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Variables affecting attendance at and radio listenership to minor league baseball games

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VARIABLES AFFECTING ATTENDANCE AT
AND RADIO LISTENERSHIP TO MINOR LEAGUE
BASEBALL GAMES

A Thesis Presented to the
Department of Communication
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha
by
David C. Ogden
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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

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ABSTRACT

Variables, including age, sex, group accompaniment, extracurricular activities and "likes" and "dislikes" about experiences at games, were investigated for their relationship to attendance at Omaha Royals games and to listenership to Royals on radio. The results of a survey of spectators ($N=333$) at 11 Royals games show a difference in frequency of attendance among age groups and a difference in frequency of listenership between the sexes. Those over age 55 appear to attend games more often ($p<.01$) and female listeners tune in Royals games more frequently than males who listen to Omaha Royals radio ($p<.05$). Such findings support the contentions of Lee and Zeiss (1980) that age does make a difference in the amount of sports consumption, and that females may adopt sports consumer roles as readily as males. The study also indicates baseball's importance as a forum for socialization among family members and as a mechanism for exploring communication components of the sports subculture (Donnelly, 1972) and their marketing implications.

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INTRODUCTION

As the epitome of the "national pastime," professional baseball in the United States has ebbed and flowed in its public acceptance and support throughout history. Trends in major league attendance are but one indication of how baseball's public image has fared.

That image has been repeatedly tested, such as in the 1919 "Black Sox" scandal and, more recently, the intensive press and media coverage of the 1984 and 1985 drug scandals involving numerous major league players, Wade Boggs' extra-marital philandering and the ousting of Pete Rose from the major league ranks.

Still, the game is enjoying a surge in popularity, as evidenced by the fact that for the first time in the game's history, all 26 major league clubs have reached attendance figures of more than one million (Bellamy, 1988, p. 73), and minor league baseball clubs are setting individual attendance marks. (1)

But as baseball writers such as Thomas Boswell, Washington Post, Bob Hertz, Pittsburgh Press, and Leonard Koppett, New York Times, have indicated, the relationship between baseball and sports consumers is fragile, and sometimes fickle. Wilkinson and Doddler (1987) are also convinced that the bonds between a sports team and its patron community are "temporary and tenuous, and therefore require continuous reinforcement from game to game and season to season" (p. 40).

Individual baseball franchises, however, may be able to

maximize such reinforcement. With the maturity and popularity of sports broadcasting, franchises can use the electronic media, in addition to public relations (2) and promotional strategies, to tap the "collective conscience" (Wilkerson and Doddler, 1987) of a patron community.

It remains to be seen whether franchises can increase the enjoyment for those attending games through the application of certain psychological and sociological concepts to promotional efforts. But increased fan enjoyment can certainly improve gate receipts and broadcasting revenues for such franchises. Most importantly, refined promotional efforts could possibly renew and maintain the tenuous bond between baseball and its consumers, and perhaps shed light on how franchises in other sports can improve the relationship with their publics.

Footnotes

1. More than 23 million passed through the turnstiles of the franchises of this country's 17 minor leagues in 1989. This figure is the most since 1952, when more than 24 million fans attended minor league ball games. The Omaha Royals have also been able to ride this crest of minor league popularity. Their 1989 attendance of 325,995 broke their club record of 298,351 set in 1988. Of all Triple A affiliate franchises, Buffalo drew most in 1989, with 1.1 million in attendance (Omaha World Herald,

Sept. 20, 1989, p. 48). Even college baseball is experiencing a surge in popularity. In 1987, 14.3 million attended college baseball games in the U.S., compared with 5.2 million in 1979. The Omaha-hosted College World Series has also increased its attendance by more than 50,000 during the past decade (Hartley, 1988, p. A-36).

2. "Public relations," as defined for purposes of this paper, is any activity or effort undertaken by an organization, group or individual to define or enhance the perception or image held by a specific public or the general public of that organization, group or individual. Public relations efforts by a baseball franchise include, but are not limited to, special promotional nights, group attendance programs for organizations and businesses, community presentations and autograph sessions by individual players, press and media relations, game broadcasts and treatment of individual fans by stadium and franchise personnel.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

A person's predisposition toward a sport or sports in general, as well as accessibility of sports consumption and factors related to the "environment" of the game, are among the variables possibly affecting the degree to which an individual expresses interest in a particular team directly (by attending games) or indirectly (by listening to or viewing games via the electronic media). Knowledge of these and other variables may allow teams or sports franchises to employ certain techniques to enhance a sports consumers' enjoyment of the contest and to refine promotional efforts in bolstering overall community support for the team.

Lee and Zeiss, in developing a baseball "fan typology," have identified some of those variables related to fan attendance, including whether a fan comes to a game as part of a social group, travel distance to the game, purchase and consumption of refreshments or concessions and commitment to the sport, among others. There may be other factors, such as the quality of the stadium and facilities where the baseball game takes place, interest in other sports and length of residence in the particular community.

To explore these variables and to attempt to determine if there is any relationship between some of them (at least in one community), a survey of fans attending 1989 Royals games was conducted. Results from the survey will be used to answer the following questions:

- 1) Do those who attend games more frequently also listen to the Omaha Royals on radio more frequently?
- 2) Is there a difference between the level of attendance at and radio listenership of Royals games between males and females?
- 3) Are "self-proclaimed" retirees, or those over the age of 65, more likely to prefer afternoon games in April and May, as opposed to evening games?
- 4) Do the "likes" and "dislikes" (as cited in items #4 and #5 of the survey instrument) of those who attend a game with children differ from those who attend without children?
- 5) Do the "likes" and "dislikes" of those who attend on special promotional nights differ from those of fans who attend games which do not feature special promotions?
- 6) Is there any relation between income, level of attendance and seating patterns (lower box, upper box or reserved)?
- 7) Is there any relation between age, income and level of attendance?
- 8) Do those who attend games also attend other sporting and/or entertainment events in Omaha, and how often?
- 9) Do the fans' level of attendance reflect on the proximity of their residences to the stadium?

Equally important to this thesis will be the development of a survey instrument which any minor league baseball franchise could use to gain a better understanding of the collective body of individuals who attend games and support the team. The present survey instrument will be used as a basis for this development and additional variables which could be important to understanding community support for a baseball franchise will be cited and discussed.

#####

LITERATURE REVIEW

At the dawn of the 20th Century, baseball had emerged as a social force in America; and the role of public relations in baseball became more salient as the game matured. In 1900, baseball's elder statesman, Albert G. Spalding, took a bold step in enhancing the game's public image as a truly American sport. He infused a "nationalist pedigree" into the game's lore by propagating the myth of a Cooperstown, N.Y. teenager (Abner Doubleday) inventing baseball in 1839, although the game has its roots in such English pastimes as cricket and rounders (Koppett, 1981, p. 175).

The longevity of the myth (which lasted until the 1950s) was assured through its dissemination via Spalding's publishing company, its confirmation by baseball's first historical commission (sponsored, incidentally, by Spalding in 1907) and the use of Doubleday, who was a major-general in the U.S. Army and a Civil War hero, as the central character (Zingg, 1986).

Spalding was more than just a shrewd businessman who exploited a theme in order to make a profit. He recognized the appeal of patriotism and understood the dynamics of mythmaking....."Baseball," proclaimed Spalding, is "the exponent of American Courage, Confidence, Combatism; American Dash, Discipline, Determinism; American Energy, Eagerness, Enthusiasm; American Pluck, Persistence, Performance; American Spirit, Sagacity, Success; American Vim, Vigor, Virility" (Zingg, p. 388).

Spalding's vivid use of imagery and hype to root the game in the collective American conscience was a sign of things to come. Since his time, such promotional fervor has continued to punctuate the public infatuation for baseball, as illustrated by a 1940s publicity stunt by the Brooklyn Dodgers:

"When the lights were turned out at Ebbets Field and 30,000 fans lit matches to simulate a birthday cake for Pee Wee Reese, it was a press-agent-instigated idea, yes, but instigated by a press agent in tune with the populace" (Koppett, 1967, p. 329).

Special events, such as just described, are now used by a majority of professional baseball organizations to enhance attendance and fortify community acceptance. Souvenir "give-aways," special appearances by baseball "showmen" (Max Patkin, the San Diego Chicken, etc.), "new display scoreboards, television sets and bars in the boxes of the Texas stadium, marching bands, and the encouragement of 'personalities' such as Chief Noc-a-Homa (Atlanta Braves)" are among the "side involvements" which Ingham and Smith (1974, p. 207) say sports organizations use to increase fan "consumership." (1) Some teams, like the Pittsburgh Pirates, have also undertaken aggressive public relations programs through "winter caravans," , player appearances at community functions and involvement in charity fund raisers to enhance their image and * increase attendance (Pittsburgh Pirate Scorebook, 1986).

*How public relations and promotional efforts affect perceptions and acceptance by sports consumers, however, has not been explored at length. In fact, there seems to be a paucity of research on the

effectiveness and role of public relations in baseball.

On the other hand, there have been numerous studies on the factors and variables which attract sports consumers to a given sport, such as baseball. Many of these studies have been conducted in the areas of psychology and sociology, and some have taken a historical perspective in discussing the fundamental role of sport in culture and society.

Gelber (1983), for example, presents empirical evidence supporting a "congruence theory" for the rise of baseball in America right after the Civil War. The theory states that baseball's appeal was in its mimicry of day to day challenges and the responsibility and division of labor in business. "Baseball," says Gelber, "provided the male business worker with a leisure analog to his job. In the game, he experienced social relationships and psychological demands similar to those he knew at work. Indeed, he was working at playing, and by doing so was minimizing dissonance between those two aspects of his life" (p. 7).

Contrary to Gelber, many scholars attribute the popularity of baseball and other sports to the "compensatory theory," in which it is believed that sport adds the excitement and challenge missing for people in "an increasingly bureaucratic, systematic and complicated world" (Zingg, 1986, p. 392). (2)

Commitment to leisure pursuits such as sports, says Shamir (1988), may "compensate for unsatisfactory work roles" (p. 254), and Ponomarev (1980) says sports allow people, who "are accustomed to the implementation of concrete production tasks, to experience a

complete change in their psychological situation" (p. 74).

* Mann and Pearce (1978) believe that "escape from the frustration and monotony of the daily routine" is one of two functions which "partisan attachment to a team fulfills" for the sports fan (p. 174). Says Guttman (1986): "The role of shouting, screaming, arm-waving spectator is an alternative to the more restrained roles of parent, employee and civilized citizen" (p. 156).

Related to this compensatory theory are various characteristics which are the foci of much of the literature describing the sports consumer and the attraction of sports to both the individual and community. One such characteristic is identification with a single player, or hero worship.

As early as 1929, Brill talked about the fan's propensity for identifying with sports heroes to rise above mediocrity and share the athlete's triumph. Several scholars (Ingham and Smith, 1974; Ponomarev, 1980; Spinard, 1970) list "hero identification" as an important function of spectator sports for the consumer, and Guttman (1986) says that if not for the "millions of ordinary, and extraordinary, men and women (who) feel themselves personally represented by sports heroes and heroines," ticket sales and revenues from sports broadcasting would not be in the millions (p. 184). Cratty (1973) also discussed the "vicarious manner" in which fans earn their success "off the athlete's sweat" (p. 256).

Sloan (1979) labelled this vicarious enjoyment of sport by the

consumer as "basking in reflected glory (BIRG)." Sloan and his colleagues conducted studies (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman and Sloan, 1976) to investigate the extent to which college students emphasized or downplayed their association with their school teams following a loss or victory.*They first observed the rates at which school-related apparel was worn by students following games. Such apparel, they found, was worn much more frequently on days following victories, than on days after losses. Cialdini et al., as described in Sloan, also found that students who had a temporary loss of personal prestige (by being told in the study that they had not done well on a quiz) were more likely to use the pronoun "we" when referring to the school team following a victory than students who had been told that they had done well on the quiz. When the school had lost, however, students in general did not attempt to associate themselves with the team.

"Thus, in sports, as well as in other areas, when people suffer a personal loss of prestige or esteem, they react by trying to enhance their image. Here they do it by trying to BIRG successful others" (Sloan, 1974, p. 236).

Lee (1985) takes Sloan's comments a step further when he says that "the state of an individual's self-regard may be critical in determining the extent of affiliation to the team. Those who have low self-esteem and limited opportunities for promoting it through their own efforts may proclaim an association with others in order to enhance their own feelings" (p. 47).

The tendency to BIRG and to maintain personal esteem, says

Sloan, is not enough to explain a person's attraction to sports. Part of the attraction, says Sloan, could be grounded in what he called an achievement theory. In a survey of 551 individuals at a college sports event, Sloan found that their moods and feelings pre- and post-game changed, depending on the outcome of the event.

".....fans displayed feelings which indicated that they had sought to achieve a goal in the sporting event they watched. When their team won, they were uplifted; when it lost, they were discouraged, frustrated and sad. They felt as though they themselves had strived for achievement and succeeded or failed. Again, it appears that the fans do^{*} believe themselves to be a part, along with the team, of a meaningful group in their lives" (p. 252).

Says Lee (1985): "The success of athletes and teams representing particular social groups provides for the expression of community pride and, through a process of basking in reflected glory, allows people to feel a sense of satisfaction, attainment and positive self-regard. Indeed, the performance of sports teams may be an important instrument in the preservation of certain cultural heritages" (p. 47).

The importance of victory and the agony of defeat for sports consumers is underscored, says Sloan, by their perception of being in a "meaningful group," whose bonding force is interest in or devotion to the team. Sloan elaborates on this communal feeling among fans, as do other authors reviewed. Lee (1985) states that "(a)ssociation with sports teams....creates the possibility of

experiencing feelings of belonging and solidarity with others" (p. 39), and McPherson (1975) called sport consumption "a socially sanctioned mode of behavior wherein an individual can share something in common on an equal basis with others in the community" (p. 250).

Wilkerson and Doddler (1987) echo Sloan, Lee and McPherson by saying that sport consumption can instill and maintain "collective conscience" in a modern society.(3) They posit that sports consumption can "link individual consciences and thus provide a basis for shared identity, common focus and, consequently, collective conscience. It might be, however, that these bonds of cohesion are temporary and tenuous, and therefore require continuous reinforcement from game to game and season to season. Perhaps this explains the seemingly insatiable demand for sport in modern society" (p. 40). (4)

Some of the elements of "collective conscience" as described by the previous authors are also used by Donnelly (1972) in defining the "sports subculture." Subcultures as they pertain to sports, says Donnelly, are collectivities or groups which have a common interest, belief or focus and which exist to meet the needs of their members. Members may adhere to the use of common symbols, "artifacts" and even behaviors (5) and allocate time and money in pursuit of their subcultural foci (p. 568). Communication among members, either through "face-to-face interaction" or widely disseminated publications targeted to the subculture, is also important for maintaining their shared identity and communal

feeling. In fact, says Donnelly, such forms of communication are "essential to the maintenance of the subculture" (p. 577) primarily *because information "is the basic currency of subcultures" (p. 572). *Those best known as members of a subculture, adds Donnelly, are individuals "in possession of the most information regarding the meanings and ways of the subculture" (p. 572).

Among baseball fans, this premium on information is evident. Trujillo and Ekdom (1985) say "today's baseball fan still reads team statistics and information.....to 'partake of the secrets of the tribe'" (p. 269). Guttman (1978) goes even further in his explanation of information's importance to baseball fans when he says that the slowness of the game's pace accommodates the dissemination and absorption of information by spectators.

"The pauses in the physical action are times for the fan to assimilate the information processed for him and to discuss with others the information already a part of his psychic life" (Guttman, 1978, p. 110).

As alluded to, being part of this "collective conscience" and sharing information with fellow members of a subculture could in itself be an attraction to sports consumption. The literature has focused on the suspected impact of sports subcultures and collective conscience on support for a team or franchise from both the viewpoint of a patron community and from those who are at a particular sporting event.

Through the concept of collective conscience and the "shared experience" of sport spectatorship, says Guttman (1986),

"individual identification with the athletes and collective membership in the community" combine to form the base of fan support for the sports team (p. 182).

In establishing evidence to support an independent home advantage factor for professional sports teams and the positive effects of attendance on that factor, (6) Schwartz and Barsky (1977) say that community residents who "invest themselves in favor of their local athletic teams" do so "partly because those teams are components of a community to which they feel themselves somehow bound and in whose destiny they find themselves in some way implicated.....A local team is not only an expression of the social integrity of a community; it is also a means by which that community becomes conscious of itself and achieves its concrete representation" (p. 657). (7)

Support for one's home team, Schwartz and Barsky add, "is a celebration of the local community," a concept that became the focus of a 1985 study by Mizruchi. Mizruchi sought to identify specific factors in a community that could enhance a team's home advantage and to demonstrate how "the social support of a crowd is itself determined by the social context within which the game is played" (p. 508). He compared the game statistics for the 23 National Basketball Association teams with demographic data from their home communities (such as size and growth as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau's "Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area"), age of franchise, size and location of arena and number of years the team had been in the city.

He concluded, among other things, that "in communities in which residents have a greater sense of community identification, and which leave fewer alternative outlets for expansion of community pride, the home court advantage will be more pronounced" (p. 516).

How people view their

communities, Mizruchi added, may also influence the extent to which they support their home team. For example, he says that residents of smaller cities, which are more "insular and less cosmopolitan" (p. 509), may have more allegiance to their city, and thus to their sports team, than residents of larger cities which are undergoing rapid growth and change and where loyalty and identification with the community will be less focused.

Identifying with one's community by attending a local sporting event is just one of the attractions of "collective conscience" for the sports consumer. The invigorating environment of the event itself and of being with other people with a similar sports interest may be another drawing card for the sports consumer.

Several papers (Koppett, 1974; Sloan, 1979; Zillmann, Sapolsky and Bryant, 1979) say the excitement a fan experiences in being among a throng of spectators is an attendance factor worthy of consideration. Dunning, as cited by McPherson (1975), said that the "quest by people for pleasurable excitement and a need to 'lose themselves,' and thereby fuse their identity with that of others in the crowd, were factors causing the rise of sport consumption" (p. 251).

These factors fall among what Hocking (1982) calls "intra-audience effects" and alter the way in which the sports consumer in attendance at the game views the contest, when compared to individuals who may be viewing the game via TV and listening to it on radio. As Ponomarev (1980) says, "the mass of spectators watching a sport show create conditions in which perception is influenced by interaction between spectators. Imitation as a way of establishing contact appears here probably in the most striking form; the feelings and experience of some individuals are taken over by others" (p. 76). Indeed, this statement could be embodied by the "Bleacher Bums" at Chicago's Wrigley Field, who were said to create "their own entertainment whether the Cubs won, lost or even took the field" (Trujillo and Ekdom, 1985, p. 274).

The impact of intra-audience effects, says Hocking, is based partly on "convergence theory," in which a "self-selection process results in a group of similar individuals being in the same crowd and subsequently feeling and behaving similarly" (p. 104).(8)

Hocking lists several variables, such as size, density and response intensity of the crowd, associated with intra-audience effects. The larger the crowd, the more tightly packed and the greater response to play action, the more excitement and emotional arousal will be felt by individual members of the crowd, not to mention the athletes on the playing field.

Says Hocking, "Such effects probably account for the large numbers of people who invest considerable resources to

attend sports events, even when they are televised. Finally, to the extent that these features of the stadium event can be conveyed through the medium, they may contribute to increased enjoyment and involvement for the home sports viewer" (p. 105).

Hocking feels that television sportscasting could help itself, while making attendance at sports events more alluring, by incorporating more crowd reaction during telecasts. He suggests that crowd response could "increase (TV) viewer enjoyment/excitement/arousal" (p. 106) if announcers and broadcasters were to place more emphasis on the crowd's role in the sporting event.

"While television excels in covering the 'game event' (just the play action)," says Hocking, "it does a poor job of covering the 'stadium event,' of which audience response is the most important part" (p. 106).

Broadcasting as a factor in sports consumption is addressed at length by other researchers, particularly Bryant and Zillmann. Bryant, Brown, Comisky and Zillmann (1982) say that sports commentary "appears to be a very powerful tool in influencing viewers' perception of play and their enjoyment of an athletic contest" (p. 118). To prove their point, the researchers showed one of three versions of a tennis match to 30 undergraduate students. Although all versions used the same video, each varied in its commentary, with the announcers on one version stressing the off-court friendship between the two tennis players and in another discussing the hatred and bitterness between the two opponents. In

the third version, the announcers stuck to the court action with no mention of any feelings between the players.

Each group of 10 students then filled out questionnaires employing semantic differential scales to assess their enjoyment of the match and their perceptions of the players' feelings and their competitive style. Bryant et al. found that the group viewing the video in which the players were portrayed as enemies gave the highest ratings to their segment in terms of enjoyment, excitement and interest. They also rated the competition as more intense.

"Perceived animosity between opponents....not only facilitates the overall enjoyment of a contest, but makes play appear more exciting, interesting and involving, and it makes the players seem more hostile, tense and competitive. All in all, hyping a bitter rivalry between sports opponents, at least in television commentary, seems to make the contest appear to be a more exciting and enjoyable affair" (p. 118). (9)

A similar study (Zillmann, Sapolsky and Bryant, 1979) found that the rougher the play in televised professional hockey games, the more it was enjoyed by viewers; and, commentary could enhance a viewer's perception of the degree of roughness in a play.

The influence of electronic media on sports consumption is such that a sports consumer can no longer be judged by how many games he or she attends. The extent to which an individual indirectly consumes sports via radio, television and the newspaper is also a factor when assessing the "commitment" of a sports consumer (Lee and Zeiss, 1980).

Commitment, as employed by Lee and Zeiss, is measured not only by the number of baseball games a person attends (direct consumption) and the ratio of those games to the total number of sporting events attended (selectivity of consumption), but also by how much the person follows the sport on radio and television (indirect consumption).

Lee and Zeiss used these criteria to survey 932 spectators at 10 major league baseball games in 1977. From their results, they developed a typology of the sports consumer. (10)

They classify sports consumers in four general groups: the fan, the follower, the spectator and the onlooker (See Table 1). They further divide each group into two categories: specialized and general, based on their selectivity of consumption. The specialized fan or spectator, for example, has a high ratio of baseball games to other sporting events attended, when compared with the general fan or spectator. Overall, fans and spectators have a high frequency of direct consumption (five games or more attended per year), while followers and onlookers average less than five games a year. On the other hand, followers and fans have the highest frequency of indirect consumption (they watch or listen to most or all broadcasts), while spectators and onlookers have a low frequency of such consumption.

Thus, followers may devote much attention to baseball, but their primary contact is through the media.

"Of particular interest is the 'specialized fan' whose frequent focused attendance and high degree of media involvement represent

the fullest expression of the baseball consumer role among those surveyed.....At the opposite extreme lies the general onlooker type...(who) are less committed to baseball than any other group of sports consumers; they rarely attend games of any kind and only periodically listen to or watch broadcasts" (p. 411).

This latter category accounts for the largest percentage (30.9) of those surveyed by Lee and Zeiss (N=932). Only 15.4 percent of those surveyed could be labelled as specialized fans, while the general fan comprised 14.4 percent of the population surveyed, the specialized follower 2.3 percent, the general follower 8.7 percent, the specialized spectator 9.7 percent, the general spectator 12.1 percent and the specialized onlooker 6.5 percent.

Lee and Zeiss employed further data from their survey to determine various characteristics about each category in their typology. They found that travel distance to the stadium had an impact on direct consumption (mean travel distance for the specialized fan was 14.8 miles, compared to 30 miles for the general onlooker) and the social habits surrounding the game event differed among the types of consumers.

"...the specialized follower, general follower, specialized onlooker and general onlooker types all live some distance from the stadium, buy their tickets in advance, go to the game with large parties and stop for food or drink before or after the contest. In contrast, the more frequent attenders comprising the two-fan and two-spectator categories are more likely to live near the stadium, buy their tickets at the gate, go to the game with small parties

and by-pass pre- or post-game refreshments" (p. 412).

If attendance at games does have an impact on the home team advantage (Cratty, 1973; Edwards, 1979; Schwartz and Barksy, 1977), then the effect could be circular--that is, the perceived quality of the home team might have an effect on attendance. In studying attendance as a factor on home team advantage, Schwartz and Barksy admitted that their findings may be tainted by this circular effect, namely that it could be that "good home teams draw large crowds; bad home teams, small crowds" (p. 654). Bellamy (1988) speculates that "teams that are consistently poor competitors tend to have lower attendance and to receive less money for local broadcast fees" (p. 75).

Noll (1974) carried this concept further when he performed a series of regression equations using team performance statistics and attendance for the 1970 and 1971 major league baseball seasons. He found that winning, indeed, does have an effect on attendance, especially winning a pennant.

"In fact, attendance in the pennant winning year will actually be less than in the next few years if the team, though not continuing to win pennants, can at least stay close behind the league leader" (p. 122).

Becker and Suls (1983) arrived at similar results when they assessed fan support for baseball teams from 1969 to 1979, based on each team's objective performance (its winning percentage for a given year), social performance (the team's standing in the division or league) and temporal performance (the

team's record for a given year compared with the previous year). They found overall that objective and social performance correlated positively with attendance (the better the team's win/loss record and standings in the league, the better the attendance). Temporal performance, however, had a negative impact--that is, "if a team improved relative to its own prior record, the number of paying spectators at home games actually decreased" (p. 306).

Not only was this temporal effect apparent when averaging game-to-game ticket sales throughout a season, it was even more pronounced when Becker and Suls evaluated season ticket sales for each team. They, like Noll, attribute this phenomenon to the sports consumers' reliability on past team performance, rather than current information on the team's success, and the feeling that "improvement in performance (from the previous year) implies poor ability," while a deteriorating record implies greater ability than the team is currently demonstrating.

"If fans hold this perspective, they may associate temporal improvement with poor team quality, thus being more likely to support deteriorating, as compared with improving, teams.....The present results indicate that actual or predicted improvement in temporal performance should be downplayed. Additionally, the results suggest that the optimum marketing strategy would emphasize the team's objective and social records when they are superior and downplay them when they are inferior" (Becker and Suls, p. 312).

Noll lists other factors which could contribute to the drawing power of a baseball franchise, as does McPherson. They are: a)

the franchise's competition with other sports and entertainment offerings in the city; b) the presence or number of "superstars" on the team; (11) c) the total cost of attending a game, including tickets, concessions and parking; d) the size and location of the stadium; e) the population of the patron city; (12) f) the amount of promotion the games receive.

This last factor is briefly cited by McPherson and not explored at all by Noll. In fact, as stated at the outset, promotion as a variable in attendance and community support for professional baseball is discussed little in the literature.

One other factor may have a consequence on community support. That factor, as cited by Daly and Moore (1981), is the team's administration and its publicly perceived intentions of building and maintaining a successful franchise. An administration, says Daly and Moore, which raises serious questions in the public's mind regarding player transactions and team management could threaten its own existence and the "viability" of the sport in the particular community (p. 82).

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Footnotes

1. Special events, or "promotional" games, are almost as old as baseball itself. Realizing the paucity of females in the stands, the management of the New York Knickerbockers of the fledgling National League initiated "Ladies Day" in 1867. On the last Thursday of each month, women were admitted free if accompanied by a paying male (Guttmann, 1986, pp. 114-115).

2. Lahr (1972) and Trujillo and Ekdom (1985) attribute baseball's mass appeal to a combination of the compensatory and congruence theories. "Baseball was not only an escape; it reinforced capitalist values," says Lahr. "The game melded field with factory, incorporating the techniques of an emerging capitalism with a pastoral panorama" (p. 110). Trujillo and Ekdom say baseball, as portrayed in the press, places importance on a "competitive work ethic" and at the same time "reaffirms American values of play" (p. 273).

3. Wilkerson and Doddler's use of the term "conscience" in this context can easily be confused with "conscious." Adopting Durkheim's (1933) definition, Wilkerson and Doddler say that collective conscience is "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society" (p. 35). Sport can activate collective conscience, they say, by linking individuals "to a common community orientation" (p. 36). In the same paper, they cite studies on "city consciousness," which is "a bond forged

between all community members regardless of separate individual or group loyalties" (p. 37).

4. While the "bonds of cohesion" among fans may be temporary, their individual interests in specific leisure activities may be more stable. In a study of 139 Knoxville, Tenn. residents, Lounsbury and Hoopes (1988) found a "surprising level of stability" in the residents' leisure activity preferences over a five-year period (p. 130).

5. Sadalla, Linder and Jenkins (1988) also talk about the use of a "shared symbol system" in "establishing, maintaining or refining a particular identity or image in the minds of others" in a group (p. 214).

6. Schwartz and Barsky surveyed 1,880 major league baseball games, 182 National League Football games, 910 college football games and 542 National Hockey League games for the 1971 season to look at the influence of such independent variables as current team standings and attendance on the number of home wins. While major league teams at home won 53 percent of the games for 1971, baseball ranked lowest in home advantage. Home teams won 55 percent of the time in pro football, 59 percent of the time in college football and 64 percent in hockey. Edwards (1979) also found in the four major league baseball teams he surveyed in 1975 that the home team won 55.6 percent of the time. In his comparison with football and basketball, he too found baseball to be influenced least by the home advantage.

7. Indeed, Schwartz and Barsky's statement may be evidenced

historically. As Guttman (1986) points out, "Irish-American and German-American owners and players were disproportionately prominent in the post-Civil War years, and disproportionate numbers of these ethnic groups flocked to cheer for Michael Kelly, Honus Wagner and others simultaneously representing memories of the old country and adaptation to the new" (p. 112). Guttman says a similar phenomenon occurred in the Italian-American communities in the 1940s when eight percent of all major leaguers were members of those communities (p. 113). On an international scale today, such community consciousness in sport, says Guttman, is especially evident in Japan, where "thousands of fans attend baseball games not simply with banners of the appropriate color but in complete baseball uniforms. Empathy can hardly go further" (p. 182).

8. Hocking, Margreiter and Hylton (1977) demonstrated intra-audience effects in an earlier field study. Two groups, each of 30 college students, attended a bar on different nights when the same rock band was playing. On one night confederates in the bar reacted positively to the band, while on the other night they reacted negatively. Hocking's hypothesis that the group which attended on the positive night would stay longer than the group attending on the negative night and would give a better overall evaluation of the band's quality were confirmed. Hocking said the evidence indicated that "audience members are affected by the responses of other audience members" (p. 247).

9. In discussing the impact sports commentary has on viewer perceptions, Bryant et al. recognizes the danger of getting too

colorful in describing rivalry between opponents. They worry that some sports commentators could get carried away and use "character and relationship manipulation that exists in fictional drama" to make the sports contest more entertaining. They ask: "Should an awareness of certain formulas to enhance viewer interest and enjoyment lead to stricter professional codes of ethics for promoters and sportscasters?" (p. 119).

10. Loy (1972) has a less exacting typology for sports consumers. He classifies them as: primary consumers, or those who attend sporting events; secondary consumers, who become involved in a sport purely through the mass media (radio and television); and tertiary consumers, whose only contact with sport is through conversations with others or through the sports section of the newspaper. "(A) special type of consumer," notes Loy, "is the fan. A fan is defined as an individual who has both a high personal investment in and a high personal commitment to a given sport" (p. 65).

11. Noll estimates that a star player on a team in a city of 3.5 million residents can draw an extra 150,000 fans during the season (p. 123).

12. Noll says that for a team "with average characteristics (including average player success)" to have a season attendance of 1 million, the patron city would have to have a population of 1.9 million. For season attendance to reach 237,000, it would take a population base of 1 million (p. 127).

METHODOLOGY

In the spring of 1989, the management of the Omaha Royals and Leslie and Associates of Omaha, with whom the Royals contract for public relations services, were approached regarding initiating a survey of spectators at Royals games during the ongoing season.

After their agreement and meetings with representatives of Leslie and Associates, a 20-item questionnaire was developed (with some items being multiple) to assess what, if any, variables may be influential in a person's attendance at a particular game and a schedule of games was identified for conducting the survey.

Subjects. Three-hundred-thirty-three spectators at Omaha Royals games were interviewed via their random selection based on seating charts of Rosenblatt Stadium. Of those, 227 (68%) were male and 106 (32%) were female. Thirty percent of the spectators (or 101) were between the ages of 35 and 44. The number of those in other age groups are: below 18--6 (2%), 18 to 24--25 (8%), 25 to 34--70 (21%), 45 to 54--47 (14%), 55 to 64--35 (11%), and 65 and over--43 (13%). Five spectators (2%) declined to give their ages.

The 333 spectators categorized by income include: less than \$10,000--22 (7%), \$10,000 to \$14,999--18 (5%), \$15,000 to \$24,999--40 (12%), \$25,000 to \$34,999--68 (20%), \$35,000 to \$44,999--57 (17%), \$45,000 to \$54,999--25 (8%), and more than \$55,000--40 (12%). Sixty three spectators (19%) declined to reveal their incomes. (See Appendix B for further breakdowns)..

Materials. Besides the 20-item paper-and-pencil instrument,

volunteers conducting the surveys were given explicit instructions and a suggested introduction for approaching respondents (See Appendix C). Clipboards were also supplied to the volunteers for ease in recording respondents' answers to survey questions. For their participation, volunteers received two box seat tickets to the game.

Procedures. The survey instrument was designed to identify variables which may affect a person's propensity for attending a Royals' game. Fans were questioned about: their attendance level during the previous year; their listenership to Royals' radio broadcasts; their likes and dislikes about their game outings; the salience of the Omaha Royals' won-loss record, individual players and identity of the opposing team in their decision to attend a game; their involvement with other sporting events or entertainment activities in Omaha; the nature of the group with whom they came to the game (if accompanied); and, various sociodemographic information, such as age, income and sex (See Appendix A). Weather, attendance and whether the game was a "promotional" event were also considered as factors.

The survey was conducted during every fourth home game, starting with the June 19 contest and ending with the last game of the season on Sept. 1. In all, 11 games were covered with a potential 550 spectators being interviewed (although that final number was substantially less because of a variety of problems, as will be discussed in the "Results" chapter).

Five volunteers per game were recruited each to survey 10

spectators. The sampling of spectators and each volunteer's "interview schedule" were based on a similar study by Lee and Zeiss (1980). Each volunteer was assigned a specific section of the stadium containing lower box, upper box and reserved seats. Volunteers were given a list of predesignated rows in their section and instructed to approach the second adult from the aisle and request the person's participation (see Appendices C and D). If the spectator declined, the volunteer was instructed to indicate so on the form and continue to the next predesignated row. If the spectator had been previously interviewed for the research project, the volunteer approached the third adult in the row. It should be reiterated that volunteers asked the questions directly, rather than giving the instrument to the spectators for them to complete. Volunteers marked the spectators' responses in the most appropriate category on the questionnaire.

Of the 10 predesignated rows for each volunteer, at least two and usually three were located in the lower box (blue) section (see Appendix E), based on the fact that about 30 percent of the annual attendance at Royals games occupy the lower box seats (according to personal correspondence with Matt Bassett, business manager for the Omaha Royals).

Volunteers usually began their interviewing a half-hour to 45 minutes before the start of the game. After the first few games, it was found that attendance in many sections remained sparse and thus predesignated rows would sometimes be completely empty. Volunteers were thus instructed that if predesignated rows in the reserved

sections were empty, they could go to the nearest row in that section having two adults and approach the second adult. They were to adhere to the designated rows in the lower and upper box sections, however, and mark "vacant" on the survey form if a row remained empty.

Statistical Methods. Since the data procured from the survey instrument was primarily nominal and ordinal, the chi-square, 2x2 contingency tables and the Spearman rank correlation were used almost exclusively to analyze the data. Percentages were also tabulated for all responses under each item (See Appendix B).

RESULTS

A Chi-square analysis was used to examine Questions 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 in the Purpose Statement. Data from Question 7 was also analyzed using the Spearman correlation, as were Questions 1 and 8. 2x2 contingency tables were used for Questions 3, 4, 5 and 7, with Questions 4 and 5 being multiple response.

In analyzing the data, one must remember that interest in direct and indirect consumption of Royals games is focused primarily on those who attend games at least occasionally (as reported by their previous year's attendance) and those who listen to the Omaha Royals on radio.

Some of the most statistically significant results were found in Question 7. Among those who do attend games, a Spearman correlation coefficient indicated there was no significant correlation between attendance and income levels ($N=235$, $r_s=-.05$, $p=.178$), but there was a significant correlation between attendance and age groups ($N=235$, $r_s=.2091$, $p=.000$). A chi-square analysis comparing frequency of attendance between those under age 65 ($n=195$) with those over age 65 ($n=37$) was statistically significant and indicates those over 65 attend more often. $\chi^2(2, N=232)=10.29$, $p<.01$. The chi-square value was even stronger when comparing those under 55 with those over 55. $\chi^2(2, N=232)=12.79$, $p<.01$. (See Table 2). However, difference in attendance among all age groups (below 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 and older) was not

significant. $\chi^2(10, N=232)=18.22, .05 < p < .10$.

Results from Question 7 prompted an analysis of the frequency of listenership by age group. A comparison of those who listen to the Royals and those who do not across all age groups was significant and in the direction of those over 55. $\chi^2(5, N=327)=22.45, p < .001$. Almost 61% of those over 55 listen to Royals' radio and about 47% listen at least twice monthly. This is compared with 37% and 28% respectively for all those under age 55.

On the other hand, a Spearman correlation of listenership frequency among all age groups which tune in was not significant. $N=139, r_s=.1114, p=.09$.

In addition, a chi-square analysis comparing listenership frequency between those over 55 and under 55, while significant, is not clear. $\chi^2(3, N=139)=8.69, .02 < p < .05$. Such significance could be based on the greater proportion of senior listeners who tune in at least twice a month (80% compared with 75% of those under 55). However, consideration must also be given to the fact that more of the under-55 listeners do so at least weekly (57% compared with 48% of the senior listeners). (See Table 3)

In exploring Question 3 (preference for afternoon vs. evening games by age), senior citizens were again the focus (specifically those over age 65), as well as those who indicated they were retired on Item 14 on the survey instrument. While less than half of that group ($n=57$) preferred afternoon over evening games, results of a chi-square comparing "retirees" with the overall population were significant in the direction of the retirees. $\chi^2(2,$

$N=310$)=6.03, $p<.05$. (See Table 4). A 2x2 contingency table, eliminating the seven "doesn't matter" responses to item 6, also shows retirees' preference for afternoon games. $\chi^2(1, N=303)=4.85$, $p<.05$.

Analysis of data regarding Question 2 also reveal statistically significant results. $\chi^2(4, N=145)=10.03$, $p=.039$. This indication of females' interest in the franchise and/or game is strengthened by the nearly identical proportions of listeners between the sexes. Just over 43% of all males surveyed said they listen to the Royals on radio, as did the same percentage of females polled. $\chi^2(1, N=332)=.00003$, $p=.995$. The difference in frequency of listenership between males and females who follow the Royals via radio is shown by the 61% of the female listeners who tune in at least once weekly, compared with 48% of the male listeners. Further analysis of female listeners shows no significant difference in listenership frequency on a weekly vs. a monthly basis between the age groups of 35 and younger, 35-54 and 55 and older (age groups and frequency levels were collapsed to meet Siegel's [1956] requirement that chi-square cells of less than 5 can comprise no more than 20% of the total number of cells). $\chi^2(2, N=44)=1.66$, $.30<p<.50$. In addressing the second part of Question 2, regarding frequency of attendance at games between the sexes, a chi-square analysis showed no significant difference. $\chi^2(2, N=235)=.5204$, $p=.77$.

In exploring Question 1, a Spearman correlation of frequency of both listenership and attendance of respondents who follow the

Royals by radio and in person at games shows a direct relationship, yielding a small, but significant, coefficient. $N=116$, $r_s=.2623$, $p=.002$.

In contrast to Question 1, results of the Spearman correlation on Question 8 shows an inverse relationship between frequency of attending Royals games and that of attending other sporting and entertainment events in Omaha. $N=178$, $r_s=-.1532$, $p=.021$. Additionally, a chi-square comparing whether those who attend Royals games more frequently are more likely to attend other sporting and entertainment events was not significant. $\chi^2(6, N=235)=3.825$, $p=.70$.

In examining the "likes" and "dislikes" of their experiences at Royals games among various groups in the sample (Question 5), little of significance was found. Small cell numbers prevented a comprehensive chi-square examination of all "likes" and "dislikes" variables. Adequate cell sizes for some variables, however, permitted 2x2 contingency tables to be calculated on all groups of interest. For example, the frequency with which concession services and prices were identified as a dislike was not found to be significantly different between those who attended on a "promotional" night and spectators at non-promotional games. $\chi^2(1, N=125)=1.08$, $.20 < p < .30$. Results of a contingency table employing crowd size as the group determinant (less than 5,000 in attendance vs. more than 5,000) in identification of concessions as a dislike was even less significant. $\chi^2(1, N=125)=.13$, $.70 < p < .80$. Likewise, the frequency of concessions as a mentioned pleasantry, or "like,"

between those who attended games with more than 5,000 and those who attended with less than 5,000 was not significant. $\chi^2(1, N=277)=.54$, $.30 < p < .50$. Neither were the frequencies of the other "likes"--the game itself, the stadium, crowd activities and events--which were subjected to contingency tables, none of which yielded a significance level of less than .05.

Between those who brought children and those who did not (Question 4), only one of the variables among the "likes" and "dislikes" was shown to be significant. The "opportunity to socialize among friends and family" as an attraction to the game was mentioned more frequently by those with children. $\chi^2(1, N=278)=4.92$, $p < .05$. As in the previous groups, there was no significant difference between those who brought children to the game and those who did not in the mention of the game, stadium, crowd activities or events as "likes," nor in the naming of concessions as a "dislike."

In examining the results from Question 6, no significant difference was found in level of attendance at games among occupants of lower box seats, upper box seats and reserved seats. $\chi^2(4, N=235)=2.36$, $p=.669$. Nor did a Spearman correlation show, as explained earlier, a relationship between level of attendance and level of income. The various income groups also show no significant difference in their seating patterns. $\chi^2(14, N=333)=12.77$, $p=.544$.

As with income, location of residence, at least in the metropolitan area, was not found to be significant when compared with level of attendance (Question 9). Analysis of respondents

grouped by zip code of residence into three categories--Omaha, the Suburbs (Bellevue, Millard, Papillion-Lavista and Ralston) and Council Bluffs--showed no significant difference in attendance among these groups. $\chi^2 (6, N=241)=3.25, .70 < p < .80$.

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DISCUSSION

If one were to assume that males are the most prolific consumers of baseball, perhaps the most surprising finding is contained in Question 2 (See Table 5). Of those who listen to the Omaha Royals on radio, there does seem to be a difference in the frequency of listenership between males and females, with women tuning in more often ($p=.039$). Adding to this evidence of the magnitude of female support for the Royals is the almost identical proportion of listeners between men and women interviewed, as exemplified by the significance of the chi-square reaching nearly 1.0, and no significant difference between the sexes in the frequency of attendance at games ($p=.77$).

This is not the first time sports spectatorship's "maleness" myth has been exposed. Lee and Zeiss (1980) found from their study that sex played "a minor part in the prediction of behavioral commitment" to a sport, suggesting that "once some minimal threshold of participation is exceeded, males and females enact the role of sport consumer in similar ways" (p.410).

These latest results, however, may also reflect the family oriented activity that baseball assumes for many people. Seventy-one percent of all respondents ($N=333$) reported being accompanied to the game by at least one family member, while 80% of women who listen to the Royals reported such accompaniment.

The promotional implications are many when one considers the number of women, spanning all age groups, who tune into the Royals on radio and who attend games, usually with family.

Age and income as variables for game attendance offer mixed results with age appearing to have the greatest influence. In fact, a Spearman correlation showed a slight, but not significant, inverse relationship between income and frequency of attendance ($r_s = -.05$, $p = .178$). Regarding the matter of seating patterns in Question 6, income groups must have been fairly evenly distributed throughout the various seating sections of the stadium, according to the chi-square analysis ($p = .544$). This could mean any number of things--the fact that businesses which hold season box seats allow employees or clients at various income levels to use the seats, the shared interest in baseball among all income groups, the generally held perception among the public that Royals baseball is affordable, or a person's willingness to invest in his or her subcultural interest regardless of income level.

Age, on the other hand, is a significant factor, and the answer to that part of Question 7 is "yes." The significance can be seen especially among those over the age of 55 ($p < .01$). More than 50% of that age group who attend games do so more than 10 times per season, compared with less than 30% for those under 55. The percentage of those who attend more than 10 games is even higher (57%) among the over-65 consumers of Royals' baseball.

These findings support Lee and Zeiss' contention that as an

individual grows older, "the selectivity of direct consumption" for a particular sport increases (p. 449).

This study shows that those over 55 also supplement their direct consumption of Royals' baseball by listening to the team on radio. Based on percentages, a greater proportion of elderly listen to Royals' radio (62%) than those under 55 (37%), and the chi-square analysis bore this out ($p < .001$). But among Royals' radio listeners, the difference in frequency of listenership among all age groups is not as clearly defined. So while the proportion of those over 55 who listen to the Royals may be higher than the rest of the population, they may not listen significantly more often than all other age groups under 55.

Still, the promotional implications regarding senior citizens should not be overlooked, especially when taking into account the significance of the chi-square of "retirees'" preference for afternoon games in April and May ($p < .05$). Another factor bearing on such promotional considerations--for both senior citizens and females--is the small, but significant, direct relationship between frequency of radio listenership and frequency of attendance at games (Question 1, $r_s = .2623$, $p = .002$). These findings open many options in building further community support from this base of direct and indirect consumption by senior citizens.

How much consumers of Royals baseball partake of other sporting and entertainment offerings in Omaha is still a question. The chi-square exploring the likelihood that individuals at varying frequencies of game attendance would indulge in such

offerings was not significant ($p=.70$). However, a small but significant inverse relationship was shown in the frequency with which such individuals partake of such cultural amenities as the zoo, high school and college sports, Lancers hockey and area restaurants, among other activities ($r_s=-.1532$, $p=.021$). In other words, the Spearman coefficient was not of such magnitude that one could conclude that a person who attends more than 10 Royals games a season is less likely to frequent other sports and entertainment events in Omaha, though the relationship leans in that direction. This certainly does not detract from Lee and Zeiss' concept of "specialized fans and followers" who devote most of their leisure attention to one sport, in this case baseball. Nor does the finding undermine the strength of what possibly could be, as Donnelly (1972) might say, Omaha's "baseball subculture."

The concept of a "baseball subculture," though not addressed directly by this study, is given momentum through the emphasis placed by respondents on the game as a medium for socialization and communication. Only 7% of the respondents came alone to the game and, as has been reported, 71% of all respondents came with at least one family member and those who brought children placed a premium on the "opportunity to socialize" at the game. Indeed, such cumulative evidence indicates that baseball is a family and group activity. This is not surprising, given the number of scholars, such as Guttmann (1986), Sloan (1979) and Wilkerson and Doddler (1987), who discuss the "communal" aspects of sports consumption.

If one applies this "communal" support to Omaha as a whole, then there is evidence to suggest that support for the Royals is not just a "celebration of community" within the city limits. In answering Question 9, it appears the Royals draw their support equally from throughout the metropolitan area, including Council Bluffs, Ia., and the suburbs of Millard, Papillion, Ralston and Bellevue on the Nebraska side of the river (p>.70). Contrary to Lee and Zeiss' findings, frequency of attendance was independent of travel distance to the game. However, this statement may be comparing "apples and oranges," since the urban geographies of Omaha and Seattle (where Lee and Zeiss conducted their study) are probably quite different, and Omaha's "inner city" is generally regarded as easily accessible by those who live outside but close to the city limits.

In considering the findings from this study, one must keep in mind some shortcomings of the survey. Item 6 on the questionnaire (preference for evening or afternoon games), for example, was somewhat ambiguous in that weekend or weekday games were not specified, and some may prefer weekend day games, but not day games during the week. Items 9 and 10 were not direct enough, in that "sporting events and entertainment activities" might have been too vague for some respondents who weren't sure what such activities included, and the latter survey item left little room for affirmative responses from veteran players who were sitting out a year, or from other personnel such as coaches and managers of

teams. Some items such as 4 and 5 ("likes" and "dislikes") could also have been left open-ended so that surveyors would not have been forced to define responses on the basis of prelisted categories under those items.

The total number of respondents was also below expectations. While that number ($N=333$) was sufficient for this study, the initial goal was 500. That number could not be attained with the method used because of sparse attendance at many of the games, at which rows predesignated for interviews were often completely empty. This also skewed the pattern of interviews between lower box, upper box and reserved seats. The goal was to have lower box seat occupants comprise about 30% of the respondents, the same percentage comprising the 1988 season attendance. It turned out to be 22%.

Finally, as Lee and Zeiss stated in their study (p. 413), the number of male respondents may have been slightly inflated by the number of females who referred interview requests to their male companions, as noted by two of the surveyors. Perhaps these females were less sports conscious than the females who did agree to be interviewed. Nevertheless, a larger number of female respondents would have been desirable given the rather surprising findings from that group.

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SUMMARY

As stated previously, this study did not deal directly with the concept of a "baseball subculture." But the questions raised by the results reflect directly on that subculture. In what some perceive to be a male-dominated sports subculture, do females partake as much as their fellow male members? Are senior citizens truly the "elders" of such subcultures, not in terms of age but in relation to the "basic currency" of the group--information (Donnelly, 1972, p. 572)--which they have accumulated over their lifetime? Are such subcultures--and more specifically, team support--fairly evenly represented economically and geographically in the patron metropolitan area? How "selective" or "general," to paraphrase Lee and Zeiss, are members of sports subcultures in their spectatorship of other athletic events? And, (from the business aspects of sports), what are the promotional and marketing implications in answering these questions?

To address these questions more fully and to accommodate future research in this area, the survey instrument used for this study has been refined. In doing so, one of two general directions could be followed. The first, which understandably is of greatest interest to the business management of a team or franchise, concerns the short-term promotional and marketing issues of interest to the team and was alluded to previously. But the second option dealing with the scientific aspects of sports spectatorship

was chosen and focuses on the composition of the team's community support and influence of the sport subculture on that support. Certainly, this area has both long-term and short-term implications for sports management and marketing.

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NEW SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The new survey instrument not only attempts to determine the composition of a team's support but also how much individual supporters partake in the baseball subculture or baseball-related activities beyond just spectatorship. With respect to the latter concept, the instrument attempts to determine whether individuals physically participate in sports (Item 10), other sports interests (Item 4) and where they procure their sports information (Items 7, 8 and 9).

Some items from the first survey instrument are retained because of their importance to understanding an individual's involvement with or attraction to the team or sport. Still worthy of consideration and study are a person's direct and indirect consumption of a particular team (Items 2, 3 and 6), intra-audience effects (Items 11 to 14), the attraction of various elements of the game itself (Item 15), group attendance habits (Item 5) and various sociodemographic data (Items 1, 16, 17, 18 and 19).

Revised Survey Instrument

1. Sex

_____ Male _____ Female

2. Did you attend any Omaha Royals games last season?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," how many?

3. Have you attended any Omaha Royals games this season?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes", how many?

4. Do you attend other sporting events in Omaha?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes":

a. What events do you attend? _____

b. How often do you attend them? _____

5. Did you come to today's games

_____ Alone	_____ With a business
_____ With a friend	_____ associate(s)
_____ or friends	_____ With a family
	_____ member(s)

6. Do you listen to/watch the Omaha Royals on radio/television?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes":

a. How often? _____

b. Do you recall the call letters of the station?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes," what are the call letters or dial number? _____

7. Do you subscribe to a sports magazine or sports publication?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," what is the name of the publication(s)?

8. Do you collect baseball cards?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," how many cards on the average do you buy a month? _____

9. Do you read the sports section of the newspaper?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," how often? _____

10. Have you played in some type of organized sports league (intramural, church, school, city, etc.) at any time during the past two years?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes":

a. Which sport(s)? _____

b. How often? _____

11. Besides the game itself, is there anything you particularly enjoy about your experience as a spectator at Omaha Royals games you have attended?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," what do you enjoy most? _____

12. Besides the game itself, is there anything you dislike about your experience as a spectator at Omaha Royals games you have attended?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes," what do you dislike the most? _____

13. Do you prefer to attend games when there are small crowds or large crowds at the stadium?

_____ Small _____ Large _____ Doesn't Matter

14. Do you prefer noisy or quiet crowds when attending games?

_____ Noisy _____ Quiet _____ Doesn't Matter

15. Did any of the following influence your decision to attend the game tonight?

	Yes	No
a. Royals' won/loss record	_____	_____
b. Opposing team	_____	_____
c. Royals starting pitcher	_____	_____
d. Opposing team's pitcher	_____	_____
e. Specific player(s)	_____	_____

f. If "yes" to specific player(s), which player(s)?

16. In what age bracket do you fall?

_____ Below 18	_____ 45-64
_____ 18-24	_____ 55-64
_____ 25-34	_____ 65 and over
_____ 35-44	_____ Refused

17. Are you married?

_____ Yes _____ No

a. If "yes", would you say you or your spouse is more interested in baseball or the Royals?

18. What is the zip code of your place of residence?

19. What is your total household income (all salaries of the family combined)?

_____ Less than \$10,000	_____ \$35,000-44,999
_____ \$10,000-14,999	_____ \$45,000-54,999
_____ \$15,000-24,999	_____ \$55,000 or more
_____ \$25,000-34,999	_____ Refused

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Appendix A

Royals Game Attendance Survey

seal no. _____

already surveyed _____

1. Sex _____ Male _____ Female _____

2. Did you attend any Omaha Royals' games last season?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," ask the respondents the following questions:

a. How many games did you attend last season?
1-5 _____ 6-10 _____ More than 10 _____

b. Of those games, how many were doubleheaders?
None _____ One _____ Two _____ More than three _____

c. During what month(s) did you attend games last season?
April _____ June _____ August _____
May _____ July _____ All months _____

d. If there were certain months in which you did not attend, do you recall any reasons for not attending during those times?
Response: _____

e. Of those games you attended, did you usually stay for the entire game?
Yes _____ No _____

3. Do you listen to the Omaha Royals on radio?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," have respondents answer the following questions:

a. How often do you listen to the Omaha Royals?
About once a month _____ At least once weekly _____
Two or three times a month _____ Almost every game _____ Other _____

b. Do you recall on which station you listened to the Omaha Royals?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," what are the call letters or the dial number of the station?
Call letters: _____ Dial # _____

4. Is there anything you particularly enjoy about Omaha Royals' games you have attended?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," what have you enjoyed?

- _____ The game itself, or field action.
- _____ Opportunity to socialize with friends and family.
- _____ Concessions (refreshments).
- _____ Special events (San Diego Chicken, Max Patkin, Glove night...)
- _____ Includes all other promo events).
- _____ "People-watching."
- _____ Gift give-aways in program.
- _____ Crowd or spectator activities (seventh inning stretch sing-along, clapping along with organ music, cheering or booing with crowd ... other stadium event activities).
- _____ Other _____

5. Is there anything that you dislike about Omaha Royals' games, or that prevents you from attending more often?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," what do you dislike or what prevents you from attending more often?

- _____ Crowd behavior
- _____ Ticket prices
- _____ Concession prices
- _____ Start & time of games
- _____ Parking
- _____ Ending time of games
- _____ Other _____

6. During April and May, would you prefer to attend afternoon or evening games?
Afternoon _____ Evening _____

NOTE: If response is "afternoon," would you prefer the games to start at
1:30 _____ 2:30 _____ 3:30 _____

7. How important is the Omaha Royals' win/loss record to you in your decision to attend a game?
Very important _____ Somewhat important _____ Not important at all _____
Important _____ Not very important _____

8. Do you attend Omaha Royals' games to see any particular player or players?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," which player or players do you like to see?

9. Do you attend other sporting events or entertainment activities in Omaha?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," have respondents answer the following questions:

a. Which events or activities do you attend?
Response: _____

b. How often do you attend such events?
At least once weekly _____ At least once every three weeks _____
At least once monthly _____ At least once every six months _____
Once a year _____ Not even once a year _____

10. Do you play organized baseball or softball in a league?
Yes _____ No _____

11. Did you come to today's game
Alone _____ With business or professional associates _____
With a friend _____ With a family member or family members _____

12. Were you accompanied to the ball park by children?
Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: If "Yes," how many children?
One _____ Two _____ Three _____ Four _____ Five or more _____

13. Who organized or initiated today's outing to the game?
I did _____ Another family member _____
A friend _____ An organization as part of a group outing _____
My spouse or roommate _____ A business or professional associate _____
My child (or children) _____ Don't recall _____

14. What is the zip code of your place of employment?

15. What is the zip code of your place of residence?

16. How long have you lived at your current residence?
Less than a year _____ Seven to 10 years _____
One to three years _____ More than 10 years _____
Four to six years _____ Other _____

17. How long does it normally take you to drive to Rosenblatt Stadium from your place of residence?
Less than 20 minutes _____ 20 to 40 minutes _____ 41 to 60 minutes _____ Other _____
More than an hour _____

18. In what age bracket do you fall?
below 18 _____ 18-24 _____ 25-34 _____ 35-44 _____ 45-54 _____ 55-64 _____ 65 and over _____
Refused _____

19. What is your total household income?
less than \$10,000 _____ \$35,000-\$44,999 _____
\$10,000-\$14,999 _____ \$45,000-\$54,999 _____
\$15,000-\$19,999 _____ \$55,000 or more _____
\$25,000-\$34,999 _____ Refused _____

EXTRA QUESTION: Was the identity or major league affiliation of tonight's opposing team a factor in your decision to attend the game?
Yes _____ No _____

Royals Game Attendance Survey

1. Sex
227(68) Male 106(32) Female

2. Did you attend any Omaha Royals' games last season?
236(45) Yes 97(29) No

NOTE: If "Yes," ask the respondents the following questions:

a. How many games did you attend last season?
106(45) 1-5 46(20) 6-10 83(35) More than 10

b. Of those games, how many were doubleheaders?
~~129(55) None 22(9) Two 18(8) More than three~~
62(26) One 5(2) Three

c. During what month(s) did you attend games last season?
10(4) April 80 June(34) 83 August (35)
39(17) May 110 July(47) 85 All months (36)

d. If there were certain months in which you did not attend, do you recall any reasons for not attending during those times?
Response: Most Frequent: Weather--22; Too Busy--15; Job Related--13; Out of Town--8

e. Of those games you attended, did you usually stay for the entire game?
211(89) Yes 25 No (11)

3. Do you listen to the Omaha Royals on radio?
145(43) Yes 188 No(56)

NOTE: If "Yes," have respondents answer the following questions:

a. How often do you listen to the Omaha Royals?
32(22) About once a month 53(37) At least once weekly
34(23) Two or three times a month 23 Almost every game(16)
3(2) Other

b. Do you recall on which station you listened to the Omaha Royals?
98(68) Yes 46 No (32)

NOTE: If "Yes," what are the call letters or the dial number of the station?

Call letters: KKAR 86(88) Dial # _____
KFAB 5(5)

4. Is there anything you particularly enjoy about Omaha Royals' games you have attended?
278(83) Yes 55(17) No

NOTE: If "Yes," what have you enjoyed?

183(66) The game itself, or field action.
31(11) Opportunity to socialize with friends and family.
20(7) Concessions (refreshments).
24(9) Special events (San Diego Chicken, Max Patkin, Glove night... includes all other promo events).
20(7) "People-watching."
17(6) Gift give-aways in program.
35(13) Crowd or spectator activities (seventh inning stretch sing-along, clapping along with organ music, cheering or booing with crowd ...other stadium event activities).
Other Stadium--47(17); Good Team--21(8); Good Seats--7(3); Being Outside--6(2)

5. Is there anything that you dislike about Omaha Royals' games, or that prevents you from attending more often?
125(38) Yes 208 No(62)

NOTE: If "Yes," what do you dislike or what prevents you from attending more often?

8(6) Crowd behavior 2(2) Uncomfortable seating
5(4) Ticket prices 2(2) Boring games
34(27) Concession prices 2(2) Starting time of games
9(7) Parking 2(2) Ending time of games
5(4) Traffic _____ Other Concession Service--9(7); No Bottles--5(4) Public Address Announcer and Music--9(7)

6. During April and May, would you prefer to attend afternoon or evening games?
104(31) Afternoon 221(67) Evening 7(2) Doesn't Matter

NOTE: If response is "afternoon," would you prefer the games to start at
46(44) 3:30 35(37) 2:30 20(19) 3:30

Appendix B (Cont.)

7. How important is the Omaha Royals' win/loss record to you in your decision to attend a game?
 7(2) Very important 35(10) Somewhat important 199 Not important at all (60)
 21(6) Important 70(21) Not very important

8. Do you attend Omaha Royals' games to see any particular player or players?
 68(20) Yes 265 No(80)

NOTE: If "Yes," which player or players do you like to see?

Most Frequent: Luis de los Santos--21(31); Jose Castro--4(6); Bill Pecota--4(6); Nick Capra--3(4)

9. Do you attend other sporting events or entertainment activities in Omaha?
 233(70) Yes 98 No(30)

NOTE: If "Yes," have respondents answer the following questions:

a. Which events or activities do you attend?

Response: Most Frequent--Creighton Sports--61(26); UNO Sports--44(19)
Lancers Hockey--40(17); Ak-Sar-Ben--33(14);

b. How often do you attend such events?

79(34) At least once weekly 30(13) At least once every three weeks
 69(30) At least once monthly 30(13) At least once every six months
 13(6) Once a year 3(1) Not even once a year

10. Do you play organized baseball or softball in a league?
 62(19) Yes 271 No(81)

11. Did you come to today's game
 24(7) Alone 6(2) With business or professional associates
 83(25) With a friend 23(7) With a family member or family members (71)

12. Were you accompanied to the ball park by children?
 153(46) Yes 180 No(54)

NOTE: If "Yes," how many children?

59(39) One 20(13) Three 9(6) Five or more
 52(34) Two 9(6) Four

13. Who organized or initiated today's outing to the game?
 192(58) I did 24(7) Another family member
 38(11) A friend 21(6) An organization as part of a group outing
 47(14) My spouse or roommate 9(3) A business or professional associate
 17(5) My child (or children) 1(0) Don't recall

14. What is the zip code of your place of employment? Most Frequent: 68113 (6); 68114 (5)

15. What is the zip code of your place of residence? 68104 (7); 68105 (17); 68005 (17)

16. How long have you lived at your current residence?
 27(8) Less than a year 35(11) Seven to 10 years
 61(18) One to three years 148(44) More than 10 years
 60(18) Four to six years Other

17. How long does it normally take you to drive to Rosenblatt Stadium from your place of residence?
 156(47) Less than 20 minutes 30(9) 41 to 60 minutes 20(6) Other
 95(29) 20 to 40 minutes 32(10) More than an hour

18. In what age bracket do you fall?
 6(2) below 18 70 25 - 34(21) 47(14) 45-54 43(13) 65 and over
 25(8) 18-24 101(30) 35 - 44 35(11) 55-64 5(2) Refused

19. What is your total household income?

22(7) Less than \$10,000 57(17) \$35,000-\$44,999
 18(5) \$10,000-\$14,999 25(8) \$45,000-\$54,999
 40(12) \$15,000-\$24,999 40(12) \$55,000 or more
 68(20) \$25,000-\$34,999 63(19) Refused

EXTRA QUESTION: Was the identity or major league affiliation of tonight's opposing team a factor in your decision to attend the game?

40(20) yes 157(80) no (This question was not posed until the fifth game of the interviewing)

Appendix C

Instructions for Interviewers

Please go to only those sections and rows that have been identified for you. At those rows, you should attempt to interview the second adult from the aisle (not the person in the second seat from the aisle, but the second adult, who may be three or four seats in from the aisle).

Before beginning each interview, please mark the section number or letter, row and seat number of that adult at the top of the survey form. (If there are not two adults in the row by the time you finish the rest of your interviews, mark "Vacant" on the survey form.)

Introduce yourself to each respondent by saying something like: * "Hello. I'm collecting information regarding the Omaha Royals for some communication research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. We're selecting areas at random in the stadium and asking people to respond to about 20 short questions. It takes about five minutes and you may refuse to answer any question. Would you like to participate?"

If they answer "no," apologize for the bother, mark "Refused" on the form by the seat number and move on to the second adult in your next designated row.

If "yes," ask them: "Have you been surveyed like this at the stadium earlier this season?" If they say "yes," apologize for the bother and approach the third adult in the row. If he or she refuses or has been previously interviewed, either write "Refused" on the survey form or check "Already Surveyed." Then move to your next designated row and approach the second adult.

In surveying the respondents, you may begin with question #2 after marking question #1 (which you should be able to do via observation).

Notice that questions #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9 and #12 have follow-up questions if the response is "yes" (or "afternoon" in the case of #6). It is very important to ask those questions to respondents who answer "yes."

For the follow-up question to #6 and for questions #7, #11, #18 and #19, you should prompt respondents by reading them the answer categories. For all other questions, however, let the respondent answer freely and mark the category in which the respondent's answer falls. If that category is "other" or "response" with a line behind it, jot down as briefly as possible their answer.

(NOTE: Apologies to volunteers for the late addition. Please notice the additional question at the end of the form. It's probably best to ask that question after question #7. But if you forget to do so, go ahead and ask the extra question after you've finished with question #19, and simply mark "yes" or "no.")

After finishing the survey, thank them and move on to your next designated row.

###

Appendix D

Sept. 1 Game--Game #11

Volunteer #1

Box 14 (seat 9 to 12 side): Rows A, C and E

Upper Box and Reserved Section H (seat 13 to 18 side): Rows 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22 and 26

Volunteer #2

Box 16 (seat 8 to 12 side): Rows A, C and E

Upper Box and Reserved Section K (seat 13 to 18 side): Rows 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28 and 31

Volunteer #3

Box 24 (seat 1 side): Rows E, D and E

Upper Box and Reserved Section P (seat 1 side): Rows 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22 and 26

Volunteer #4

Box 3 (seat 1 side): Rows A, C and E

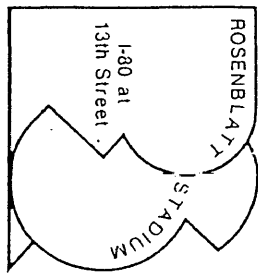
Upper Box and Reserved Section B (seat 1 side): Rows 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22 and 26

Volunteer #5

Box 5 (Seat 1 side): Rows A, C and E

Upper Box and Reserved Section 5 (Seat 1 side): Rows 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22 and 26

Appendix E



OMAHA

PO. BOX 3665
OMAHA, NE 68103
402-734-2550

ROSENBLATT STADIUM IS LOCATED ON
SOUTH 13th STREET OFF INTERSTATE 80

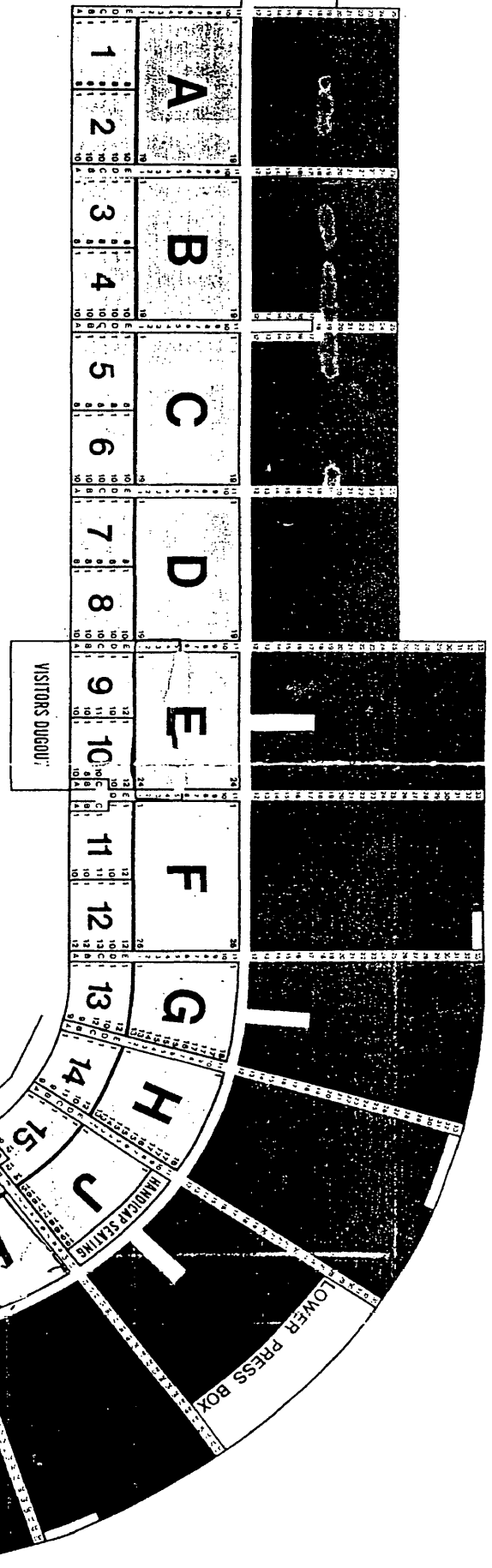
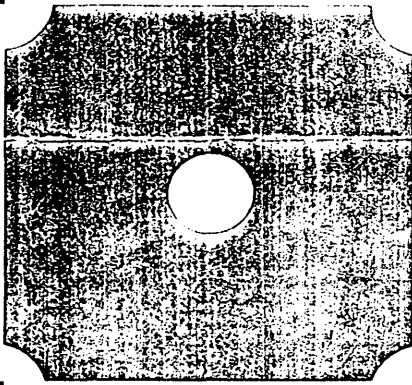


Table 1

Typology of Sports Consumers (a)

Direct Consumption				
	High Frequency High Selectivity	High Frequency Low Selectivity	Low Frequency High Selectivity	Low Frequency Low Selectivity
Indirect Consumption	Specialized Fan	General Fan	Specialized Follower	General Follower
	15.4%	14.4%	2.3%	8.7%
	N = 144	N = 134	N = 21	N = 81
	High Frequency			
	Specialized Spectator	General Spectator	Specialized Onlooker	General Onlooker
	Low Frequency			
	9.7%	12.1%	6.5%	30.9%
	N = 90	N = 113	N = 61	N = 288

^aCutting points: frequency of direct consumption (5 games or less = low; more than 5 games = high), selectivity of direct consumption (2.5 times or less the proportion of baseball games attended to the proportion of other games attended = low; more than 2.5 times = high), frequency of indirect consumption (listen to or watch less than most broadcasts = low; most or all = high)

Note. From "Behavioral Commitment to the Role of Sport Consumer: An Exploratory Analysis" by Barrett A. Lee and Carol A. Zeiss, 1980, Sociology and Social Research, 64, p. 418.

Table 2

Attendance by Age

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Those Under 55</u>	<u>Those Over 55</u>
1-5 Games	89 (51%)	16 (27%)
6-10 Games	34 (20%)	12 (20%)
More than 10	50 (29%)	31 (53%)

df=2, $\chi^2=12.79$, $p<.01$

Table 3

Listenership by Age

<u>Listens:</u>	<u>Those Under 55</u>	<u>Those Over 55</u>
Once/Month	23 (25%)	9 (20%)
2 or 3/Month	17 (18%)	15 (31%)
Weekly	41 (44%)	11 (24%)
Every Game	12 (13%)	11 (24%)

df=3, $\chi^2=8.69$, $p<.05$

Table 4

Evening vs. Afternoon Game Preference

<u>Preference for:</u>	<u>Those Under 55</u>	<u>Those Over 55 (a)</u>
Evening Games	176 (69%)	30 (53%)
Afternoon Games	72 (28%)	25 (44%)
Doesn't Matter	7 (3%)	2 (3%)

df=2, $\chi^2=6.03$, $p<.05$

(a) This also includes all self-proclaimed retirees.

Table 5

Listenership by Sex

<u>Listens:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Once/Month	21 (21%)	11 (24%)
2 or 3/Month	28 (28%)	6 (13%)
Weekly	38 (38%)	15 (33%)
Every Game	10 (10%)	13 (28%)
Other	2 (2%)	1 (2%)

df=4, $\chi^2=10.03$, $p=.039$