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Reflection Week 4

The first thing I thought of after going through this week’s material and Dr. Rinehart’s commentary, was the “Great Sports Myth” from week one. The idea that sports is pure, good, and teaches athletes to become good is simply not true. In many ways, sports may also reinforce stereotypes and bad behavior. For example, we saw how WWE celebrates violence and sexism. Like Dr. Rinehart noted, many sports do seem to reinforce the social construct of male and female. More “masculine” sports like football are generally seen only for male athletes. The reading even noted that football was a sport created to mirror American ideologies of individualism, masculinity, aggression, etc. In that way, we can view society’s social problems through sports. I think it was hinted in the reading and in the commentary that there was an interaction between sport and society. Societal changes can be seen within the realm of sports. For example, I would describe the last couple decades of society to be times of movements for greater equality in race, gender, and sexuality. I see that reflected in society. Historically, African Americans were restricted from playing any sports in America. Now, there are no such restriction and African Americans make up a large portion in some sports such as the NBA. There has been greater inclusion of women in sports. The idea of women playing sports is also increasingly seen as legitimate. More currently, we see many athletes embracing their sexualities. The changes in sport that we make also is reflected in society. For example, the behaviors and actions of athletes are looked up upon by the younger generation. When they see players change themselves to show greater sportsmanship and dialogue of inclusivity of people of all genders, sexualities, and gender, the audience is more likely to also accept those views. I think that Dr. Rinehart has hinting that athletes have a role in transforming sports and society as well. We do not have to wait for society to change to have more equality in sports.