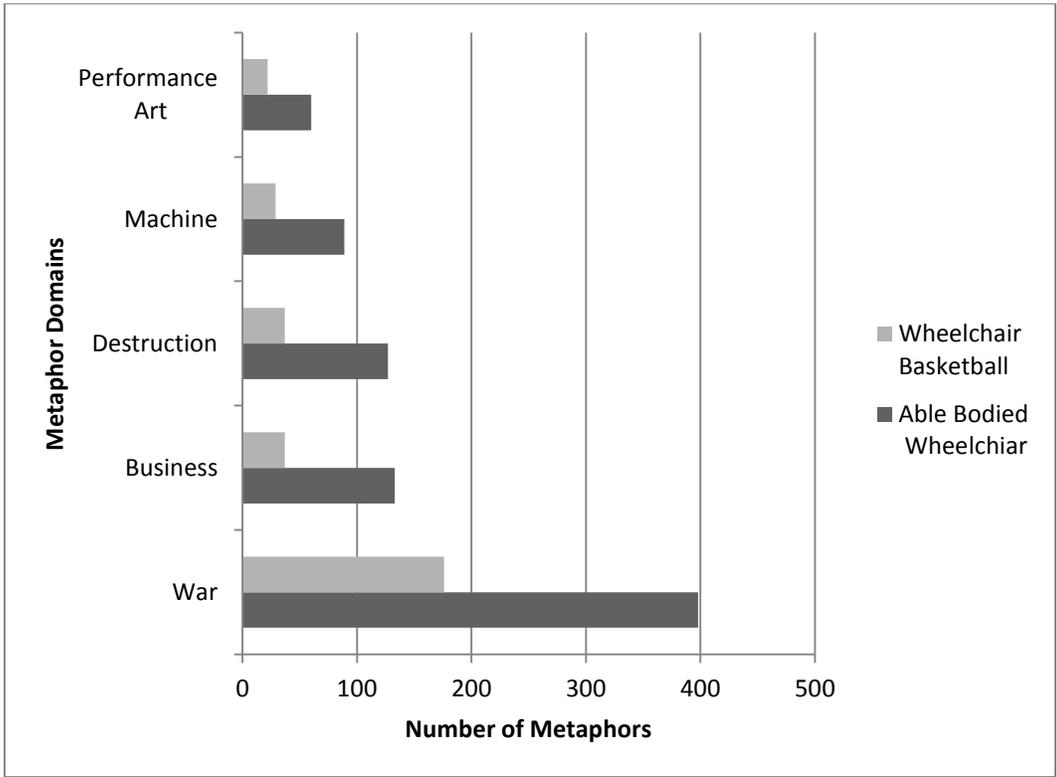


### Wheelchair Basketball Team/Individual Action Chart



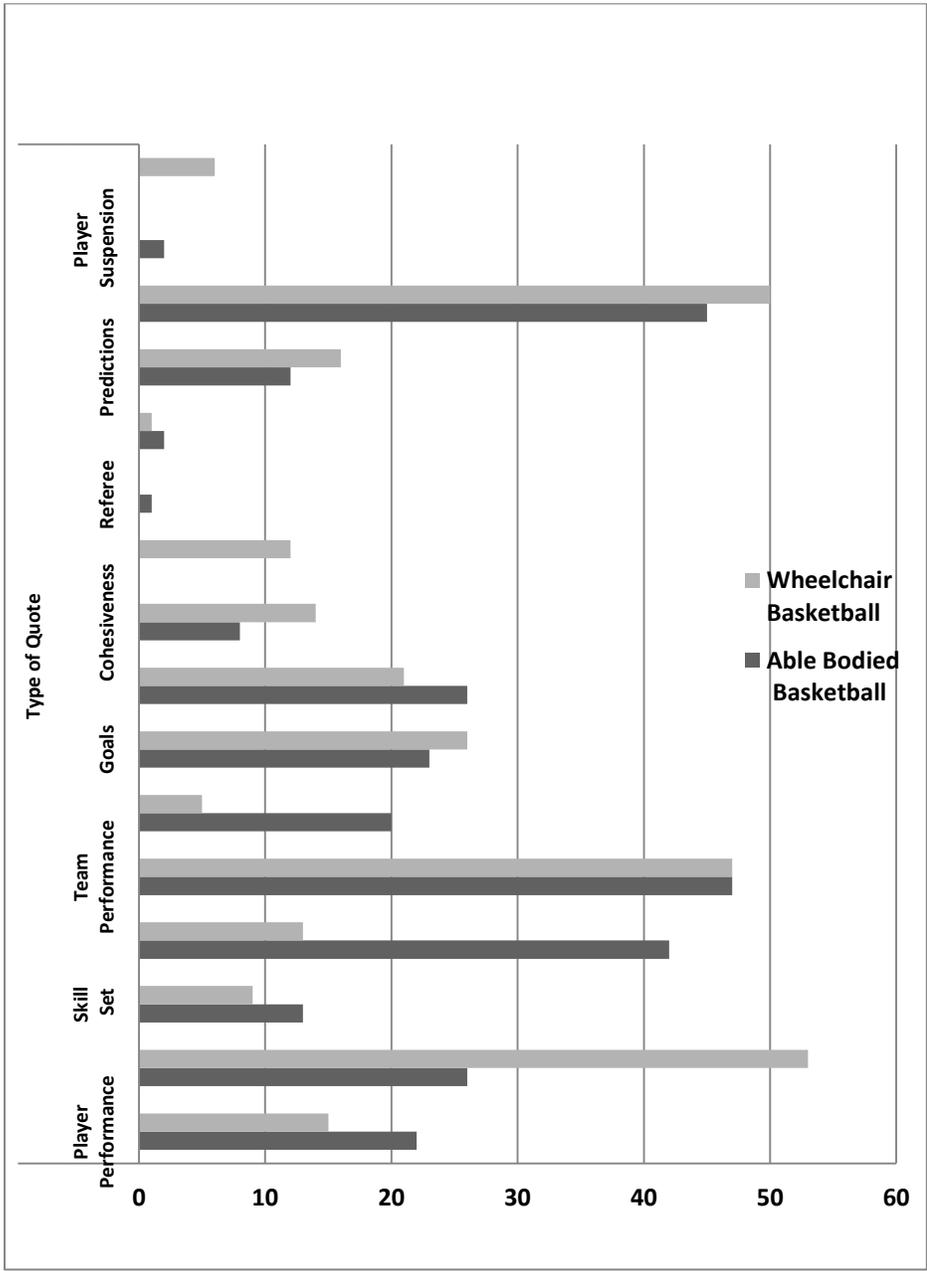
Appendix C

Metaphor Chart



Appendix D

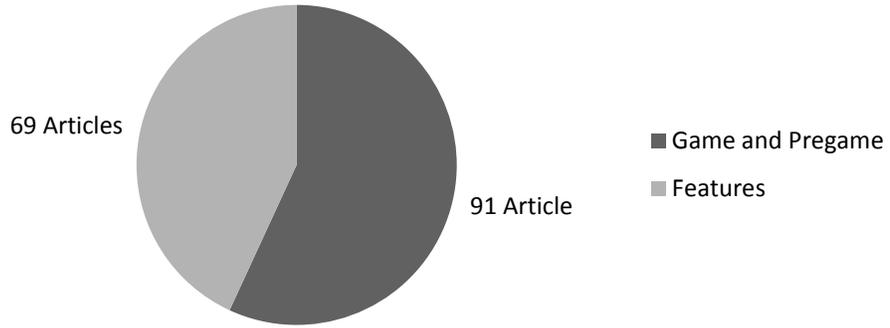
Direct Quotation Chart



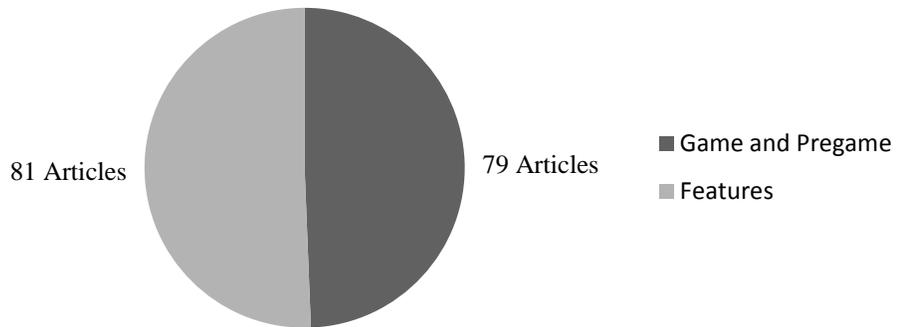
Appendix E

Article Genre Chart

## Able Bodied Basketball



## Wheelchair Basketball



Appendix F  
Image Type Table

<b>Sport</b>		Able Bodied Basketball	Wheelchair Basketball
<b>Type of Image</b>	Athletic Action	72 (78.3%)	57 (62%)
	Portrait	8 (8.7%)	10 (10.8%)
	Dressed but Not in Action	8 (8.7%)	15 (16.3%)
	Non-Sport Setting	4 (4.4%)	10 (10.8%)
	Teammates	64 (69.6%)	53 (57.6%)

Appendix G

Metaphors Table

		<b>Sport</b>	
		Able Bodied Basketball	Wheelchair Basketball
<b>Metaphor Domains</b>	War	398	176
	Business	133	37
	Destruction	127	37
	Machine	89	29
	Performance Art	60	22
	Food	20	21
	Race	62	20
	Family	7	13
	Illness	13	12
	Science	23	11
	Journey	33	10
	Fight/Violence	31	10
	Animal	21	8
	Temperature	27	7
	Law	23	7
	Royalty	8	5
	Religion	8	4
	School	7	4
	Gambling	5	3
	Other Sport	3	2
	Puzzle	3	1
	Madness	17	1
	Life	17	3
	Dream	8	0
	Amusement	3	0
Politics	4	0	
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>443</b>

Appendix H

Direct Quotation Table

		Sport	
		Able Bodied Basketball	Wheelchair Basketball
Type of Quote	Player Performance	22	15
	Strategy/Prep	26	53
	Skill Set	13	9
	Specific Recap	42	13
	Team Performance	47	47
	Self-Performance	20	5
	Goals	23	26
	Opposition	26	21
	Cohesiveness	8	14
	Comparisons	0	12
	Referee	1	0
	Injury	2	1
	Predictions	12	16
	Insight	45	50
	Player Suspension	2	0
	Disability/Stereotype	0	6
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>288</b>

Appendix I  
Article Genre Table

		Sport	
		Able Bodied Basketball	Wheelchair Basketball
Article Genre	Game	67 (41.9%)	54 (33.8%)
	Pre-Game/ Tournament	24 (15%)	25 (15.6%)
	Player Feature	21 (13.1%)	23 (14.4%)
	Team Feature	12 (7.5%)	19 (11.9%)
	Charity Feature	0 (0%)	14 (8.8%)
	Coach Feature	10 (6.3%)	10 (6.3%)
	Camp Feature	0 (0%)	8 (5%)
	Pre/Post Season Feature	12 (7.5%)	5 (3.1%)
	Award Feature	8 (5%)	2 (1.2%)
	Injury Feature	6 (3.8%)	0 (0%)

Appendix J

Photo: 1



[http://www.ssumustangs.com/news/2010/3/19/WCBB\\_0319103316.aspx?path=wheelball](http://www.ssumustangs.com/news/2010/3/19/WCBB_0319103316.aspx?path=wheelball)

Appendix K

Photo: 2



[http://www.theshorthorn.com/sports/athletic\\_department/ut-arlington-men-s-basketball-stands-strong-with-/article\\_f1319c50-2914-5d4e-a409-ee6a83e2ed2c.html](http://www.theshorthorn.com/sports/athletic_department/ut-arlington-men-s-basketball-stands-strong-with-/article_f1319c50-2914-5d4e-a409-ee6a83e2ed2c.html)

Appendix L

Photo: 3



<http://www.themaneater.com/stories/2009/12/8/missouri-wheelchair-basketball-sweeps-kansas-wheel/>

Appendix M

Photo: 4



[http://www.dailyillini.com/sports/men\\_sports/men\\_basketball/article\\_4a0fb53e-0868-55d3-a3ff-bd971f27075b.html?mode=iqm](http://www.dailyillini.com/sports/men_sports/men_basketball/article_4a0fb53e-0868-55d3-a3ff-bd971f27075b.html?mode=iqm)

Appendix N

Photo: 5



THE COURTYARD ON CONVENT

Available for Lease Fall 2015  
2 BEDROOM/BATHROOM ALL APPLIANCES INCL.  
DESIGNATED PARKING 1024 Current Stock

205-469-3231

News Culture Sports Opinion Multimedia Topics About Us Advertising FYI Search

Serving The University of Alabama since 1894

### Wheelchair basketball teams head to nationals

BY MORGAN KEARNEY | Published 03/05/13 10:20pm



CONNECT WITH THE CRIMSON WHITE  
f t+ y+ r+ e+

#### Video

Should Jonathan Taylor have been given a second chance?

view results

TWEET SHARE+ SHARE COMMENTS

**F**or The University of Alabama's two wheelchair basketball teams, success is nothing new. The women's team has competed in the last five national championship games and is headed to their sixth consecutive title game at the 2013 National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Championship this week.

"After a tough loss in the championship game last year, we have really had a whole new drive for this season," Lindsey Mertz, president of the women's team, said. "Really the whole season we have been focused on doing the things we need to do to be successful in the national championship tournament."

Beginning Thursday through Saturday, eight men's teams and four women's teams from different conferences will compete at the Lakeshore Foundation.

"I feel very positive about the games coming up," Mertz said. "We have really worked on a lot of things over the last few weeks and gotten a lot better as a team going into the tournament. I'm very proud of the hard work that the whole team has put into working to get better."

The women's national championship game will be Saturday at 1 p.m. and the men's will be at 3 p.m. The tournament will be played on a single-elimination basis between teams from Alabama, University of Illinois, University Wisconsin-Whitewater and Edinboro University. The University of Alabama men's and women's teams are currently seeded No. 2

#### Photos



Tweets  
The CW Sports  
@CWSports  
FINAL: Alabama retires shut out Kentucky 20 to take the title. The Crimson Tide is now 200 and 204 in conference play.

<http://www.cw.ua.edu/article/2013/03/wheelchair-basketball-teams-head-to-nationals>

## References

- About the Missourian - Columbia Missourian. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2014, from <http://www.columbiamissourian.com/about/>
- Anderson, J. (2003). 'Turned into taxpayers': Paraplegia, rehabilitation and sport at Stoke Mandeville, 1944-56. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38(3), 461-475.
- Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1998). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In P. L. Carell, J. Devine, & D. Eskey (Eds.). *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 37-55). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Angelini, J. R., & Billings, A. C. (2010). An agenda that sets the frames: Gender, language, and NBC's Americanized Olympic telecast. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29(3), 1-23.
- Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of mass-media effects. *Communication Research*, 3(1), 3-21.
- Bandura, A. (1969). Social-learning theory of identificatory processes. In D. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 213- 262). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Bandura, A. (1971). *Social learning theory*. New York, NY: General Learning Press.
- Barking & Dagenham Centre. (2001). *Disability Language and Etiquette*. Retrieved from <http://www.insiderart.org.uk/userfiles/disability-language-01-07.pdf>.
- Barthes, R. (2000). Myth today. In L. Burke, T. Crowley, & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and culture theory reader* (pp. 410-415). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Batzou, A. (2011). Framing 'otherness' in press photographs: The case of immigrants in Greece and Spain. *Journal of Media Practice*, 12(1), 41-60.
- Bauer, R. (1964). The obstinate audience: The influence process from the point of view of social communication. *American Psychologist*, 19(5), 319-328.
- Bernstein, A. (2002). Is it time for a victory lap? Changes in the media coverage of women in sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 37(3-4), 415-428.
- Blaska, J. (1993). The power of language: Speak and write using 'person first.'  
In M. Nagler (Ed.), *Perspectives on disability* (2nd ed.) (pp. 25-32). Palo Alto, CA: Health Markets Research.
- Blinde, E. M., Greendorfer, S. L., & Shanker, R. J. (1991). Differential media coverage of men's and women's intercollegiate basketball: Reflection of gender ideology. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 15(2), 98-114.
- Bruce, T. (1998). Audience frustration and pleasure: Women viewers confront televised women's basketball. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 22(4), 373-397.
- Bogdan, R., Biklen, D., Shapiro, A., & Spelkoman, D. (1982). The disabled: Media's monster. *Social Policy*, 13(2), 32-35.
- Braye, S., Dixon, K., & Gibbons, T. (2013). A mockery of equality: An exploratory investigation into disabled activists' views of the Paralympic Games. *Disability & Society*, 28(7), 984-996.
- Buyse, J., & Embser-Herbert, M. (2004). Constructions of gender in sport: An analysis of intercollegiate media guide cover photographs. *Gender & Society*, 18(1), 66-81.
- Buyse, J., & Borcharding, B. (2010). Framing gender and disability: A cross-

- cultural analysis of photographs from the 2008 Paralympic Games. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 3(3), 308-321.
- Bystrom, D. G., Robertson, T. A., & Banwart, M. C. (2001). Framing the fight: An analysis of media coverage of female and male candidates in primary races for governor and U.S. Senate in 2000. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44(12), 1999-2013.
- Chang, I., Crossman, J., Taylor, J., & Walker, D. (2011). One world, one dream: A qualitative comparison of the newspaper coverage of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 4(1), 26-49.
- Chilton, P., & Ilyin, M. (1993). Metaphor in political discourse: The case of the 'common European house.' *Discourse & Society*, 4(1), 7-31.
- Clapton, J., & Fitzgerald, J. (1997). The history of disability: A history of 'otherness.' *New Renaissance Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.ru.org/human-rights/the-history-of-disability-a-history-of-otherness.html>
- Dahl, M. (1993). The role of the media in promoting images of disability: Disability as metaphor: The evil cripp. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 18(1). Retrieved from <http://cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/718/624>
- Davis, L. J. (Ed.). (2006). *The disability studies reader*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Davis, R., Busse, S., Enos, M., & Megginson, N. (2012). If they built it, would you come? *Palaestra*, 26(3), 28-30.
- DePauw, K. P., & Gavron, S. J. (2005). *Disability sport* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Domke, D., Perlmutter, D., & Spratt, M. (2002). The primes of our times? An examination of the 'power' of visual images. *Journalism*, 3(2), 131-159.

- Eldridge, M. & Watson, J., (2013). Differently abled: Disparity between media coverage of able-bodied and wheelchair basketball at UT Arlington. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Communication, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas.
- Entman, R. M. (1991). Symposium framing U.S. coverage of international news: Contrasts in narratives of the KAL and Iran air incidents. *Journal of Communication*, 41(4), 6-27.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Fink, J. S., & Kensicki, L. J. (2002). An imperceptible difference: Visual and textual constructions of femininity in Sports Illustrated and Sports Illustrated for Women. *Mass Communication and Society*, 5(3), 317-339.
- Flamand, T. (2009, February). Paralympic coverage missing. *Practical Horseman*, 37, 10. Retrieved from <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=e0cf2e91-2176-4459-88e8-9a2dcae89651%40sessionmgr4001&vid=0&hid=4105&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWlhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=s3h&AN=36212706>.
- Foucault, M. (1988). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Gallik, J. D. (1999). Do they read for pleasure? Recreational reading habits of college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 42(6), 480-488.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, 373-393.
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile.

- Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 172-194.
- Golden, A. (2003). An analysis of the dissimilar coverage of the 2002 Olympics and Paralympics: Frenzied pack journalism versus the empty press room. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 23(3/4). Retrieved from <http://www.dsqsds.org/article/view/437/614>
- Gramsci, A. (1975). *Prison notebooks* (Vol. 3). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. York, PA: Maple Press.
- Griffin, E. (2012). *A first look at communication theory* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Groce, N. E. (2009). *Everyone here spoke sign language: Hereditary deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hahn, H. (1996). Antidiscrimination laws and social research on disability: The minority group perspective. *Behavioral Sciences & The Law*, 14(1), 41-59.
- Hall, S., (1975). Introduction. In A.H. Smith (Ed.), *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change, 1935-1965* (pp. 1-33). London: Chatto & Windus.
- Hall, S. (2001). Foucault: Power, knowledge and discourse. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S.J. Yates, (Eds.), *Discourse theory and practice: A reader* (pp. 72-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hardin, B., & Hardin, M. (2003). Conformity and conflict: Wheelchair athletes discuss sport media. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 20(3), 246-259.

- Hardin, B., & Hardin, M. (2004). Distorted pictures: Images of disability in physical education textbooks. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 21(4), 399-413.
- Hardin, M., & Hardin, B. (2004). The "supercrip" in sport media: Wheelchair athletes discuss hegemony's disabled hero. *Sociology of Sport Online*, 7(1), 1-16.
- Hardin, B., Hardin, M., Walsdorf, S.L., & Walsdorf, K. (2001). Missing in action? Images of disability in Sports Illustrated for Kids. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 21(2). Retrieved from <http://www.dsq-sds.org/article/view/277/303>
- Harrison, C. (2003). Visual social semiotics: Understanding how still images make meaning. *Technical Communication*, 50(1), 46-60.
- Harp, D., & Tremayne, M. (2006). The gendered blogosphere: Examining inequality using network and feminist theory. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 83(2), 247-264.
- Harnett, A. (2000). Escaping the 'Evil Avenger' and the 'Supercrip': Images of disability in popular television. *Irish Communication Review*, 8, 21-29.
- Hehir, T. (2005). *New directions in special education: Eliminating ableism in policy and practice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- History. (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2015, from [www.nwba.org/about/general-information/history/](http://www.nwba.org/about/general-information/history/)
- Holt, R. (2000). The discourse ethics of sports print journalism. *Culture, Sport, Society*, 3(3), 88.
- Howe, N. (1988). Metaphor in contemporary American political discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 3(2), 87-104.

- Howe, P. D. (2008). From inside the newsroom Paralympic media and the production of elite disability. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 43(2), 135-150.
- Howe, P. D. (2011). Cyborg and supercrip: The Paralympics technology and (dis) empowerment of disabled athletes. *Sociology*, 45(5), 868-882.
- Huffman, S., Tuggle, C. A., & Rosengard, D. S. (2004). How campus media cover sports: The gender-equity issue, one generation later. *Mass Communication and Society*, 7(4), 475-489.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47(2), 263–291
- Kian, E. T., Mondello, M., & Vincent, J. (2009). ESPN—the women’s sports network? A content analysis of internet coverage of March madness. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(3), 477–495.
- Kinnick, K. N. (1998). Gender bias in newspaper profiles of 1996 Olympic athletes: A content analysis of five major dailies. *Women's Studies In Communication*, 21(2), 212-237.
- Krages, B. (2005). *Photography: the art of composition*. New York, NY: Allworth Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2004). Language, thought, and culture. In A. Davies & C. Elder (Eds.), *Handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 235-261). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary*

- communication*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Krossel, M. (1988). 'Handicapped heroes' and the knee jerk press. *Columbia Journalism Review*, 27 (1), 46-47.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 202-251). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Conceptual metaphor in everyday language. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (8), 453-486.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Levin, I. P., & Gaeth, G. J. (1988). How consumers are affected by the framing of attribute information before and after consuming the product. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(3), 374-378.
- Levin, I. P., Schneider, S. L., & Gaeth, G. J. (1998). All frames are not created equal: A typology and critical analysis of framing effects. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 76(2), 149-188.
- Loke, J., Harp, D., & Bachmann, I. (2010). Mothering and governing: How news articulated gender roles in the cases of Governors Jane Swift and Sarah Palin. *Journalism Studies*, (12)2, 1-16.
- Longmore, P. K. (2003). *Why I burned my book and other essays on disability*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Longmore, P. K., & Umansky, L. (2001). *The new disability history: American perspectives*. New York, NY: University Press.
- MacKay, S., & Dallaire, C. (2009). Campus newspaper coverage of varsity sports:

Getting closer to equitable and sports-related representations of female athletes?

*International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(1), 25-40.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Melvin, C. J. (1996). *Women's sports coverage in three college newspapers* (Unpublished master's thesis). California State University, Long Beach. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304375901/abstract?accountid=7117>

Men's Team. (2014). Retrieved February 6, 2015, from <http://www.uta.edu/movinmavs/athletics/basketball/intercollegiate.php>

Meyerowitz, B. E., & Chaiken, S. (1987). The effect of message framing on breast self-examination attitudes, intentions, and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(3), 500-510.

Mitchell, D. T., & Snyder, S. L. (1998). Talking about talking back: Afterthoughts on the making of the disability documentary vital signs: Crip culture talks back. *Disability Art, and Culture*, 37(2), Retrieved from <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/ttext/text-idx?cc=mqr;c=mqr;c=mqrarchive;idno=act2080.0037.216;rgn=main;view=text;xc=1;g=mqrq>

Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *The American Political Science Review*, 91(3), 567-583.

Norden, M. F. (1994). *The cinema of isolation: A history of physical disability in the movies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Owen, E. (1982). *Playing and coaching wheelchair basketball*. Champaign, IL:

University of Illinois Press.

- Peers, D. (2009). (Dis) empowering Paralympic histories: Absent athletes and disabling discourses. *Disability & Society*, 24(5), 653-665.
- Perse, E. M. (2000). *Media effects and society*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Pierre, J. (2015, January 14). Wheelchair basketball league provides inspiration, second chances for many. *Miami Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/miami-springs/article6321183.html>.
- Preston, J. (2013, October 13) Black and white and in the red. *New York Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/education/edlife/student-newspapers-scurry-to-make-ends-meet.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/education/edlife/student-newspapers-scurry-to-make-ends-meet.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)
- Price, V., Tewksbury, D., & Powers, E. (1997). Switching trains of thought: The impact of news frames on readers' cognitive responses. *Communication Research*, 24(5), 481-506.
- Ramasubramanian, S. (2007). Media-based strategies to reduce racial stereotypes activated by news stories. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(2), 249-264.
- Reese, S. D., Gandy, O. H., & Grant, A. E. (Eds.). (2001). *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rpiet. (2015, February 20). Men's basketball: MSU-Moorhead dominates Bemidji State. *The Bemidji Pioneer*. Retrieved from <http://www.bemidjipioneer.com/sports/3684212-mens-basketball-msu-moorhead-dominates-bemidji-state>.

- Rodriguez, N. S., & Blumell, L. (2014). What a year! The framing of marriage equality through media's selected sources in 2013. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 38(4), 341-359.
- Rose, S. (2012). The right to a college education? The G.I. Bill, Public Law 16, and disabled veterans. *Journal of Policy History*, 24, 26-52.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: SIU Press.
- Santa Ana, O. (1999). 'Like an animal I was treated': Anti-immigrant metaphor in US public discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 10(2), 191-224.
- Saussure, F. (2000). The nature of the linguistic sign. In L. Burke, T. Crowley, & A. Girvin, (Eds.), *The Routledge language and culture theory reader* (pp. 21-32). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schantz, O. J., & Gilbert, K. (2001). An ideal misconstrued: Newspaper coverage of the Atlanta Paralympic Games in France and Germany. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 18(1), 69-94.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20.
- Schmidt, H. C. (2013). Women, sports, and journalism: Examining the limited role of women in student newspaper sports reporting. *Communication & Sport*, 1(3), 246-268.
- Seale, C. (2001). Sporting cancer: Struggle language in news reports of people with cancer. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 23(3), 308-329.
- Segrave, J. O. (1997). A matter of life and death: Some thoughts on the language of sport. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 21, 211-220.

- Shakespeare, T. (1997). The social model of disability. In D. Lennard (Ed.), *The disability studies reader* (pp. 266-273). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shakespeare, W. (2009). *King Richard III* (Vol. 32). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Shapiro, A., Margolis, H., & Anderson, P. M. (1989). The vocabulary of disability: critical reading and handicapism. *The High School Journal*, 73(2), 86-91.
- Shifflett, B., & Reville, R. (1994). Gender equity in sports media coverage: A review of the NCAA news. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 18(2), 144-150.
- Shiffrin, R. M., & Schneider, W. (1984). Automatic and controlled processing revisited. *Psychological Review*, 91(2), 269-276.
- Society of Professional Journalists. (1996). *Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from <https://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf>
- Sonwalkar, P. (2004). Mediating otherness: India's English-language press and the northeast. *Contemporary South Asia*, 13(4), 389-402.
- Strohkendl, H. (1996). *The 50th anniversary of wheelchair basketball*. New York, NY: Waxmann.
- Thomas, N., & Smith, A. (2003). Preoccupied with able-bodiedness? An analysis of the British media coverage of the 2000 Paralympic games. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 20(2), 166-181.
- Thunder. (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2015, from <http://per4max.com/sport-chairs/thunder/>.
- Tuchman, G. (1979). Women's depiction by the mass media. *Signs*, 4(3), 528-542.

- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1981). The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science*, 211(4481), 453-458.
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1986). The rational choice and the framing of decisions. *Journal of Business*, 59(4), S251-S278.
- Tynedal, J., & Wolbring, G. (2013). Paralympics and its athletes through the lens of the New York Times. *Sports*, 1(1), 13-36.
- Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2013). The differential susceptibility to media effects model. *Journal of Communication*, 63(2), 221-243.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing social semiotics*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Von Sikorski, C., & Schierl, T. (2014). Inclusion of persons with disabilities through media sports: Attitudinal and behavioral news-framing effects. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 7(1), 90-112.
- Von Sikorski, C., Schierl, T., Möller, C., & Oberhäuser, K. P. (2012). Visual news framing and effects on recipients' attitudes toward athletes with physical disabilities. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 5(1), 69-86.
- Watson, J. (2014). Signs of the times: *Sigma Signs* in the 1950s and 1960s. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Communication, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas.
- Wedgwood, N. (2014). Hahn versus Guttman: Revisiting "Sports and the political movement of disabled persons." *Disability & Society*, 29(1), 129-142.
- Whisenant, W. A., & Pedersen, P. M. (2004). Analyzing attitudes regarding quantity and quality of sports page coverage: Athletic director perceptions of newspaper coverage given to interscholastic sports. *International Sports Journal*, 8(1), 54-64.

### Biographical Information

John Watson earned a B.A. in Communication with a specialization in Journalism and a minor in History from The University of Texas at Arlington. He played and volunteered for the UTA Movin' Mavs and DFW Freewheelers wheelchair basketball teams while working on his Master's. Watson hopes to continue research of disability sports media and to ultimately play a role in the disability rights movement's progress toward equality.