

Columnist Analysis

William C. Rhoden is a sports columnist that works for the New York Times, and has written about sports since 1983. His recent articles talk about two prestigious New York professional basketball teams, the Knicks and the Nets, and how each of them are struggling to stay relevant in the league while they go through the dilemma of coaching changes, and high expectations of each of their own fan bases. He also shines the light on quarterback battles in the NFL, and if any of these new quarterbacks have the potential to ever be the next Manning or Brady. In each article he gives his viewpoints on the topic at hand, relates them to specific details from the past, and compares them to the fanbase of the teams' and players' respective leagues.

In his most recent article "As Knicks' Derek Fisher Finds, Coaching Burdens Are Heavy" he dives deep into the struggle of coaching professional basketball, and what kind of experience and talent it takes to make it in the league. This piece shines the light on first year head coach, Derek Fisher as he takes the overwhelming job of trying to fix the problem that is the New York Knicks basketball team. Rhoden first opens up the article with an example of a coaching experience of his, telling about when he was coaching his daughter's team of 13-year-olds, and how mentally draining it was for him compared to his three years of being a cornerback, or three decades of covering sports. Rhoden then moves on to describe how different it is playing and coaching, and as in Derek Fisher's case how hard it is to transition into coaching right after playing. Throughout the article, Rhoden gives examples of Knicks games, and their disappointing losses through the season. He gives reactions from Fisher describing how it feels like being the coaches seat, and input from other players, for example, Nets guard Joe Johnson talks about the difference of being a coach and a player. Furthermore, Rhoden adds in his opinion on what it takes to make a good coach, then follows up with examples of players who made the transition to coaching like Steve Kerr, Mark Jackson, and Billy Cunningham. Rhoden also shows that coaching is stressful and not every great player can be a good coach by giving the example of Hall of Famer Magic Johnson. Finally Rhoden then teases by comparing his experience with coaching teenage girls, with NBA coaches, and concludes that people should not be so quick to jump on the bandwagon of firing Derek Fisher or any new NBA coach in general as the pressure of being a reasonably exceptional coach, especially in the NBA, is a strenuous life with countless numbers sleepless nights.

Furthermore, Rhoden's next article is about the Brooklyn Nets battling to stay relevant in a city dominated by the New York Knicks. Rhoden introduces the conflict of the team by shining the light on the troubling situation in the front office of the Nets. He writes about the Mikhail D. Prokhorov the inadequate Russian billionaire who owns the team, and compares him to James Dolan the owner of the star-studded Knicks. Rhoden

then gives examples of weird habits performed by the Prokhorov such as never being there for any Nets games, and peculiar signings such as appointing Jason Kidd as their head coach, who has never had any experience as a coach whatsoever. Rhoden then moves on to give the Nets hope by describing the new, very solid, head coach of the team, Lionel Hollins. Hollins brings a tough old school defensive minded approach to a Brooklyn team struggling to leave a mark in the Eastern Conference. Rhoden gives pieces and bits of the coach's expectations coming into the season, his style, and even some background knowledge to show the fun side of a tough coach like Lionel Hollins. Rhoden ends the article by giving the honest fact of which everyone in sports knows, if the Nets ever want to draw attention away from the Knicks, the celebrities and new stadium will not make a difference, but all they have to do is win.

Then in Rhoden's third article he discusses the new generation of quarterbacks coming into the league, and compares them to the best, for example Peyton Manning and Tom Brady. He discusses how the style of quarterbacks have changed, there are now less pocket passers, but more quarterbacks that can make plays with their feet, and new leaders like Russell Wilson, in which Rhoden feels like is the next Peyton Manning in terms of leadership. Rhoden then compares all these new quarterbacks, continues to give examples of what each has accomplished, what each quarterback is expected to accomplish, and then finally ends the article with his opinion of "The N.F.L is facing a big-time quarterback vacuum".

Throughout all three pieces of Rhoden's work, all of them start with an introduction to the topic of what he is writing about whether it be background knowledge, or pure evidence from the games. He precedes to then talk about what is going on with the topic, and presents examples and insight from other credible sources, or past experience. Rhoden then states his opinion on the topic at hand, and then explains why he thinks that way by giving the audience facts supporting his side, and numerous amounts of examples throughout the article. At the very end of his article most of all the facts lead up the ultimatum of which he then presents his opinions again after giving the audience the evidence. His structure can be compared to deductive reasoning where you present your conception of the topic, and then precede to give facts to support your stance. Although Rhoden does a good job of delivering his argument, he does not address any counter-arguments, since opinions like, Russell Wilson possesses the same amount of ability as Peyton Manning can lead to arguments of how Luck is the better quarterback in terms of on-field play. Also his arguments for Derek Fisher, and how he need more time to develop, does not address the point of how Knick fans want to see their team win now and not later, especially with the likes of star player Carmelo Anthony on the team. Rhoden also has a good amount of credibility in his articles because he has been writing for so long, and he also builds it by getting interviews from other players and coaches around the leagues.