LGBQ Athletes and Representation in the Media

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Introduction
Currently, there are more athletes coming out openly to the public about their sexual orientation. The media has a very big influence on the way the public views these athletes because they are the ones who give their opinions to millions of their audience. Media representation for these athletes has been both positive and negative to these athletes coming out.

Findings
In order to know more about our research topic, we looked at news articles and social media.

“The first is former NFL running back Derrick Ward: “Man U got little kids lookin at the draft. I can’t believe ESPN even allowed that to happen.”

‘Similarly, former Ole Miss basketball player Marshall Henderson was not pleased with SportCenter’s coverage of Sam on Monday morning: “Boycotting sportcenter til this michael sam nasty a** s**t is off .... My brothers are 7 and 11 and saw that!!! #SICKENING”
— marshall henderson (@NativeFlash22) May 12, 2014”

These tweets from fellow athletes were sent out immediately following the event of Michael Sam’s broadcasted kiss with his boyfriend.

This demonstrated that even in the most recent years, people will still judge an athlete based on their sexual orientation and will ignore the fact that they are good at the sport they play.

Background
• Homophobia is defined as the irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals.

• Research has shown that the media stigmatizes homosexual athletes even when they are in the same situation as a heterosexual athlete.

• The media can seem as though they are not saying anything wrong, when in reality they are subliminally conveying negative messages about LGBQ athletes.

• News articles have said that the athletes feel uncomfortable around gay athletes in the locker room.

• Tweets and other forms of social media from both fellow athletes and fans can be found that are extremely homophobic and hurtful toward the athletes.

Conclusions
• LGBQ athletes are portrayed in the media negatively despite society’s changing views of the LGBQ community.

• This implies that LGBQ athletes are better off hiding the fact that they are gay in order to avoid negative media representation.

• LGBQ athletes are possibly represented negatively in the media because it implies that the sports they participate in are feminine, against what sports were made to do (in the minds of the public, anyway).

• It is still unclear as to why LGBQ athletes are represented in the media negatively.

• If people see the negative backlash of an outed LGBQ athlete, then they might have a negative idea about the LGBQ community as a whole.

References
