

Is Access to the Internet a Right?

Since the development of DVR technology in 1999, many television programs are now recorded, instead of being watched live. The increase in control people have over their television, and an ability to watch recorded shows whenever they desire have made devices extremely popular with customers. However, sports have not followed the rest of television in being recorded. While televised dramas, comedies, and other similar programs are often recorded, sports continue to be primarily watched live. Most television is not actually live like sports event are, but are primarily filmed awhile before airing. People know this and act accordingly. However, when it comes to sports, people react negatively when viewing it after it has already occurred. This has not only been observed in sports, but also in news programs and contest shows as well (NYTimes.) The main factors that cause this are mental distancing from the event, erosion of tension, learning the game's result before watching the game, and a lack of companionship while watching recorded sports.

Mental distancing is caused by a lack of emotional connection to an event. When people watch live sports on television they feel emotionally involved since it is unfolding in real time in front of them. This is one of the main attractions to watching live sports on TV; to feel the emotional enjoyment (or sorrow) of watching your team play. In many respects the person feels like they are present at the actual game. This is a common human behavior. When events are happening to us or others in front of us, we attach ourselves emotionally to that event. For most shows this is not a problem when they are recorded. They never were live to begin with, and people create a different kind of emotional connection to them. However, when a game has been recorded, it loses the emotional attachment. Subconsciously people are unable to make that emotional connection because they know it happened at another time (Grantland.) It loses its place in time, and without that the game becomes quite bland. Also, people find it rather odd to hope for a good outcome when the game has already been decided. The game has now become an event of the past. Mental distancing is only further exacerbated by the next problem, the erosion of tension.

If mental distancing takes away emotional connection, then the erosion of drama takes away any sense of suspense. The tension of not knowing what will happen next is a key part of any sports broadcast. This is made especially intense by the frequent commercials that punctuate any sports program. Secondly, slower parts of a game adds to this anticipation for a more energetic sequence. However, when sports are recorded, this tension evaporates. Few people will sit through the commercials; they fast forward through them. They, also, will skip through slow parts of a game. While this increases convenience, there is no more waiting for an exciting part of the game. Part of the great joy of a sports game comes from not knowing what will happen (That Inking Feeling.) It is outside of your control, and many people enjoy having their "hands off the wheel" for a short time. Recording gives great control to people over their television, and many people do not want this for sports (Grantland.)

If people do not learn the results of a recorded game, they can still retain a sense of not knowing what will happen. However, with social media it has become difficult to avoid learning the results of an exciting game, or any game for that matter. Since knowing the outcome ahead of time makes watching a game extremely dull and pointless, people who record these games must abstain from anything which can inform them of the game's results (That Inking Feeling.) In today's interconnected world this can be especially challenging. Most people will not go through the effort to do this when they could just watch sports live. To do otherwise would be to condemn themselves to either a tedious game or to reclusively shun themselves from the world of social media.

Lastly, a large part of the enjoyment of watching sports comes from doing it with friends and family. Not only do they enjoy watching the game, but they enjoy being with ones they care about (Cheap Talk.) As such, sports are also about being with the people you know as well as the game itself. However, few people have such fun with others when watching a recording. Since a recorded sports game is not as exciting as a live one, people do not make the effort to get together to watch such a game. Also, there is no cultural practice to have a get together for a recording. These reasons have kept recorded sports games from becoming centers of social entertainment.

While the ability to record shows has saved a lot of people time and convenience, it appears to decrease the enjoyment of certain genres (mostly sporting events.) This may be impossible to solve, as the issue lies with people themselves. Even though more shows will be recorded in the future, it looks like sports will be continue to be watched live.

Sources

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