

Focus Group Analysis and Insights Attendance at Women's Sporting Events

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Analysis:

The first step in our process was transcribing our focus group Zoom's using voice typing and captions. From there, each of us read through our transcriptions and kept track of any patterns or trends we noticed. Once we had this data in mind, we then generated codes that correlated to our sections. After completing the coding, we then went back to our transcripts and coded the passages. With these passages coded, we could now contextualize for intensity, frequency, specificity, agreement/disagreement, and co-occurrence.

Codes: Scope and Context

Shorthand: Promotion

Definition: Participants examine the contrasting levels of promotion, media coverage, and sponsorship interest observed between women and men's sports.

Shorthand: Women's college basketball

Definition: Participants illustrate the role of Women's college basketball, specifically women's March Madness, in boosting engagement in women's athletes.

Shorthand: Skill

Definition: Participants share that skill level of athletes and level of competition significantly influence public interest in women's sports.

Shorthand: Growth

Definition: Participants express a surge in interest in women's sports.

Shorthand: Underappreciated

Definition: Participants convey that women's sports are currently undervalued relative to men's sports.

Shorthand: Game environment

Definition: Participants assess the perceptions of women's sporting events, articulate motivators behind attendance, and identify possible barriers that impede attendance.

Shorthand: Recognition

Definition: Participants discuss the current level of recognition, or lack thereof, for women athletes and team programs

Codes: Barriers

Shorthand: Stigma

Definition: The stigmas and stereotypes surrounding social perception of skills and perceived entertainment of women's vs men's sports.

Shorthand: Misrepresentation

Definition: The misrepresentation and unfair treatment of women's sports in media, often treating them differently than men's.

Shorthand: Promotion

Definition: Lack of promotion of schedules, individual player stories, team information, and more in social media and general advertising.

Shorthand: Disinterest

Definition: General disinterest and lack of engagement, can also be elevated by lack social incentive or time constraints.

Codes: Motivations

Shorthand: Good Competition

Definition: Participants expressed their want to see good competition as a motivator to attend sports games

Shorthand: Star Players

Definition: Participants expressed their want to see star players as a motivator to attend sports games

Shorthand: Special Events

Definition: Participants expressed their want to attend games if special events were happening at the games. (Free t-shirts, cheap concessions, theme nights)

Shorthand: Social Events

Definition: Participants expressed their want to go to sporting events for the social aspects. They wanted to go if their friends were going.

Shorthand: Environment

Definition: Participants expressed wanting to attend sporting events if the atmosphere was going to be good or if the location was convenient.

Shorthand: Enjoyment of Sport

Definition: Participants expressed their want to watch sporting events because they enjoy the sport itself.

Codes: Channels & Settings

Shorthand: Broadcast / TV

Definition: Participants receive women's sport media through commercials, TV, broadcasts, and other televised mediums.

Shorthand: Social Media

Definition: Participants receive women's sport media through social media like Instagram, Twitter, sports websites ,ESPN, and other apps.

Shorthand: Advertisements

Definition: Participants receive women's sport media through physical media like posters, physical promotions, and give-away events.

Shorthand: Through Celebrities

Definition: Participants receive women's sport media through "stars", popular athletes in sport or on social media, or even celebrities outside of sports who are commenting on sport media.

Shorthand: Word of Mouth

Definition: Participants receive women's sport media or news by hearing about it through other people, conversations, or talking about it with their friends.

Shorthand: On Campus

Definition: Participants see, hear, or receive women's sports media by physically being on the UO campus.

Shorthand: Off Campus

Definition: Participants see, hear, or receive women's sports media at other locations than the UO campus. This could be restaurants, on billboards, in other cities, and in Eugene in general.

Shorthand: Other Sporting Events

Definition: Participants see, hear, or receive women's sports media at other sporting events. This could be football games, other male sporting events, other professional sporting events.

Codes: Feedback and New Ideas

Shorthand: Physical

Definition: Categorizes ideas that take place in person, or physically.

Shorthand: Social Media

Definition: Categorizes ideas that take place virtually, on social media.

Shorthand: Monetary

Definition: Categorizes ideas that have a monetary incentive or require money.

Shorthand: Improvement

Definition: Categorizes ideas that UO currently utilize, but could be improved upon.

Shorthand: Other

Definition: Categorizes other ideas that do not fit the previously mentioned four.

Interpretations

When beginning our coding analysis process, we each re-evaluated our coding and took note of patterns and frequencies. We took this approach in order to assert how, when and why participants agreed, disagreed or felt strongly about a topic. We compared and contrasted our findings to analyze as a whole how participants felt.

With these findings in mind, we began to contextualize our codings and findings. We prioritized accounts of personal experience and agreements or disagreements of topics within the group. Our group felt these factors held the most weight. We then used these findings to influence our campaign idea generation.

Finding Insights: Prevalence/Context (Olivia Weiss)

Engagement in women's sports creates a ripple effect. With a rise in viewership and attendance, increased funding promotes women's sports further, ultimately elevating the level of skill and competition. Participants agree that there is a growing interest, but women's sports are still under-appreciated and under-promoted. All participants have a stake in University of Oregon sports as students and possess the power and ability to change the dynamics of UO women's sports.

Finding Insights: Prevalence/Context Quotes

There is a clear discrepancy in the promotion of male versus female athletes. This hinders the growth of women's sports, as interest typically arises when people have personal stakes and connections to players as this quote demonstrates.

"There's a difference like Bo Nix is everywhere- everyone knows it- so you can go to see certain players. But with women's sports here they don't really promote names like that, or you don't really see like many big names. I feel like people go to support players and when women's players are also getting less coverage those names aren't out there as much. "

These quotes illustrate the connection between news coverage, sponsorships, and interest in women's sports.

"I think with companies and broadcast news and stuff like that there is still something left to be desired in who they portray women's sports and give access to them."

"Sponsors are a big part- I'm talking about women's basketball- some sponsors will know that the men's game is on ESPN so they're gonna put more money towards the men's game. So they're gonna get like free t-shirts and stuff, while the women won't get that kinda stuff."

Finding Insights: Barriers (Will Nusbaum)

After contextualizing and coding our findings from our focus groups, we found lots of valuable data and insights into what is stopping people from watching women's sports. We found that the vast majority of participants cited misrepresentation in media and lack of promotion as their biggest barriers to attendance in women's sports. Although this was more of an abstract obstacle than a physical one, it was consistently brought up.

Many focus group participants also revealed that another large factor of their absence was the various stereotypes and stigmas that surround women's sports, from lack of entertainment value to perceived skill level.

Lastly, a small number of participants brought up more tangible barriers to attendance like the timing of various games, lack of social/community engagement, and general absence of discussion.

Finding Insights: Barriers Quotes (Will)

By far the most brought up topic in our focus group was misrepresentation and mistreatment of women's sports in the media. This included the differences in how men's and women's sports were discussed, such as the sexualization of female athletes and classification of them as emotional, and lastly the level of personal and negative scrutiny that women's sports are subjected to.

"I think that some of the media focus on what women look like. Oh, well, she's kind of like, you know, a little bit bigger for like a soccer player or whatever the sport they're talking about, but you know, she's still good, but you know, like she can be the lost a little bit of weight or oh, she's had a child. So, you know, you know, her days are kinda over now."

"It's like scrutinized a lot more. You can't make any mistakes. Or like with their emotions, a female athlete will get called a bitch instead of [getting recognition for] trying really hard. "

Another barrier that was consistently brought up was lack of promotion, both physically and online. Most focus group participants cited a general absence of advertising around campus for collegiate women's sports, and expressed their displeasure that they were often unaware of schedules, standings, or general team dynamics or members. The members of the study also attributed this lack of promotion to the misrepresentation and stigmas that exist within the women's sports realm, creating a cycle of shortage of knowledge and scarcity/negativity of general discussion.

"I don't find the schedule super accessible like I feel like if there was like a I'm like, a banner or someone like, something like a bulletin board that has the schedule. I feel like then more people would go to games, but I think we just don't know when the games are."

"I think they also just aren't advertised. And if they are advertised it's not as this as a big event that everybody should want to go to. It's like, oh, this is happening, but like. The guys games, the men's games, get way more hype and stuff like that. And again, like somewhat changing with like, especially at UO, like women's basketball and stuff like that, but. There's still teams that get just like virtually no marketing or advertising at all. "

Lastly, many students discussed stigmas around women's sports to be a prevailing reason why society at large is not as involved and invested in women's sports, although notably did not blame these same stereotypes and stigmas nearly as much for their own lack of attendance.

"People think it's boring, I mean, when you look into it, you can see it is more technical than men's basketball or even like women's soccer is more technical than men's soccer but they will think that it is slower."

Finding Insights: Motivations (Alexis Stinnett)

After reading over the transcripts from our focus group and analyzing the data a variety of motivators seemed to occur. Two of the biggest motivators for why students would attend a women's sporting event at UO included the social aspects and the environment.

Many students discussed that they would attend women's sporting events more if their friends also attended. They also cited their friends attendance as a reason for why they attended mens sporting events. This showed us that sporting events are more likely to be enjoyed with others and that it is unlikely for someone to attend on their own even if they enjoy the sport itself.

The environment of the game both in atmosphere and physical location was also a motivating factor. Many students expressed that they were more likely to attend a game if they knew the atmosphere was going to be exciting or if the location was convenient for them.

Finding Insights: Motivations Quotes (Alexis)

Numerous students in the focus group expressed that one of the main reasons they attended certain sporting events was because of the social aspects that coincided with the game. Football was the primary sport mentioned when discussing these social aspects.

"I think with like football, there's like this sort of party aspect. Whenever you hear about football, it's like, oh, where we'll be like in the pre-game, where are we gonna tailgate, so that kind of gets you excited to go to these games because once you're there you're with good friends are being social"

In addition to the discussion of the social aspect of sporting events, many students also expressed their desire to go to games that were in a convenient location for them.

"...like not last year but the year before that like people were excited to see them (volleyball) play and again since it's in Matthew Knight it's like oh you want to just go. It's indoors and it's something to do and it's close."

Lastly, many students cited the atmosphere of the game as a reason for attendance. They were more likely to attend if they knew it was going to be a "hype" environment.

"I didn't like realize it was, so like a packed stadium like 30,000 plus people and it was like such a cool atmosphere that I wouldn't have even expected. And then like yeah just being in there and that energy... and so that was just like really fun to like hear the whole stadium reacting to the match."

Finding Insights: Channels & Settings (Mia Carlton)

After contextualizing and coding our findings from our focus groups, we found myriad of valuable data. We found that the best channel to reach the public in order to promote women's sporting events was social media, specifically apps like Instagram and Tiktok. We also found that proper media representation on websites like ESPN and godducks.com would help promote the sporting events.

We also found that the best setting for the public to act upon our message was on campus here at UO. Participants highlighted how if there were more events on campus for women, that were properly advertised, they'd be more inclined to participate and become more knowledgeable about women's sporting events.

Participants found that promotions like posters were inefficient and did not do a proper job at promoting women's sporting events. We found that participants acknowledged that these mediums alone cost more money and more in-person investment than a social media post, which would arguably reach a broader audience.

Finding Insights: Channels & Settings Quotes (Mia)

At numerous points during our focus groups, participants gave examples of what social media they connected to in the context of women's sports. Many found that if the quality of the content properly advocated for women's sports then they'd feel more inclined to attend or keep up with women's teams.

"... social media accounts accounts posts like clips and stuff like really good plays and that's a big thing that attracts people like oh maybe I should have watched that like the highlights of that game or whatever maybe I should catch the next game."

"I feel like Instagram has been pretty good, especially like ESPNW. ESPN women's they normally collaborate with a spam account will post like collaboratively with ESPN women's now to promote more of those stories."

Participants also acknowledged how certain promotional channels failed to engage with them properly. Posters and television were two main factors deemed insufficient by participants. Most of them going on to discuss how social media was superior.

"online that can be free and if you're making posters and stuff you can invest money and that's not something a lot of people want to do for women's sports."

Finding Insights: Idea Testing (Andrew Milham)

Some insights we spotted regarding idea testing were that women's sports at UO should be posted more on Instagram, as the target demographic of students is less likely to be reached on the current platforms being posted on. In addition, there was support for more T shirts to be present at games, and that the department should hire someone specifically for women's sports, as the current iteration apparently has one person managing six sports at once. One weakness towards one of the presented ideas was that several participants did not like the idea of the punch cards, as they felt that would be disrespectful to the athletes if people were just coming to get their card punched and not watch the game.

Finding Insights: Idea Testing Quotes (Andrew Milham)

During the focus group, one main idea talked about was handing out t shirts to fans who would attend the games, which recipients seemed to like.

“I like the idea of like a towel or a shirt or something along that line.”

Specific ways on how to improve the current UO department were found as well, with one focus group member having specific info about the department.

“I understand a bit of how that department works and I think they need to hire people specifically for women's sports, rather than putting someone who's in charge of six different sports and is bounced around.”

Lastly, increasing the channels of communication to gain popularity via Instagram was an idea that came up, as the current available channels were deemed not widely accessible by members.

“I think there are different ways than interviews to show women's sport, like show tick tocks of the weird mini mic series it could go on Instagram, I think our current one has like 2,000 followers. But you could put more on that or like Go Ducks.”

Insights to Strategy & Creativity

Channel and Setting: Increased social media posts on sites like Instagram and Tiktok, and/or more promotional content on websites like goducks.com. These posts should highlight and promote in-person events on campus.

Justification:

One thing we reviewed in the focus group was that we want to exemplify the impact that proper female sports social media representation could have when coupled with promotional events on campus. Many people in our group discussed how they did not know when an event was happening and they felt a lack of connection to players. By using a social media campaign along with in person events in which players attend and participate in, we can create more awareness and connections with womens athletes and sports programs on campus.



**Come meet your women's
Volleyball Team!!**

Message Content Sample:

This is a mock instagram post, promoting a meet and greet event with the women's volleyball team. The caption of the post would include more event details as well as location and time.