

# 7: Radio play-by-play

Sport Journalism  
Beijing Sport University

Dr. Simon Ličen

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## Recap

- **Writing stories:**
- **Lead:** direct, delayed
- **Structure:** inverted pyramid, circular
- Style + headlines

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## Assignment over break – questions?

- **Feature story analysis**
- Examine how topics discussed in this course apply to an “iconic” Sports Illustrated feature story
- 1. Pick a story (research, browse!). Summarize.  
Topic, news value?
- 2. Writing style?
- 3. Sources?
- 4. Compare to Chinese features
- 5. Reflect
- 6. Formal: (...) up to **2 pages** on **1 sheet**. Due in lesson 9
  - 10% of final grade
  - Detailed prompts at <https://sportj.weebly.com/>

## Journalism and broadcasting

- “Journalism” usually **print**; journalism on radio, TV usually referred to as “**broadcasting**”
- **Describe the audience (listeners, viewers)**  
**what you see**
  - No need to sound scripted; make them feel part of the game
- **First rule:**

## Be specific, descriptive, lively:

- What is “fun?”
  - Watching a good sports game?
  - Sitting in the stands of a beach volleyball stadium on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro on a sunny, warm, and slightly breezy day, during the final moments of a quarter-final match of the women’s Olympic beach volleyball tournament.  
The Atlantic Ocean is in the background, and a refreshing drink is in your hand. The crowd is loudly and fanatically cheering the two Brazilian athletes currently playing, and they prepare to erupt in celebration when they score the final point to claim the victory:

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**Vivid descriptions  
are even more important  
in broadcasting!**

**Now, as for  
radio broadcasting...**

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## **Pre-game introduction**

- Introduction (what, who are listeners listening to)
- Significance of the game (e.g., history, rivalry)
- Who plays, team records, “road to the game”
- Prospects for the game
- Expectations, anticipations
  - Playing style, *not* likely winners!

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## Intro

- **These components are standard. They may be in part scripted and they certainly follow a template:**
  - Greeting, intro. Significance. Teams, standings. Individual statistical leaders.
- Importance of preparation, material sources, statistics, etc.

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## Tip-off (or, opening kick, or...)

- Introduce the game (just tuned in)
- Introduce starting lineups: positions, names, numbers (personal details – height and weight), (formations) for both teams
- (Team records, accomplishments)
- Coaches, season and career records
- **Uniforms, direction of play**

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## Ex.: NCAA Men's Basketball

- Washington State University Cougars vs. University of Washington Huskies
- NCAA Division I, Pacific-12 conference game; in-state rivalry
- Beasley Coliseum in Pullman, Wash., Feb. 26, 2017 ("Senior Day")
- Produced by IMG College, distributed to participating radio stations

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## \*Cougars vs. Huskies

- 1:35-3:45
- Significance of game: Senior Day
  - Charles Callison, Conor Clifford
  - Ike Iroegbu [wsu top-10 asst], Josh Hawkinson [wsu d-d lead]
- Statistical leaders, standings, injuries
- Markelle Fultz (*top 2017 draft p., 76ers*) **will not** play
  - Recall "beat." Starting nod?
- "Talk to [assistant coach] Curtis Allen with the keys to the game"
- Purple warm-ups
- Commercial break

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## Game time!

- **Provide frequent score and time updates.**  
People tune in and out all the time
  - Where do people listen to the radio?
  - How often is “often?”  
**At least once every three minutes; often even more.**

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## Game time: Score

- **Vary ways of giving the score and time.**  
  
16-14 can be:
  - “The score is 16–14;” or “Sixteen – fourteen”
  - “(Cougars) lead 16–14;” “up 16–14;” “up by two;”
  - “Two-point lead/game, (Huskies);”
  - “Cougars, 16 – Huskies, 14”
  - Etc.

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## Game time: Time

- **Vary ways of giving the score and time.**

Time:

- “4:25 till the end\* of the first (quarter);”
- “5:35 into the first quarter (period);”
- “Less than five (minutes) to go/left/on the ticker in the first (quarter, half, period...);”
- Etc.

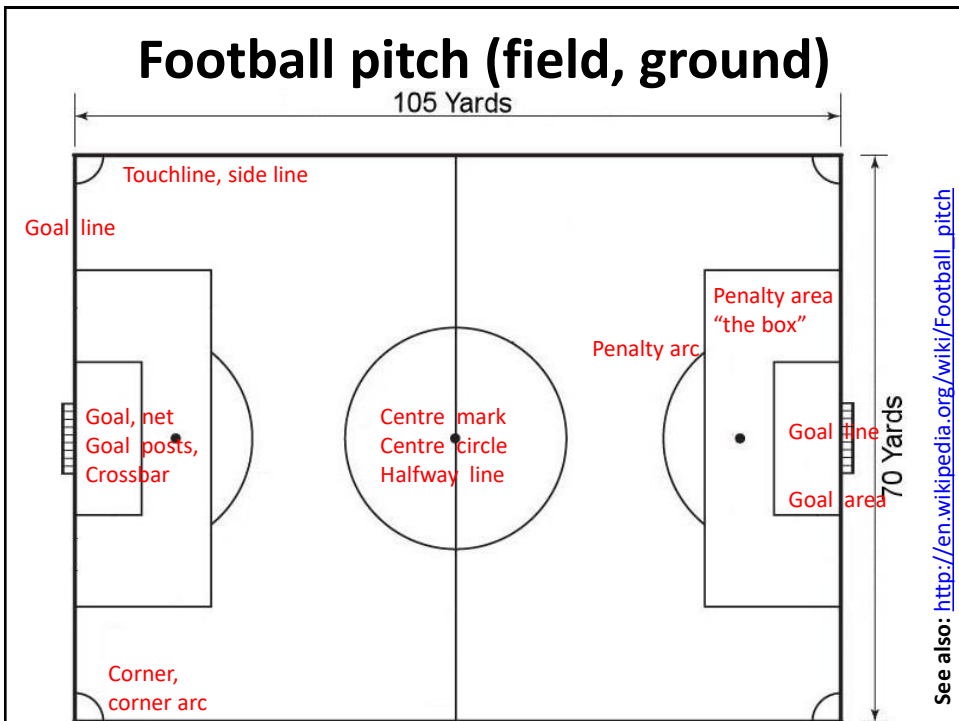
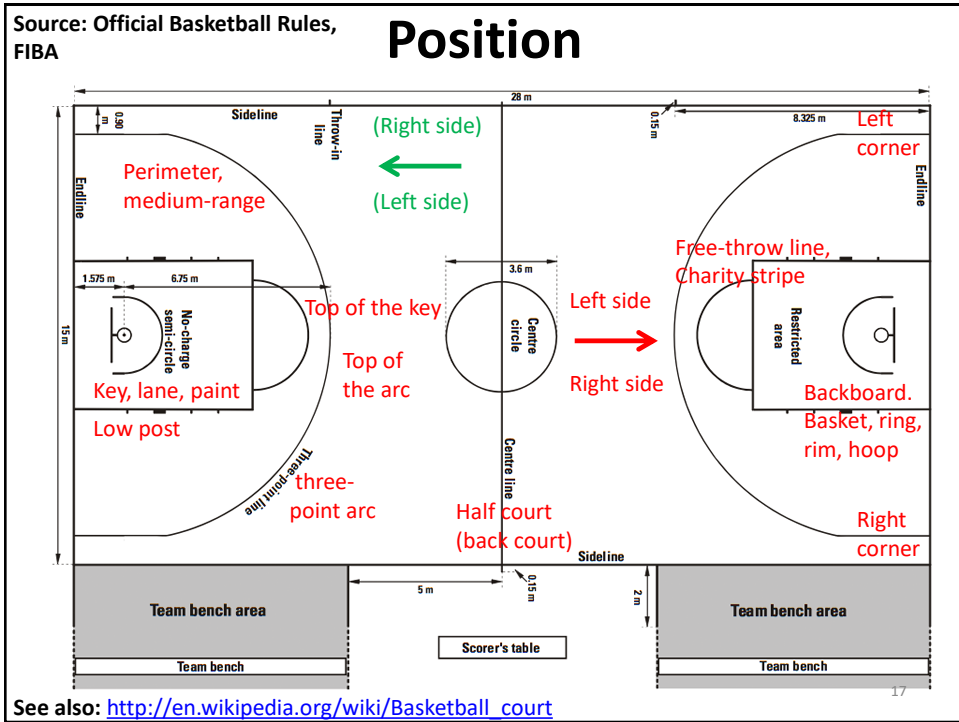
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## Position, identification, key stats

- Identify position of the ball
- Instantly identify players
  - Jerseys and numbers
  - Eventually, height ... look ... position on court ... playing style
  - Practice during warm-up
- Statistics, notes and observations that are relevant to the current play

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## Content

- **Report the game as it happens**
  - Avoid cheering (even for “home” team)
  - **Explain** why fans boo and protest; but,
  - Avoid criticizing the referees: what happens, not what you *think should have happened*
- Pace: talk about the game with a friend
- **Only** mention numbers, figures that support what happens (no opportunity to memorize)

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## \*Half-Time + Game

- 1:34:37-1:36:10
- Back here courtside at Beasley
- All tied at 31...Senior Night...Great crowd
- Lineups, scores (all tied at 31)
- Inbound: Husky ball to start the second half
- Crisp, “six-foot lefty from Tacoma”
- Crisp...teardrop...“connects:” “Seven points in the first half, nine total now, 3/10 shooting”
- Nineteen to shoot...twelve to shoot
- “Clifford with the lefty putback” ...“Now’s got a dozen”
- All tied at 33...

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## ...so what happened?

- Recap
- Two baskets scored
- How were they scored? ([teardrop](#), [putback](#) – *see also the provided transcript*)

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## Closing

- Final score
- Importance, implications
- Game highlights: best scorer, player (formal awards?)
- Scorers for both teams

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## Recap

- Ideally, memorize names and numbers. Also have a “spotting board”
  - Less difficult than it sounds
- Every 10-15 minutes
  - Teams, scores, time. Importance. Key moments, plays
- **Vary vocabulary**
- Know the rules: talk to referees, officials; read rule books

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## Silence

- Generally inappropriate

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## Speaking for media

- **Speak clearly. Enunciate (= open your mouth)!**
- Short, unequivocal words
- Short sentences: subject-verb-object
- Active verbs, voice
- Lower *your* voice; **do not** scream
  - Do not imitate, either
- Conversational tone
- Be objective. Be specific. Do not exaggerate.

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## Description is key

- **Stimulate the senses** of people listening from home; be the **eyes, ears, nose, skin** of the listeners
  - What do you **see, hear, smell, sense**? Is it sunny, hot, windy, loud? Tell your audience that!

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## Weasel words

- Words that don't **actually say** anything. "*Fun.*" "*Good.*"
- Be **specific**: "A lot" is 16 tons, 26 points, 76,000 fans...
- "It was a great game." What made it great? Compare this to another "great" game!

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## Description exercise

- **Talk about an object** for a minute!

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## Selected resources (!)

- Soccer:
  - Glossary of association football terms:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_association\\_football\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_association_football_terms)
  - Formations: <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/identifying-popular-soccer-formations.html>
  - Tips for watching:  
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/ten-tips-for-watching-a-soccer-match.html>
- Look up more resources on your own!

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## Selected resources (!)

- Basketball:
  - Moves:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball\\_moves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball_moves)
  - Lines & dimensions:  
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/the-lines-and-dimensions-of-a-basketball-court.html>
  - Cheat sheet: <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/basketball-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html>
    - See also RELATED ARTICLES

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## Selected suggested links, samples

- Not necessarily best. What do you like, dislike?
- [Basketball](#)
  - Time-out
  - Color analyst exaggeration
  - Talks over a goal
- NBA's Wilton Chamberlain scores 100 points in a game: [fourth quarter](#), CBS radio broadcast
- Soccer ([football](#)) play-by-play

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## Review

- Introduction: game, significance, teams
  - Players, coaches, formations, jerseys
- Score and time every three minutes; vary
- Recapitulate every 10-15 minutes
- Player identification; vivid descriptions
- Voice: clear, conversational, low, articulate
- “Random description” exercise + resources

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