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*Sports Media Roundtable*

Starting in 1980 with the launch of ESPN the consumption of all things sports has been on upward trajectory. Thirty years later we have a landscape that not only includes the variety of ESPN's but NBC, CBS and Fox have got into the business of all sports channels. These different outlets can elevate what were once fringe sports and Americans now have access to English soccer. It should be noted that Americans have been prepared for this sport for the past 30 years with youth soccer leagues dotting the country. A generation in this country has been exposed to this sport growing up so it is not necessarily an import but something Americans can relate to. To make the states more comfortable with soccer the different media outlets have given America an English soccer superstar to idolize David Beckham. The Olympics is in a different situation altogether. It has existed for over a hundred years and while its sports, track & field, swimming and others receive a massive amount of attention ever four years it generally ends there. One would be hard pressed to find a national swimming meet despite all the sports channels. But the issue of nationalist fervor that may arise during the games can be excusable since it is better than different nations actually fighting a war. After all the Olympics has never been the stated cause of a war. Also unlike the English Premier League you do not hear of many incidents of hooliganism. The culture of sports gaming has changed America's appetite not only because of being able to play different sports but the interconnectivity of it. Twenty years ago if you wanted to play video games with someone they had to be in the room with you. Now alone in the comfort of your own room you can play anyone in the world. So an American kid that may not have a school

friend interested in soccer can go online through his Xbox and find someone that does. In that virtual space his affection for the game can be expressed in a community. Twitter gives another avenue to sports fans to follow athletes without the filter of sports news channels. The unfortunate aspects of this for athletes is that a ill-timed tweet that has not been filtered by a media handler, like in the case of the Greek Olympiad Voula Papachrisou, may show a more honest view but cost the athletes public support or corporate sponsorships.

Media coverage of Tim Tebow and Jeremy Lin offers a new type of religious personality in American sports that is different in that particular culture but many in America can relate to. But how different are they really? Black athletes have openly expressed their Christian affiliation for years but have received nowhere near the media scrutiny but since Tebow is white he is unique in expressing Christian sentiment. Lin on the other hand entered into a sport dominated by African Americans. So through is this domination that white men in the sport receive more attention from sports news. One only has to look at the attention Dirk Nowitzki to see this. Couple that with the fact that Asian men are saddled with the stereotyped of being short. Sports networks are picking up on there uniqueness and since some have denigrated their talent their fans now have the joy of rooting for an underdog. With both of these individuals Twitter and 24 hour sports channels allow the fans the chance to better follow and sympathize with their hero's. One can argue that fantasy football does the same thing instead of a football fan being concerned with a whole team, he only has to follow one player since his stats are the only one that actually matter to the fan.