

Writer Doesn't Like Mainstream Sports Covering WWE

Because it's not real you see.

It's another day and another story of a "mainstream" sports writer deciding that professional wrestling is "rasslin" and something not worthy of coverage on ESPN or CBS. In this case it's Michael Bradley of the National Sports Journalism Center at Indiana University.

The gist of the opening of his piece is basically saying that wrestling is being used to fill in space on a 24/7 sports station and how it's the price we pay. This leads to saying it started with ESPN "breaking" (his quotation marks) the story that Brock Lesnar wasn't returning to the UFC. This is the first red flag I see. Why is this not a breaking story? Mixed martial arts is certainly a mainstream sport, but for some reason a former World Champion opting not to return isn't a story.

I wonder if say, Tom Crean not returning to coach the Hoosiers' basketball team would be considered mainstream enough. As I'm writing this, the first four articles on their website are all about college basketball, followed by the article on the mainstream coverage of Wrestlemania. I don't see anything about Major League Baseball or the upcoming NFL Draft, but it seems that college basketball is important enough to cover, in addition to the Indy Racing League. Mixed martial arts apparently isn't worthy of a breaking news story though. Good to know.

Then the ESPN commentators talked about Wrestlemania and their Twitter and Facebook feeds were used to discuss the results of the show. So now it's not ok to dedicate part of an unlimited space to talk about the results of a show that runs four hours of a year. By the way, on the group's Facebook page: an article on football analyst Lee Corso, led by a discussion of how often he gargles to keep his throat strong. Back and forth, hand to hand combat with former collegiate athletes: not ok, but

football analysts gargling: ok. Again, good to know.

Now we'll get to the point of this: apparently Bradley doesn't care for the idea of mixing fake results with real results, because it might confuse the fans. Apparently this could lead to breaking down sports films or discussing TV, which is totally different than airing dramatic films on ESPN (which they've done) or Harlem Globetrotters games (which they air from time to time and Bradley says would be the next horrible step) or anything besides hard hitting journalism at the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network.

Then we get to the big line at the end: "It's fun to talk about Lesnar and his fellow rasslers, but it's not journalism." That word of "rasslers" tells me everything I need to know here. That one word makes Bradley come off as just another writer who seems to have no idea of how wrestling works and sees himself as a defender of REAL athletics who has no idea what wrestling is all about. Yes, the results are fake and it's been a known factor for years. For some reason, this means it's completely ridiculous to cover.

There was an excellent ad campaign from the WWF back in 1998 with a lot of the roster talking about their mainstream athletic backgrounds such as Ron Simmons, who has since gone into the College Football Hall of Fame and Ken Shamrock, who was a UFC Champion (oh wait that's not worthy of a mention. I wasn't sure if I was wrong about the site's coverage of UFC but their last story involving them was posted over a year ago so it doesn't seem to be a priority).

Apparently talking about the post-career lives and activities of athletes such as Brock Lesnar or the Rock, or current mainstream athletes like Ronda Rousey, would just befuddle the average fan because I guess they're not smart enough to figure out the difference. To paraphrase the end of that ad campaign, try watching their boots, because they're probably working a lot harder than some of the "real" sports out there.

Overall, I've certainly seen far worse attacks on wrestling and other than implying that wrestling or other sports fans might not be bright enough to know the difference between scripted or unscripted results and

using the antiquated term of “rasslers”, he doesn’t take any unnecessary shots at the sport.

As usual though, it seems that he heard the letters WWE and had already decided that it was just guys doing fake moves to each other because that’s what he heard it was growing up. It’s a shame that mainstream writers don’t give it a bigger chance, but with columns like this out there, it’s not surprising that they don’t as it basically shames them for trying to talk about it. But hey, it’s fine to air poker, cheerleading, darts, spelling bees and specials on fantasy football or the NFL Draft right?

Here’s the original article:

<http://sportsjournalism.org/sports-media-news/lets-hope-media-outlets-remember-what-e-in-wwe-means/>