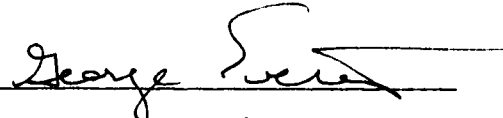
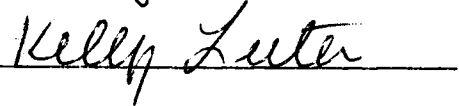


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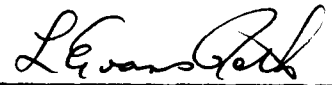
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kerry Wayne Tharp entitled "Profile of a Sports Information Director: An Examination of the Working Relationship Among Southeastern Conference Sports Information Directors and Basketball Coaches and the Editors Who Cover Them." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.


James A. Crook, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

PROFILE OF A SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
WORKING RELATIONSHIP AMONG SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE SPORTS
INFORMATION DIRECTORS AND BASKETBALL COACHES AND THE
EDITORS WHO COVER THEM

A Thesis
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Kerry Wayne Tharp

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain a personal and professional profile of the sports information director in the Southeastern Conference. In addition, a major part of the research dealt with an examination of the working relationship among the SIDs, key sports editors and head basketball coaches in the SEC. The 10 SIDs and 10 basketball coaches of the respective SEC universities were chosen as participants in this study, as were 10 key sports editors in the Southeast. The SEC is one of the most successful and progressive athletic conferences in the country and the author believed the SEC to be a suitable representative of NCAA Division I athletic conferences.

The data collection instrument was the questionnaire and the data collection method was direct mail. This study involved three separate questionnaires. Each particular group--the SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches--were sent separate questionnaires. The return rates were 8 of 10 for each group.

The major findings indicate that the SID serves as the liaison between the school's athletic program and the media and is a disseminator of information to the press and public in regard to his school's athletic program. The SID also serves as host to the media at all athletic events and is responsible for the printing and editing of all athletic department printed material. Through his work, the SID also attempts to constantly project an honest and credible image of his school's athletic program.

The findings from this study suggested that the SID must be a

versatile individual with the ability to adapt to diverse situations and relationships. It was found that it is important for the SID to cultivate a solid working relationship with the members of the press, as they are his arm to reach the public. Maintaining a stable working relationship with the coaching staff is another goal the SID should seek to attain. Gaining the coaches' respect and confidence is vital for the SID in his efforts to serve as an effective information source.

From this study, it appears that the SEC SIDs maintain fairly close working relationships with both the sports editors and basketball coaches. However, the editor-coach relationships do not seem to be as close. Personal conflicts between the two are often the cause for the breakdown in this relationship.

In a quick characterization, the SEC SID is either under 40 or over 50 years of age, has more than 15 years of experience in the sports information field, possesses a strong background in newspaper work, is an alumnus of the school he worked for in 1981, and earns between \$20,000-29,999 per year.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THESIS

I. INTRODUCTION

A university's sports information director has the potential to perform a vital function in the administration of collegiate athletics. Serving as the liaison between the school's athletic program and the media, the sports information director handles the bulk of the press relations for his school's athletic program. Generating publicity, hosting the media at events, assisting in radio and television negotiations and maintaining a credible image for the athletic department are among the primary responsibilities of the sports information director (NCAA Public Relations Manual, 1976).

While no more demanding assignment may exist in collegiate athletics than that of public relations at any institution of whatever size, primarily because the job encompasses so many activities, the function of the sports information director is often misunderstood. Just what does a sports information director really do? is a question raised not only by those outside the realm of collegiate athletics, but inside that circle, as well. Sports information directors have encountered the problem of being stereotyped; frequently they are labeled as publicists, horn blowers, drum beaters and cheerleaders for the school's athletic department. The job of the sports information director has expanded in recent years to incorporate far more important matters than simply dispensing information about athletic teams

to the media. At most institutions, directing sports information has become a minor part of any efficient sports information director's job. The modern sports information director is heavily involved in promotion, public relations, advertising and several other areas (Bronzan, 1977). The misunderstanding of the role the sports information director plays in the management of collegiate athletics needs clarification.

II. BACKGROUND

The sports information director profession is a relatively new one. The first organization dealing with sports information directors and their work was known as the Sports Section of the American College Public Relations Association. Early records are not available, but it is known that the Sports Section was formed sometime in the early 1930s and that the group met annually (in January) with the parent group (ACPRA). While the Sports Section had no officers as such, an ACPRA vice-president was delegated to handle all Sports Section business at the ACPRA meetings. George Shiebler of New York University in 1931 was the first such vice-president now known (Culp, 1972).

At the annual meeting in 1953, many Sports Section members (37 were present) expressed discontent over having to meet within the ACPRA group and asked for a plan to be drawn up that would allow for a separate meeting of the group in August. Arch Ward, sports editor of the Chicago Tribune, was approached concerning the plan and invited all Sports Section members to meet in Chicago and be guests at the Tribune's charity-sponsored all-star football game (Culp, 1972).

The Sports Section published its first newsletter that same year and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) issued its first public relations manual. The group set up an executive committee and appointed Charles Flynn of the University of Illinois as its president (Culp, 1972).

A record turnout of 102 Sports Section members attended the Chicago meeting in 1956 where the ACPRA Sports Section was reorganized under the national title of College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) (Culp, 1972). It was at these 1956 meetings that it was determined that Sports Section members would thereafter be called sports information directors.

The image of the sports information director and his future are the main concerns of CoSIDA. The organization has implemented regional workshops for new members, conducts an annual convention each summer, sponsors academic All-America teams in football, basketball and baseball, and has started a graduate school scholarship program for students who spend their undergraduate days as student assistants in the sports information office (Culp, 1972).

Seventeen committees, ranging from the Future of CoSIDA, to Ethics and Job Attrition, are presently in operation. A record 428 sports information directors registered for the 1980 summer four-day conclave in Kansas City (CoSIDA Digest, August, 1980).

CoSIDA's membership consists mainly of male full-time sports information directors, although an increasing number of women are joining the organization. Membership in 1980 stood at over 900 (CoSIDA Digest).

This thesis is a personal and professional profile of the sports

information director in the Southeastern Conference (hereafter called the SEC) and is an attempt to examine the working relationship among the sports information director and two of his closest associates--the sports editor and the basketball coach. It delves into such matters as which qualities are important for a sports information director to have in order for him to perform his job successfully, determines his specific and most valuable duties, and takes a close look at how he works to maintain a successful working relationship with the sports editor and the basketball coach. This thesis will describe sports information for men's athletics only and will not examine the coverage of women's athletics.

The SEC is one of the most successful and progressive athletic conferences in the country. The league's 10 universities have maintained strong athletic programs over the years and the researcher believes the SEC to be a suitable representative of NCAA Division I athletic conferences.

Certain criteria must be met in order for a school to be considered a member of Division I. An institution desiring to be a member may schedule and play not more than four basketball games against institutions which are not members of Division I. An institution desiring to become a member of Division I-A football must meet the following requirements:

1. The institution must sponsor a minimum of eight varsity intercollegiate sports, including football in Division I.
2. The institution must schedule and play at least 60 per cent of its football games against members of Division I-A football.

In addition, one of the following three criteria must be met:

1. The institution must have averaged more than 17,000 in paid attendance per home football game in the immediate past four-year period.
2. The stadium utilized regularly for the institution's home games must contain a minimum of 30,000 permanent seats.
3. The institution must sponsor 12 or more varsity intercollegiate sports, including football and basketball, in Division I (1981-82 Manual of National Collegiate Athletic Association).

Basketball coaches can also be considered as appropriate representatives of SEC head coaches, as basketball has developed into a consistently competitive sport from top to bottom in the SEC. To prove the overall balance of the league, in 1981, Mississippi, the sixth place finisher in the SEC's regular season title race, won the post-season conference tournament, earning a bid to the NCAA Tournament, giving the SEC four representatives (besides Mississippi, LSU, Kentucky and Tennessee also received bids) in the national tournament. Also, based on his own personal work experience as a graduate assistant in the sports information office at The University of Tennessee, the researcher believes that there exists a closer working relationship between the sports information directors and the basketball coaches as opposed to coaches of football or the other sports.

The 10 universities comprising the SEC began athletic competition with one another as members of the Southeastern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA), organized at a meeting of faculty representatives, called by Dr. William Dudley of Vanderbilt, in Atlanta, December 22, 1894 (SEC Basketball Guide, 1980). Representatives of seven

schools attended the SIAA organizational meeting and 12 more joined during the first year of operation. Dr. Dudley was elected president and served until his death in 1914. By 1920, the SIAA had expanded to 30 members, so in December of that year in a meeting in Gainesville, Florida, the larger schools reorganized as the Southern Conference (SC). Prof. S. V. Sanford of the University of Georgia served as the first president. By 1923, membership of the SC had grown to 23, including most of the Southern colleges, ranging from Virginia to Texas.

At the annual SC meeting in December of 1932 in Knoxville, Tennessee, the 13 members west and south of the Appalachians reorganized as the Southeastern Conference, with the 10 coast members remaining as the SC. Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Louisiana State University, Mississippi, Mississippi State, The University of the South (Sewanee), Tennessee, Tulane and Vanderbilt were the charter members of the SEC (SEC Basketball Guide, 1980). The new conference achieved both stature and stability by designating voting power to the presidents of the member schools. The presidents determine the league's policy and through the years this has enabled the SEC to maintain strong academic and eligibility standards, goals which are mentioned in the SEC statement of purpose which reads:

The Southeastern Conference is organized to form a more compact group of institutions with similar educational ideals and regulations in order that they may . . . increase their ability to render the services for which they were founded . . . by making athletics a part of the educational plan . . . and placing them under the same administrative control. (Southeastern Conference Tournament Program, 1981)

Sewanee withdrew from the SEC on December 13, 1940. Georgia

Tech followed in June of 1964, as did Tulane in June of 1966 (SEC Basketball Guide, 1980). The office of the Commissioner was created in 1940, because of the great amount of detail work developing, especially in recruiting and eligibility. Martin S. Conner of Jackson, Mississippi, a former governor of the state, took office August 21 of that year as an extension of the authority of the presidents. Bernie H. Moore, former coach at LSU, was appointed the second full-time commissioner February 21, 1948, and guided the league to national respect in his 18 years of service. A. M. (Tonto) Coleman succeeded Moore on his retirement in April of 1966. Coleman served in this capacity for six and one-half years. Dr. Boyd McWhorter, Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia and Secretary of the SEC since 1967, succeeded Coleman August 1, 1972, and is the current conference commissioner (SEC Basketball Guide, 1980).

The SEC Constitution states that the maximum number of league members is 10, with membership granted by invitation only by the conference members at a regular meeting. Membership may be terminated through a vote of two-thirds of the members. The sports regulated by the SEC are baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, indoor and outdoor track, swimming, tennis and wrestling (Southeastern Conference Manual).

III. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, the researcher seeks to develop a personal and professional profile of the SEC sports information director. This involves the sports information director's

thoughts on what his most important duties are, what challenges he faces in his work and what key qualities are necessary to become successful in his field. In addition, each sports information director is asked how he functions in crisis news situations (for example, team dissension, player suspension or coach dismissal) and how he thinks his work is perceived in the eyes of the media and basketball coaches in the SEC. Also, demographic materials, such as age, educational background, related work experience and income is gathered to help further this personal and professional profile.

The second purpose of this study is to examine the working relationship among the SEC sports information directors, sports editors and basketball coaches. Each group is asked about their working relationship with the other group, how close the relationship is and what qualities are valuable to have in order to maintain a successful working relationship. The researcher also attempts to develop personal and professional profiles, though on smaller scales, of SEC sports editors and basketball coaches. Questions concerning age, educational background, work experience and salary are asked of these two groups.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Minimal research has been conducted on a university's sports information director and his working relationship with the sports editor and basketball coach. This research could be beneficial to four groups--sports information directors, administrators of athletic programs, sports editors and coaches of intercollegiate sports.

Potential sports information directors could examine the results of this study and obtain an idea as to what qualities and traits are deemed important to become a successful sports information director and learn about the challenges of this relatively young, but growing profession. This study would also point out areas of conflict in the work of a sports information director and would assess the credibility of his work in the eyes of two of his closest working associates. So, this study can help the prospective sports information director as well as give the current sports information director some insight as to how he compares with his colleagues.

This study can also be beneficial to sports editors. The sports editor is a primary target of the sports information director in his attempt to obtain newspaper space and broadcast air time for his school's athletic program, with the sports editor being the sports information director's arm to reach the public. This research gives the sports editor a means of comparing sports information operations around the SEC and also allows him the opportunity to voice his opinion on the sports information director's primary responsibilities in accommodating the press. This study gives the sports editor the chance to have his say in determining the role of the major college sports information director.

This study can also be of use to head coaches. The SEC basketball coach heads one of the two most dominating and revenue-producing sports in the conference and is constantly in the public eye during the season. His relationship with the sports information director has the potential to be of great benefit to his basketball program. This

study gives the basketball coach the opportunity to compare SEC sports information operations and present his views in regard to the role the sports information director plays in collegiate athletics.

V. FORMAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This survey involved three questionnaires. One questionnaire was sent to the SEC sports information directors, one was sent to the head basketball coaches in the SEC and one was sent to the sports editors of the states' largest circulating newspapers in which the particular SEC school was located. The only exception to this criterion was in the case of using the sports editor of The Florida Times-Union in Jacksonville as opposed to the sports editor of The Miami Herald, the state's largest circulating newspaper. Upon the advice of University of Tennessee sports information director Haywood Harris and Knoxville News-Sentinel sports editor Marvin West, it was decided that a more accurate and objective response concerning the sports information operation at the University of Florida could be obtained from the sports editor of The Florida Times-Union. The Times-Union is located in Jacksonville, which is geographically closer to the University of Florida in Gainesville than the other large papers in the state. It was decided that this newspaper, as opposed to The Miami Herald, St. Petersburg Times, or Tampa Tribune, would be more likely to provide extensive coverage of Florida's athletic program.

Each questionnaire dealt with the particular group and their working relationship with the other two groups (i.e., a triangular relationship) with special emphasis placed upon defining the role of

the sports information director, evaluating his performance in the eyes of the sports editor and basketball coach, and determining the chief qualities and traits necessary in successfully carrying out his job. The area of investigation was defined to entail the following considerations:

From the sports information director questionnaire:

1. What qualities are necessary in becoming a successful sports information director? How important is each of these qualities?

2. What are the primary functions of the sports information department? How is your school's sports information department organized and what is the extent of your coverage?

3. How should the sports information director respond in certain work situations?

4. How is the work of the sports information director perceived by the media? How is his work perceived by the basketball coach?

5. What is the sports information director's perception of the working relationship which exists between him and the sports editor? What is his perception of the working relationship which exists between him and the basketball coach?

6. What is the sports information director like personally? What are his age, income, educational background and related work experience?

From the sports editor questionnaire:

1. How do you rate the sports information operations in the SEC? Which are the top operations? What qualities are necessary in becoming successful in this field?

2. What duties should the sports information director perform in order to best accommodate your needs as sports editor?

3. What is the sports editor's perception of the working relationship which exists between him and the sports information director? What is his perception of the working relationship which exists between him and the basketball coach?

4. What is the sports editor like personally? What are his age, income, and educational background?

From the basketball coach questionnaire:

1. How do you rate the sports information operations in the SEC? Which are the top operations? How do the other schools' compare with your school? What qualities are necessary in becoming successful in this field?

2. What is your perception of the working relationship which exists between you and your school's sports information director? How closely do you work with him during the course of the season?

3. How is the work of your school's sports information director perceived in the eyes of the other basketball coaches and media members in the SEC?

4. How do you rate the work of the sports editors who cover the SEC? Who are some of the top sports editors who cover the SEC?

5. What is your perception of the working relationship which exists between you and the sports editor who covers your basketball team?

6. What is the basketball coach like personally? What are his age, income, coaching experience, and educational background?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In a search of the literature for any previous work on a personal and professional profile of a major college sports information director and his working relationship with the sports editor and basketball coach, a minimal amount of material of any value was found. Smith (1976) found that sports reporters and sports information directors in the Southwest Conference held high opinions of one another on both a personal and professional level, according to results obtained through mail questionnaires and personal interviews. This thesis used questionnaires completed by sports information directors, daily newspaper sports reporters, wire service sports reporters and television sports reporters in the SWC. Smith discovered that newspaper sportswriters hold sports information directors in higher regard than do wire service or television sports reporters. Likewise, SWC sports information directors had a higher opinion of newspaper sportswriters in the conference than wire service or television sports reporters.

Reysen (1965) provided insight into the intent and extent of American college sports information programs and the factors affecting their performance. Reysen examined the status of the sports information director in the overall academic scheme, his purposes and their determinants, and his actual services. Through a survey of 145 sports information directors, Reysen discovered that because of the multiplicity of duties, no two sports information operations are

identical. Reysen did surmise that the four primary functions of the sports information director were: (1) Provide information concerning the school's athletic program, (2) produce brochures and programs, (3) accommodate the press and (4) maintain historical records. Reysen found that the amount and nature of the work done in each of the above areas is governed by the sports information director's fundamental objectives, which he generally derives from the school's athletic philosophy, success of its teams, the school's size and location with respect to schools competing for the same media attention and the school's conference affiliation, if any.

Reysen concluded that the sports information director was confronted with three major needs in his field of work--more time, more personnel and more funds to do a more thorough job. Reysen also pointed out the distinct need for improved communication between the sports information director and school administrators, so that the latter will better realize the value of a sound professional program in sports publicity as a means of achieving good public relations.

Dart (1973) shed some light on the role the sports information director plays in All-America football selections. This study revealed that it was the opinion of the sports information director that supplying information about All-America caliber players was part of his job and that selection to the prestigious squad was a goal that all sports information directors hoped could be achieved.

Anderson (1966) examined the basic duties of sports information directors across the country. Anderson found no basic differences in job responsibilities of a sports information director at a major

institution and one at a small college, but did discover differences in degree of job responsibilities. The major difference between the two was found to exist in their other duties, with the major college sports information director having few, if any, duties besides sports information related responsibilities, while the small college publicist normally has a number of extra duties and is not able to devote as much time to sports information work. Both major and small college sports information directors were found to believe that their work was worthwhile.

Kelley (1976) discussed a recent survey of major college sports information directors which found that over 60 per cent of the sports information directors surveyed indicated that they chose journalism as a major course of study in college. However, there are conflicting opinions on the value of majoring in journalism, as University of Pennsylvania sports information director Ed Fabricius says:

I don't think you have to take journalism to do the job. In fact, I don't think you even have to be a good writer to be a sports information man. There are other outlets on campus, such as the school paper or the school radio station, that could help a person develop his journalistic abilities. (Kelley, 1976).

On the other hand, Temple University sports information director Al Shrier believes, journalism provides the sports information director with the tools to build upon:

I think it (journalism) is a necessity. It prepares you for the basics of the profession. If I was hiring a man for the office, I would tend to lean more to the person with a journalism background than I would to a person who did not have that background. (Kelley, 1976).

The survey showed that more than half of the sports information

directors had newspaper experience before entering the sports publicity field. About 40 per cent had no newspaper experience before entering their present occupation; about 25 per cent had five or more years of experience (Kelley, 1976). The survey revealed that about half of the sports information directors have been in sports publicity work for nine years or more. About two-thirds of the sports information directors have been at their present school for four years or more. The survey also showed that about half of the sports information directors are currently working for their alma maters (Kelley, 1976).

Penn's Ed Fabricius offers his views toward working for one's alma mater:

Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. . . . It's good in that you know your institution. It's easier to operate if you know the temper and flavor of the school. It's not good if you get to be a cheerleader. If you're tied emotionally to the school, there is no way you can do a good, objective job. (Kelley, 1976)

The major complaint with the sports information director was found to be that his salary was not commensurate with the hours he puts in. The survey showed that only about 60 per cent of the sports information directors at major universities were earning \$15,000 or less in 1976, and that only three of the sports information directors surveyed were earning over \$20,000. Temple's Shrier comments on the salary situation:

The pay is improving. But it is nowhere near the number of hours we put in. I wish we would qualify for overtime. We would all work for half our salary. If the schools had to start paying us for our evenings, our Saturdays and Sundays, we'd be so far ahead of the game it wouldn't be funny. (Kelley, 1976).

Kelley concludes by saying that the sports information director must be a well-rounded individual and capable in a number of areas:

The job beckons an educated person, a person with a sensitive feel of campus life, a judicious mind, and eye for innovation, a zealous drive to make his school a viable and productive force in its public relations efforts. (Kelley, 1976)

Deford (1975) wrote of the selling and promotion involved in bigtime college athletics. In his article, Deford profiles University of Michigan Director of Athletics, Don Canham, the driving force behind one of the nation's top athletic programs. Canham is a strong advocate of solid promoting and public relations in college athletics and considers Michigan sports information director Will Perry his right-hand man. Canham sees collegiate athletics as a big industry operation:

We've got to promote what we have. . . . We've got to ballyhoo the pageantry, the weekend on campus, the kids, the cheerleaders, the bands. We've got to sell the spectacle and a strong promotions program is a feasible means of doing that. (Deford, 1975)

Smith (1979) pointed out that coaches, athletic directors or anyone dealing with the press on behalf of the school's athletic department should become familiar with the deadlines of the news media--newspapers, radio, TV, magazines, etc.,--in their area and make sure all information is timely and provided when it is news.

Davis (1978) devoted an entire book to the work of a sports information director titled Basic Concepts of Sports Information. The book is a general overview of the duties of a sports information director, ranging from his responsibilities in the office to his responsibilities on game day. Davis stressed two basic thoughts in

his text--"service to the media and professional credibility"--that should be constantly in the mind of the sports information director. Davis' book is a good source for concrete information that may be of use to current or prospective sports information directors in explaining some of the intricacies of the profession. However, since the text is written from the viewpoint of a Division II or small college (Springfield College, Springfield, Massachusetts) sports information operation, its value to this study is limited.

The review of the literature also revealed several sources which discussed the wider profession of sportswriting and can be related to this study.

Cartwright (1968) described sportswriters as oftentimes trying to bait coaches into answering a leading question. University of Alabama football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant offered his own personal philosophy on maintaining a successful relationship with the press when he said, "the only way to handle a sportswriter is with a fifth of Scotch" (Cartwright, 1968).

Cartwright further examined a university's practice of paying the traveling expenses for the sportswriters assigned to cover its sports teams. While this practice is for the most part considered obsolete, some editors see no special evil to the fact that their writers accept cash from the school to pay for lodging and meals. W. O. McGeehan is credited with drafting the sportswriters' code by saying:

If it's a bribe, it's not enough. If it's a gift, it's too much. (Cartwright, 1968)

Ethics is still a nebulous question to this profession that has never clearly defined its purpose. Is it the sportswriter's responsibility to report? to expose? to speculate? to entertain? to criticize? or just to subsist and endure? (Cartwright, 1968).

Ethics at the sports desk rests in the eyes of the beholder, but the Associated Press Managing Editors (APME), in their annual Sports Committee Report in 1975, found an increasing concern about complimentary tickets, meals or trips, commonly referred to as "freebies."

The APME sports editor survey in 1975 indicated that the editors were evenly divided on the propriety of accepting free trips on team flights, Christmas gifts and complimentary tickets. Newspapers have a variety of policies on ethics. Some prohibit free tickets in any form, while others accept them routinely (APME Red Book, 1975).

Most of the sports editors interviewed said they had few qualms about taking free drinks or meals despite the fact that many newspapers prohibit the practice. Most sports editors rely on their own professional judgment in accepting or refusing freebies. The majority of those interviewed said they could recall no instance where freebies had influenced a reporter's objectivity (APME Red Book, 1975).

The APME's Sports Committee Report in 1979 discussed the problems of access in sports, specifically a reporter's access to coaches and players following a game. Eddie Crowder, Athletic Director at the University of Colorado, spoke of access problems at the collegiate level. Colorado had a football coach who would lock the locker room

following a loss, barring reporters, but would leave it open following a win. Crowder addressed the problem in the annual report:

The problem arose because there was no policy governing our dealings with the media. We went over it with the coach and with some members of the press and then we worked out an agreement and decided how we were going to operate. . . . A key point was that it was the University of Colorado as an entity that was being represented, not any individual coach, athletic director, athlete, or anybody else. . . . We decided, of course, that we would be open to all newspeople with two guidelines: First, a cooling-off period of about 10 minutes at the end of any event, when coaches and athletes go into the locker room and can talk among themselves and get settled a bit. Second, in that period we provide a press room adjoining the locker room area. Our sports information director will be there and find out whom the reporters want to interview. At the end of the 10 minutes, he goes into the locker room and asks those people to come out and talk to the press. (APME Red Book, 1979)

This control of accessibility by coaches is becoming rarer each year in collegiate athletics. Many sportswriters say that access and media-sports relations are improving, because, along with changes like interview rooms and the establishment of Sports Information Departments, coaches, though still wary of the press, now realize the importance of good press relations (APME Red Book, 1979).

Although some writers do not use the sports information directors for all interviews, they all said they were able to do more interviews with greater ease because of the sports information directors' services. Wayne Bishop, of The Oklahoma Journal, commented on the helpfulness of the sports information directors in the Big Eight Conference in handling press relations:

I've had lots of success with the SID at Oklahoma. As a courtesy, I always go through them, but some player interviews wouldn't be possible without their help. (APME Red Book, 1979)

A letter was written to Fred Neusch, sports information director at Texas A & I University and 1981 CoSIDA secretary, for information regarding the history of CoSIDA. Neusch sent a booklet entitled A History of CoSIDA, which gave the researcher useful background information on the professional organization available for college sports information directors, which is presented in Chapter I of this thesis. A telephone call was placed to David Cawood, Director of Public Relations for the NCAA, with the researcher asking for information on public relations practices in collegiate athletics. Mr. Cawood sent a copy of the NCAA Public Relations Manual, which provided the researcher with a guide to successful collegiate sports publicity, with articles written by top sports information directors, athletic directors, and sports media members in the country. University of Michigan Director of Athletics Don Canham offers his views toward the duties of the sports information director:

. . . Once primarily a dispenser of information, the sports information director must become an income producer, a cost saver, an idea man who sees the problems ahead and is dedicated to adding his full talents in an attempt to solve them. He must earn that role by his: (1) relationship with the athletic director, (2) relationship with coaches, (3) relationship with news media, (4) relationship with alumni and students, (5) broad knowledge of public relations, advertising and promotion, (6) positive attitude, and (7) ability to change what has been done to what now must be done. (NCAA Public Relations Manual, 1976)

Hosting the media at events is a primary responsibility of the sports information director. Michigan State sports information director Fred Stabley believes it is of the utmost importance for the sports information director to go beyond the call of duty when the press are in town:

The sports information director's goal should be to play the perfect host. This means his guests should have fun, but also should have the way smoothed for them to do their best work. There is no more important function a sports information director can perform in all his varied duties. (NCAA Public Relations Manual, 1976)

Handling press and complimentary tickets is a tedious part of the sports information director's job. Nothing a sports information director does will gain him more respect or scorn than the manner in which he handles tickets. George Wine, sports information director at the University of Iowa, lists some important "do's and don'ts" for a sports information director in handling press tickets:

1. Keep track of all tickets, using a chart or filing system. Be sure you know where every one of the tickets goes.
2. Have a differently colored ticket for each game. Coordinate colors with the regular game ticket, if possible.
3. Insist that everyone on press row displays his ticket.
4. Have a competent person at the press entrance to check all tickets and handle emergencies.
5. Make it very clear each ticket is to be used by the person to whom it was issued. If anyone violates this rule, corrective steps must be taken.
6. When there is some doubt in your mind about a ticket request, check thoroughly before issuing the ticket.
7. Make the rules workable but strict, then live by them. When a policy is broken for one person, the word gets around.
8. Never give tickets to friends or to repay favors.
9. Insist that no one else handle press tickets. (NCAA Public Relations Manual, 1976)

The researcher talked with Mr. Cawood personally when he was in Knoxville for a Tennessee football game in the fall of 1980, and he offered his views on the researcher's thesis topic. Mr. Cawood suggested that the researcher use a direct mail survey for his study, as opposed to a telephone survey. He believed the mail questionnaire would allow for more thorough and accurate responses. Mr. Cawood also advised the researcher to make the questionnaires as simple and self-explanatory as possible, as all three groups used in the study exercise demanding time schedules.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I. THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The main thrust of this thesis was to obtain a personal and professional profile of the Southeastern Conference sports information director (SID) and examine his working relationship with editors and coaches. This was accomplished from information generated from questionnaires sent to SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches in the SEC. The SID questionnaire focused upon his responsibilities and his relationship with the sports editor and basketball coach, as well as his personal background. The sports editor questionnaire dealt primarily with his working relationship with the SID and basketball coach and a personal profile, while the basketball coach questionnaire examined the coach's working relationship with the SID and sports editor and likewise provided some personal information. Thus, a triangular model was established to examine the working relationship among these three groups, with special emphasis directed toward the SID.

Through the review of the literature, discussion with the sports information staff at Tennessee, and the author's own personal work experience, a rationale was developed for the construction of three separate questionnaires. The author drew much of his reasoning from interviews conducted during the summer of 1980 with Earl Cox, sports

columnist for The Louisville Courier-Journal and Joe Yates, sports information director at the University of Louisville. Cox, a sports-writer for more than 25 years, provided an insight into the sports reporter's relationship with the SID. He described the role of the SID in collegiate athletics and offered his views on the importance of a mutual respect between the media and the SID. Yates discussed the primary responsibilities of the SID and spoke frankly about what he believed were the major challenges and drawbacks in the sports information profession.

The literature review revealed that ethics was an area of concern among sportswriters, with newspapers maintaining their own personal policies in accepting freebies. Previous research had also indicated that an SID's work had expanded in recent years to encompass much more than serving as a source for statistics and publicity photographs. The author learned that the work of the SID had become much more sophisticated than some people realized.

Following the formulation of three sample questionnaires--one for SIDs, one for sports editors, and one for basketball coaches--the author conducted three separate pretests to uncover flaws in the research method and determine the feasibility of such a study. Following final revisions, three separate questionnaires were constructed. The sports information director questionnaire was five pages long and contained 34 questions. The sports editor and basketball coach questionnaires were each five pages long and contained 33 questions. The three questionnaires are in the Appendix.

Each of the three questionnaires was examined to determine what

type of information was being provided from each particular question. A coding method was devised and each question was grouped under one of the following headings:

1. FACTS--general information concerning responsibilities, scope of coverage, policies, work procedure and demographics.
2. OPINIONS--beliefs stronger than impressions regarding a particular issue; judgments.
3. PERCEPTIONS--insight or comprehension of a particular situation or relationship.

Although the author did not group the questions accordingly under each heading in the questionnaires, each heading contained a number of questions and when these questions were considered together, they provided information on the section as a whole. Thus, each question is important in providing information that is part of the overall development of each section.

Under the heading FACTS in examining the sports information director questionnaire, general information regarding the SID's responsibilities and scope of coverage was gathered. For example, "What are the primary functions of your department?" "What duties does your assistant(s) perform?" "Does your department cover women's athletics?" "How often do you talk with the sports editor during the basketball season?" were just some of the questions aimed at gathering information of this nature. This heading also dealt with the personal description of the SID and collected such demographic data as number of years in the field, related work experience, educational background, salary, and age.

The second heading, OPINIONS, examined the SID's personal viewpoint toward his work, his thoughts on various work situations, and his judgment of the performance of his two associates in question, the sports editor and basketball coach. For example, "What should the SID do in a crisis news situation?" "What qualities are important in becoming a successful SID?" "What is the biggest challenge in your work?" "Who are the top sports editors in the Southeast?" "Which basketball coaches are most likely to make themselves available to the press?" were questions asked. The key questions here were the ones concerning the SID's views toward his profession in general and the various work situations he encounters.

The final heading, PERCEPTIONS, was similar to the one on OPINIONS, but went a bit deeper by providing a more thorough insight into the work of the SID and his relationship with the sports editor and basketball coach. This section dealt with the insight the SID had with regard to his credibility in the eyes of the media and coaches in the SEC and his assessment of his working relationship with the sports editor and basketball coach. It was the author's belief that perceptions were judgments or viewpoints developed over a long period of time, while opinions focused only on present situations.

The questions on the sports editor questionnaire were grouped under the same categories when examined. Under the FACTS section, general information regarding the sports editors' dealings with the SID and basketball coaches was gathered as well as demographic material that attempted to describe the sports editors at the largest

newspapers in the Southeast. Questions dealing with work experience, educational background, age and salary were asked.

The OPINIONS section sought the sports editors' judgment of the sports information operations in the SEC, their views on the qualities necessary in becoming a successful SID, the value of the SID and the appraisal of the cooperation of SEC basketball coaches in accommodating the press. The primary areas of significance here were the sports editors' evaluations of the performance of the SEC SIDs and, to a lesser degree, the SEC basketball coaches.

The final section, PERCEPTIONS, again examined the sports editors' insight into the credibility of the SIDs in the eyes of their peers, their thoughts on the treatment from the SIDs toward the print media compared to the electronic media, and their perceptions of the working relationship that existed among editors, sports information directors and basketball coaches.

The questions on the basketball coach questionnaire were grouped under the same headings when examined. The FACTS section investigated general information concerning the coaches' dealings with the SIDs and sports editors, as well as demographic data such as coaching experience, educational background, salary and age.

The OPINIONS category compiled the basketball coaches' judgments of the SEC sports information operations, their views toward the value of the SIDs to their basketball program, their reactions to various work situations, and their overall evaluation of the SID at an SEC university.

The final category used to code the basketball coach questions

was PERCEPTIONS. Again, this area explored the coaches' insight into the credibility of SIDs in the eyes of the media, the cooperation they receive from school officials on information and their apprehension of the working relationship with SIDs. The questions grouped under this heading also examined the basketball coaches' discernment of the credibility of the sports editors in the eyes of their peers, their analysis of the coverage given their team by the sports editors, and their perception of the working relationship with the sports editors.

II. DESIGN

Two of the three groups used in this survey--the SIDs and coaches--were a census of a specifically determined population. That is, there was not a sampling from a larger population for these two groups and the results from this survey correspond only to those SIDs and basketball coaches in the SEC. The sports editors in this survey were sampled from a larger population. Ten of the key sports editors in the Southeast, whose newspapers cover the SEC, were chosen for use in this study. The rationale for this sports editor sampling is discussed in the upcoming section on Population. Thus, the results are applicable only to these three groups in the SEC and not generalizable to a larger population. All three surveys are one-shot descriptive studies and no cause-and-effect statements can be made when interpreting the results. This is purely a descriptive study.

III. POPULATION

The population for the sports information director questionnaire consisted of the SID's of the 10 universities in the SEC listed in the 1980-81 CoSIDA Directory. Likewise, the population for the basketball coach questionnaire consisted of the head basketball coaches of the 10 SEC universities as listed in the 1980-81 Blue Book of College Athletics. Basketball coaches were chosen for this study because the author believed he would receive a higher response rate from these coaches as opposed to those from football coaches. Football season was in full swing when this survey was first begun and a high return rate was unlikely for football coaches during this period. Also, basketball is rapidly becoming a more competitive sport in the SEC and is approaching the point of overall balance. Finally, based on his own personal work experience in the sports information office at The University of Tennessee, the researcher believed that there existed a closer working relationship between basketball coaches and SIDs than football coaches and SIDs.

The population for the key sports editor questionnaire was derived with one exception from the sports editors of the largest circulating newspapers in the states which the particular SEC schools were located, as determined from the 1980 Editor and Publisher Yearbook. The states' largest circulating newspapers were chosen because these papers would normally have the most professional and extensive sports coverage and would provide a more thorough insight into the work of an SID and basketball coach. In cases involving two schools from the same state (e.g., Alabama and Auburn), the sports editor of

the state's second largest circulating newspaper was selected also, and the two were randomly assigned a school. The only exception to this criterion was in the case of using the sports editor of The Florida Times-Union in Jacksonville, as opposed to the sports editor of The Miami Herald, the state's largest circulating paper. University of Tennessee sports information director Haywood Harris and Knoxville News-Sentinel sports editor Marvin West suggested that a more accurate, objective and comparable response would be obtained from the sports editor of the Jacksonville paper concerning the SID and basketball coach at the University of Florida. While The St. Petersburg Times and Tampa Tribune both have larger circulations than The Times-Union, it was decided that with Jacksonville being located geographically nearer to Gainesville, yet not the home city of the University of Florida, The Times-Union would be more likely to provide more extensive and similar coverage of the Florida athletic program.

IV. DATA GATHERING METHOD

The data gathering method was direct mail and the surveys were a census of the intended population. A questionnaire was sent to each member of the population, with 30 questionnaires being mailed in all. Each of the three questionnaires contained information on the other two groups involved, thus facilitating some verification of data gathering.

This study was aimed at examining the triangular working relationship among the three groups, with special emphasis directed toward the SID. Some of the questions on all three questionnaires were

identical, thus drawing opinions and perceptions from three groups in regard to the same subjects. Other questions were related so that information could be linked to the relationships that existed among the three groups. The population for this survey is listed in Appendices A, B, and C.

V. JUSTIFICATION FOR DIRECT MAIL

It was the author's belief that a direct mail survey would be the most applicable in this study. Erdos (1973) cites several major advantages of mail surveys over other surveys using other methods of data gathering. These advantages included: (1) wider distribution, (2) less distribution bias in connection with the neighborhood, (3) less distribution bias in connection with the type of family, (4) less distribution bias in connection with the individual, (5) no interviewer bias, (6) better chance for truthful reply, (7) time saving under certain circumstances, (8) centralized control, and (9) cost saving resulting in more flexibility per dollar spent.

A few of these advantages apply to this study. Since the individuals in this survey are located throughout the Southeast and are in professions that require long hours of work and hectic time schedules, the cost of conducting personal interviews or telephone interviews would have been prohibitive. Thus, one of the major reasons for direct mail was the cost involved. Also, some of the questions in the questionnaires required some thought, and the mail questionnaire gave the respondents the time to put some thought into these questions.

The direct mail questionnaire allowed them to fill it out at their convenience, and information was gathered that might have been omitted otherwise. The questionnaires are in Appendices E, F, and G.

VI. TIMING

The timing of the surveys, particularly the basketball coach survey was very important. With basketball activity in full swing by November, it was imperative that the coaches' questionnaires be sent prior to this time. A pretest for the basketball coach questionnaire was conducted in the middle of September 1980. A proposed questionnaire was sent to University of Louisville Coach Denny Crum, who promptly replied within 10 days. The questionnaire sent to Coach Crum was structured to examine the news coverage of the Metro Conference, of which the University of Louisville is a member. Therefore, Coach Crum was asked to comment on the sports information operations and key sports editors of that conference. The questionnaires developed in this study were designed to examine the news coverage of the SEC, so SEC related questions had to be inserted following the return of the pretest questionnaire from Coach Crum. The questionnaire was revised and final questionnaires for basketball coaches were mailed between October 21 and 24, 1980. Each envelope contained a questionnaire, a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the completed return. On November 30, 1980, each coach who had not returned the questionnaire was sent a follow-up letter reminding him to fill out the questionnaire and return it.

The pretests for the SID and sports editor were not conducted

until early January 1981. Pretest questionnaires were sent to Joe Yates, sports information director at the University of Louisville, and Marvin West, sports editor of The Knoxville News-Sentinel. Again, the questionnaire sent to Yates was concerned with news coverage of the Metro Conference. Since West covers The University of Tennessee and subsequently the SEC, his questionnaire examined the news coverage of that conference, which served as the focal point of this study. After revisions and rewriting, the final sports information director and sports editor questionnaires were mailed between January 26 and February 1, 1981. Each envelope contained a questionnaire, a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope. On February 19, 1981, each SID and sports editor who had not returned the questionnaire was sent a reminder asking him to fill out the questionnaire and return it. Since 100 per cent return rate was really necessary with such a small population, those coaches, SIDs and sports editors who had not returned their questionnaires were contacted by mail after the SEC basketball season ended March 7, 1981.

Those individuals used in the pretests were not members of the study's population but were adequate representatives for use as pre-test models. Both Coach Crum and Yates of the University of Louisville work for a university whose enrollment, geographic location and basketball program are similar to those schools of the SEC. West is sports editor of a paper whose circulation is among the highest in the state of Tennessee and whose sports coverage is comprehensive and focuses upon SEC athletics, in particular The University of Tennessee's sports program.

The results of these questionnaires are tabulated by hand, using the coding method described previously in this chapter.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

There was one primary limitation involved with this study. The time lag between the pretests and the main study should have been avoided. While the author believed it was necessary that the basketball coaches' questionnaire be sent out prior to the start of the season (end of November), the other two questionnaires should have been sent out during this time, as well. If the study were to be conducted again, the researcher would send out all three questionnaires at the same time. A time lag such as the one in this study could result in biased responses on the part of the SIDs and sports editors because of events that took place over the course of the season.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the data obtained from the survey of SEC SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches. The chapter is divided into the following sections which correspond with the coding method devised to study the results of this survey:

(1) FACTS--which includes a description of SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches in the SEC, functions of the SID, the scope of his coverage, work policies of SIDs and sports editors and frequency of contact among the three groups. This section also takes a look at the personal side of SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches, with key demographics being analyzed. (2) OPINIONS--views and judgments of SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches in regard to work situations and environments, importance of traits in evaluating work of each particular group, evaluation of the work performances of the three groups, and the most important functions and challenges in the work of SIDs. (3) PERCEPTIONS--how the SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches perceive their working relationships among one another, examine the credibility of the work of the SIDs and sports editors in the eyes of others in the SEC, examine the accuracy and consistency of work of SIDs and sports editors and the overall analysis of the working relationships among the three groups.

I. JOB DESCRIPTION AND POLICIES OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS

The job title of a SID is oftentimes misconstrued. SIDs have been referred to as everything from publicists to promotions directors. The majority of the respondents to this survey (six out of eight) go by the title of sports information director. Two respondents carry the additional title of assistant athletic director, with both going by the title of assistant athletic director for promotions and publicity. SIDs who have worked at a university for an extended period of time (e.g., over 15 years) oftentimes fulfill the expanded role of an assistant athletics director, as is the case with the two respondents mentioned above. But, generally, the name sports information director appears to be the official title of the majority of the SEC men who participated in this survey. The results are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

OFFICIAL JOB TITLES OF SEC SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS

Job Title	SIDs
Sports Information Director	6
Sports Publicity Director	0
Director of Sports Promotions	0
Assistant Athletic Director in charge of sports publicity	2
N=8 of 10 SIDs	

The work of an SID encompasses a wide variety of activities. However, several job functions seem to hold more significance than others.

The SID serves as the liaison between the athletic department and the media in an attempt to facilitate a healthy working relationship. He aids the media in their coverage of his school's athletic program and provides them with all the basic and necessary information they need in their coverage.

The SID's office also serves as an information and news bureau. The SID must be the most informed person on campus with regard to the total athletic program. It is the responsibility of the sports information director to edit and publish all athletic department printed material, ranging from brochures for individual sports to game programs, press releases and team statistics.

The SID serves as the coordinator of all on-campus athletic events and represents the university at events held off campus. He works with the athletic director in formulating and carrying out various promotional ideas and is the direct link to a sound internal public relations program within the athletic department.

In short, the SID is a writer, an editor and proofreader, public relations practitioner and promoter, news disseminator and enhancer of his school's athletic program image.

Every respondent to this survey has a working staff to shoulder some of the work load. Every respondent indicated having at least one assistant SID, one secretary, and one student assistant on his staff. Four SEC sports information offices have two assistants on their

staffs, while four offices have one assistant. Each SID in the SEC has one secretary in his office.

The amount of student help varies. The greatest number of students working in an office is five, with one office having this many. Two offices have four student assistants, two have three, one has two and two offices have just one student assistant. One SID indicated that in addition to having three student assistants on a part-time basis, he also has two students who are on a work study program, which indicates a limited work load in comparison to his other student assistants. These results are indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2

POSITIONS REPORTING TO SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

School	Positions and Number			
	Asst. SID	Secretary	Student Asst.	Other
Alabama	NR*	NR	NR	
Auburn	2	1	1	
Florida	2	1	3	
Georgia	1	1	5	
Kentucky	2	1	3	Work-study (2)
LSU	2	1	4	
Mississippi	NR	NR	NR	
Mississippi State	1	1	1	
Tennessee	1	1	4	
Vanderbilt	1	1	2	

*NR = No Response

Assistant SIDs perform a variety of duties. In the SEC, the assistant SID is primarily responsible for basketball publicity, which includes traveling with the team, handling the statistics and press releases, and editing and publishing the basketball game program. The assistant also does the bulk of the publicity work for his school's non-revenue sports (e.g., track, baseball, golf, tennis and wrestling).

Other duties of the assistant include keeping records and files, supervising student help, and editing and publishing the football game programs. In cases where the sports information office covers both men's and women's athletics, (discussion of separate coverage follows) there are normally two assistants, one whose primary duties lie with coverage of the women's program. Two respondents indicated that one of their assistants works exclusively with the women's program.

The assistant SID's job description is primarily what his job title indicates. Besides his specific responsibilities outlined by his superior, he assists the SID in coverage of his school's athletic program and assists in the handling of on-campus athletic events.

Five of the eight respondents to this survey indicated that their office covers both men's and women's athletics. Of these five offices, three have assistant SIDs whose primary duties consist of handling all women's athletic publicity. The three offices who responded that women's athletics is not part of their coverage noted that a separate sports information office within the school's athletic department handles the women's program.

There were a wide range of answers to the number of media outlets on the SIDs' basketball mailing lists, indicating a difference in scope of media mailing lists among the SEC schools. Three SIDs

responded that there are 500 or more media outlets on their mailing lists, two said that there are between 400-499, two said there are between 300-399 and one said there are between 200-299 media outlets on its basketball mailing list. It came as no surprise that the three schools with 500 or more media outlets on their basketball mailing lists are generally considered to be the schools who place the most emphasis on basketball in the SEC. Results are in Table 3.

TABLE 3
SIZE OF BASKETBALL MAILING LISTS

Size of Mailing List	Schools
Fewer than 100	0
100-199	0
200-299	1
300-399	2
400-499	2
500 or more	3
N=8 of 10 Schools	

For the most part, SEC SIDs have small and limited roles in radio and television negotiations for coverage of their schools' athletic programs. Five SIDs responded that they do not assist in these negotiations. The three SIDs who answered that they do participate in negotiations indicated that their roles are quite limited.

Two respondents said that they write the bid specifications for the radio and television contracts, but do not take part in actual negotiations.

The majority of the sports informations offices in the SEC send their assistants to cover the basketball team on the road. Six respondents said that their assistants normally accompany the team during the regular season, with three SIDs saying that both they and their assistants attend tournaments and post-season play. Only two respondents indicated that the SID traveled with the basketball team during the regular season.

The assistant SID in the SEC appears to fulfill one of two major roles. Either he is responsible for basketball publicity, including traveling with the team, or he is responsible for coverage of women's athletics at those schools whose sports information offices cover both men's and women's athletics.

Five SIDs indicated that their office provides complimentary tickets to the press. Two of these SIDs said that a maximum of two complimentary tickets are provided to the working press upon previous request in writing. Three SIDs stated that their policy is that no complimentary tickets are provided to the press.

Providing some sort of food for the working press at athletic events is usually the responsibility of the SID. All eight SIDs indicated that food is available for the press at their games. The type of food ranges from sandwiches and soft drinks to fried chicken boxes and coffee. One SID replied that "we are very generous in picking up meal tabs."

The question of complimentary tickets and meals was also posed to the sports editors. For the most part, their responses indicated a difference in policy in regard to complimentary tickets and meals. Six of the eight responding editors made it clear that they accept absolutely no complimentary tickets other than working press credentials, and one sports editor said that "he would pay for those (press credentials) if he could." One respondent flatly stated that "we don't accept anything." Another simply said "we practice common sense."

As for complimentary meals, most of the editors indicated that they do accept press box meals. One sports editor said that "we eat with the mob and pay our own way," while another said that the "meals depend upon the situation."

II. FREQUENCY OF CONTACT AMONG SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS, SPORTS EDITORS AND BASKETBALL COACHES

The SIDs appear to maintain frequent contact with the sports editors who cover their respective teams during basketball season. Four SIDs indicated that they speak with the sports editor more than twice a week, with one respondent saying that he speaks with the sports editor on almost a daily basis. Two SIDs said they speak with the sports editor on an average of once a week, one said at least twice a week, and one said less than once a week. It should be noted, however, that the SIDs speak more frequently with the sports editors of their schools' hometown newspapers than to the sports editors of the states' largest circulating newspapers. Also, the schools' local newspapers'

beat reporters were said to be the ones with whom the SIDs maintain their highest frequency of contact.

The sports editors in this survey do appear to keep in consistent contact with the SIDs, but not as often as the schools' local newspapers' sports editors. Four editors said that they talk with the SIDs of their respective schools once a week, while three indicated they make contact less than once a week. One editor said he speaks with his state's university's SID only "about once a month." Only one sports editor replied that he makes contact twice a week with the SID.

The frequency of contact between the sports editors and basketball coaches in the SEC varies. Four editors said they speak with the basketball coach once a week and four said they make contact less than once a week. One editor said he "rarely speaks with the coach," and another said he talks with the coach "about twice a month." It should be reiterated that the sports editors of the schools' local newspapers normally maintain a higher degree of contact with the coaches than the editors used in this survey.

The basketball coaches also indicated a limited degree of contact with the sports editors, with five coaches talking to the sports editor once a week or less. Two coaches said that they speak with the sports editor more than twice a week and one said he makes contact with the sports editor on the average of twice a week. The results are recorded in Table 4.

This limited contact can be correlated to the number of basketball games these sports editors attended and covered during the 1979-80

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT AMONG SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS,
SPORTS EDITORS AND BASKETBALL COACHES

Frequency of Contact	SID Calls Editor	Editor Calls SID	Editor Calls Coach	Coach Calls Editor
Once a week	2	4	4	3
Twice a week	1	1	0	1
Less than once a week	1	3	4	2
More than twice a week	4	0	0	2

N=8 of 10 SIDs, editors, and coaches

season. Four sports editors said they covered less than five of their respective schools' games during the year, two said they covered between 6 and 10 games, one covered between 11 and 15 games, and one covered over 25 games.

The majority of the sports editors in this survey indicated that they do not go through the SID to arrange interviews with the schools' coaches or players. Seven of eight respondents said they arrange the contacts on their own, usually by telephone. One editor said that "if the story is routine, we'll usually go through the sports information director. But, if we're after something hot, we're more likely to contact the source directly."

Most of the coaches indicated that the majority of their contact with the media is arranged through the SID. Five coaches said

that they do go through the SID, while three said they set up the contact on their own, usually by telephone or spontaneous response.

Results are found in Table 5.

TABLE 5

USE OF SPORTS INFORMATION OFFICE AS COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Respondents	Use SID As Communication Channel	Do Not Use SID As Communication Channel
Sports Editors	1	7
Basketball Coaches	5	3
N=8 of 10 editors and coaches		

Interviews and radio/TV talk shows were the two areas of basketball related communications with the media that the coaches indicated are arranged through the SID, with six coaches saying that the arrangements are handled by the SIDs in both of these areas. As for public appearances, four coaches said the SID handles the arrangements, while four coaches said they handle the arrangements on their own. The results are available in Table 6.

From all indications, it appears that the basketball coach has at least some input into the putting together of the basketball brochure. Six coaches said that they have some input in working with the SID on the basketball brochure, one said he has very little input, and

TABLE 6
COACHES' USE OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS
AS COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

Form of Communications	No. of Coaches	
	Yes	No
Interviews	6	2
Radio/TV talk shows	6	2
Public appearances	4	4
N=8 of 10 coaches		

one said he has very much input. Likewise, six SIDs responded that their schools' coaches provide some input in working on the basketball brochure. Two indicated that the coach has very little input.

III. DEMOGRAPHICS

This section was designed to reveal the personal side of the SEC SIDs, sports editors and basketball coaches. The questions elicited the information needed to characterize these three groups personally.

Sports Information Directors

The SEC SIDs were, for the most part, quite experienced in their field. Five respondents had been SIDs at their present schools for more than 10 years, with one SID having served in his present position for more than 20 years. Two respondents indicated they had worked at

their present schools between 2 and 5 years and one had been there between 6 and 10 years. (Table 7).

Likewise, five respondents said they had more than 15 years of experience in sports information work, with two having more than 25 years of experience in the field. Three SIDs had between 6 and 10 year of experience.

Newspaper work, in particular sportswriting, was the area most often mentioned by the SIDs as related work experience. Seven respondents indicated having worked as sportswriters prior to becoming SIDs (including one who had previously been a sports editor) while one had been public relations director at a college.

Seven out of eight SIDs were alumni of the schools they worked for in 1981. The one respondent who was not an alumnus of his school did graduate from an SEC university, however.

Journalism was found to be the most prevalent course of study among the SEC SIDs. Three respondents had bachelor degrees in journalism, including one who had his master's. The remaining SIDs earned bachelor degrees in history, political science, classical studies and business administration.

The \$25-29,999 salary range was found to be the most consistent salary among the SIDs, with four respondents indicating this as their salary range. Three respondents said they were paid between \$20-24,999. One SID reported making less than \$20,000 a year.

The ages of the SIDs were fairly evenly distributed, with three respondents being 40 years or younger. Each of the other age brackets (41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60 and over 60) contained one SID apiece.

TABLE 7

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS, SPORTS
EDITORS, AND BASKETBALL COACHES

Variables	SIDs	Editors	Coaches
Years of Experience in Field			
Up to five years	0	0	0
6-10 years	3	0	0
11-15 years	0	0	2
16-20 years	2	3	2
More than 20 years	3	5	4
Alumnus of school you work for or were paired with in this survey	7	2	1
Salary			
Under \$20,000	1	0	0
\$20-29,999	7	3	0
\$30-39,999	0	3	1
\$40-49,999	0	0	4
More than \$50,000	0	0	0
College degrees			
Bachelor's degree	8	6	-
Master's degrees	1	0	-
Related work experience			
Newspaper work	7	-	-
Public relations work	1	-	-
Age			
40 or under	3	3	2
41-45	1	2	5
46-50	1	0	0
Over 50	3	3	1

N=8 of 10 SIDs, editors and coaches

Sports Editors

Four of the responding editors had been sports editors at their present newspapers between two and five years. The other four had been sports editors at their papers for over 10 years, with two of these having had more than 20 years in as sports editors at their present papers.

Five of the editors said they had between 16 and 25 years of experience in newspaper work, while three had more than 30 years of experience in the field. Thus, the SEC sports editors were quite an experienced group of journalists.

There appeared to be no definite connection between the sports editors' alma maters and the schools they covered in 1981. Six of the sports editors replied that they were not alumni of the schools their papers covered. Besides the SEC universities, other schools listed by the sports editors included Dartmouth, Indiana (twice) and Transylvania.

While the major courses of college study varied among the sports editors, English proved to be the most popular, with two respondents indicating they earned their bachelor's degrees in this area. Other bachelor's degrees were earned in history, government, journalism, and political science. None of the respondents indicated they had earned master's degrees. Surprisingly, two of the SEC sports editors responded that they did not receive college degrees.

The salary range varied among the SEC sports editors. One respondent reported that he earned between \$35-39,999 per year, and two said they made between \$30-34,999 per year. Two editors indicated

they earned between \$25-29,999 and one editor said he made between \$20-24,999. Two of the editors did not disclose their yearly income.

The majority of the SEC sports editors in this study were fairly young. Five respondents indicated being 45 years of age or younger, with three being under 40. The remaining three sports editors were over 50 years of age. The results are shown in Table 7, page 49.

Basketball Coaches

The SEC basketball coaches were relatively recent additions to their respective schools' coaching staffs. Five of the coaches had been head coaches at the schools they worked for in 1981 between 2 and 5 years, while two had between 6 and 10 years in at their schools in 1981. One of the coaches was in his first year as head coach of his school.

Six coaches had more than 16 years of experience in the coaching field, with four having had more than 20 years' experience. The other two remaining coaches had between 11 and 15 years of experience in the coaching field.

The majority of the coaches were not alumni of the schools they were coaching at in 1981. Only one of the eight coaches indicated he was an alumnus of the school he coached at in 1981.

While only five of the eight participants in this survey responded to the question on salary, there existed a good indication that the salary range of \$40-49,999 was average for SEC basketball coaches, with four coaches indicating this as being their yearly income range as paid by the university. The other respondent said he was paid a salary of between \$30-39,999.

The majority of the coaches were fairly young, with seven coaches being 45 years or younger. Of this group, two were under 40 years of age. Only one coach indicated that he was over 50 years of age (see Table 7, page 49).

IV. VIEWS TOWARD WORK SITUATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

This section analyzes the views and judgments of the SIDs, editors and coaches toward their work situations and environments. The degree of importance of the publicity disseminated by the SIDs as viewed by the editors and coaches is also discussed.

All three groups were asked the following question:

In a crisis news situation (for example, team dissension, player suspension or coach dismissal) should the sports information director

- a. report the story as honestly and accurately as possible
- b. give the press little information on the matter
- c. reveal the total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved
- d. channel the responsibility off unto the coaches involved
- e. withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may result.

Crisis news situations frequently arise in the work of an SID. It is the responsibility of the SID to handle such situations with tact and professionalism. The manner in which the SID manages a crisis news situation is both a reflection of his work ethics and athletic department policy.

Without a doubt, the SEC SIDs believe honesty is the best policy in reporting on a crisis news situation. Eight respondents indicated that it is their responsibility to report the story as honestly and accurately as possible. Two SIDs also thought that it is feasible to

withhold certain information if injury to one's reputation or character is likely to result. Therefore, the SEC SIDs maintain the policy of reporting a crisis story as honestly and accurately as possible, although as one SID said in response to this question: "I think it is important to be honest and yet at the same time be sure the athletic department and/or coach's position is made clear."

The sports editors, normally the ones with whom the SIDs deal with when reporting on a crisis news situation, are totally supportive of reporting the situation as honestly and accurately as possible. Eight respondents chose this policy as their answer and one respondent even said the SID should reveal the total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved. Here were some comments given by the editors in response to this question:

The sports information director should never lie in response to a direct question. It menaces his credibility in future dealings. He shouldn't plead ignorance, either. A sports information director should know what's a foot at his school.

A total account eliminates all rumors and eliminates numerous day-to-day stories by reporters looking for the facts.

The sports information director can give background information to keep a reporter from an inaccurate story.

The editor relies on the SID for straight-forward and reliable information in regard to crisis news situations. From the results of this survey, it is apparent that editors deem it important that the SIDs report crisis news stories as honestly and accurately as possible.

The coach is often a central figure within a crisis news situation. Five of the SEC basketball coaches believed the SID should withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may

evolve. Four of the coaches said that the story should be reported as honestly and accurately as possible, with one coach choosing both policies as answers.

The coach is in a different situation from the sports editor. In many cases, it is his reputation or character that may be on the line. The coach oftentimes finds himself involved in the center of controversy and although it appears a good number of the SEC coaches believe in presenting an honest account, they do feel the need to limit information on the subject if they feel the circumstances call for it. The results of this discussion are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

OPINIONS TOWARD SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS' OPTIONS
IN HANDLING CRISIS NEWS SITUATIONS

Options	SIDs	Editors	Coaches
Report story as honestly and accurately as possible	8	8	4
Give the press little information on the matter	0	0	0
Reveal the total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved	0	1	0
Channel responsibility off unto coach involved	0	0	1
Withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may result	2	0	5

Editors were also asked if the SID at the school they normally covered usually leveled with them when providing confidential information on a crisis news situation. Four sports editors responded "yes," three "no," and one expressed "no opinion" on the matter. One of the sports editors who answered "no" said of the SID in question: ". . . his hands could be tied."

This leads to the discussion of the degree of cooperation the SIDs in the SEC receive on information from their schools' athletics directors and coaches. Whether or not the SID is included in the information circle revolving around a crisis news situation or delicate news item is a factor in his ability to provide the press the necessary facts. Five SIDs reported that they received "excellent cooperation" on information, while three reported they received "good cooperation." One sports information director indicated that the cooperation he receives from the athletic director is "excellent," while the cooperation he receives from the coaches was just "good."

Although the work schedule of an SID is often unpredictable, three areas of his job were found to require the greatest amount of time and effort: (1) accommodating the press at games, (2) working on brochures, and (3) setting up interviews.

Hosting the media at athletic events is a primary responsibility of SIDs. Organized and detailed preparation is a must and the SID must take it upon himself to play the perfect host. Four of the respondents replied that accommodating the press takes up "very much" of their time, while four said it took up "some" of their time. Four respondents indicated that working on brochures requires "very much" of their time, while four said it requires "some" of their time.

Arranging interviews for the press is still another area of the SIDs' job which takes up a great deal of time and attention. This especially holds true for those SIDs with whom the press primarily channels their interview requests. Seven respondents said setting up interviews takes up "some" of their time, while one said it takes up "very much" of his time.

Other areas of the SIDs' work which received recognition for requiring a good amount of time and effort included producing releases, talking on the telephone to the media, alumni and fans, and in the words of one respondent, "answering questionnaires and unsolicited and almost unwanted telephone calls." Results are found in Table 9.

TABLE 9

SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS' EVALUATION OF AREAS
OF WORK REQUIRING MOST TIME AND EFFORT

Areas of Work	Very Little Time	Some Time	Very Much Time
Producing releases	2	3	3
Accommodating press at games	0	4	4
Working on brochures	0	4	4
Making special appearances	4	4	0
Setting up interviews	0	7	1

The editors and coaches were asked about the usefulness of the publicity they receive from the SIDs and the importance of this publicity when it comes to selecting all-SEC teams.

Each SID publicizes his basketball team in a variety of ways. However, publicity mailings are a chief tool of the SID in reaching the media outlets he believes would be most likely to carry news of his school's team. The SEC sports editors polled in this survey indicated that the team statistics is the most useful piece of information they receive from SIDs, with six respondents saying that the statistics are "very useful" and two saying they are "moderately useful."

The SIDs' weekly press release, which usually contains a preview of upcoming games and tidbits of information which may be of use to the media, was found to be the second most useful piece of information to the editors. Two editors said the weekly release is "very useful," five said it is "moderately useful" and one felt it is "not useful." Feature stories on players, which frequently accompany weekly releases, were also found to be of "moderate" use to the sports editors.

The coaches were asked about the amount of attention they pay to the publicity they receive from their opponents' sports information departments. Likewise, team statistics were found to draw the greatest amount of attention from the coaches. Five respondents indicated they pay "a lot" of attention to their opponents' statistics, while three said they pay "some" attention. The amount of attention paid to weekly release and feature story was fairly evenly distributed, with seven coaches indicating they pay "some attention" to both. One coach

said he pays "a lot of attention" to player feature stories, while another coach said he pays "no attention" to the weekly release. These results are available in Table 10.

TABLE 10

USEFULNESS OF PUBLICITY RECEIVED FROM SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS

Type of Publicity	Not Useful		Moderately Useful		Very Useful	
	Editors	Coaches	Editors	Coaches	Editors	Coaches
Weekly release	1	1	5	7	2	0
Statistics	0	0	2	3	6	5
Player features	2	0	4	7	2	1

N=8 of 10 editors and coaches

The publicity disseminated by the SIDs was discovered to be of moderate importance in selecting all-SEC teams. Four editors deemed the publicity as being "moderately important," two believed it is "very important" and two felt it is "not important." The coaches' responses were nearly identical. Six coaches felt the publicity is "moderately important," while two believed it is "very important" in selecting all-SEC teams. The results are recorded in Table 11.

The coaches were asked whether or not their schools' SIDs spend as much time publicizing the basketball program as they do the football program. The majority of the coaches (six of eight) believed that their schools' SIDs do not spend as much time publicizing the

TABLE 11
IMPORTANCE OF PUBLICITY IN SELECTING ALL-SEC
BASKETBALL TEAMS

Level of Importance	Editors	Coaches
Not important	2	0
Moderately important	4	6
Very important	2	2
N=8 of 10 editors and coaches		

basketball program as they do the football program. This response may come as no surprise, however. For years, football has reigned supreme in the SEC and only just recently has basketball come of age. But, perhaps the greatest reason for the coaches viewing the situation as they do, is that football is and most likely always will be the top revenue-producing sport in the SEC.

V. OPINIONS TOWARD IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS IN WORK PERFORMANCE

With the multi-faceted work situations SIDs face, it is no secret that they must be well-rounded individuals in order to become successful in their fields. The SIDs who responded to this survey believed there are several traits and qualities a SID must possess in order to be successful. At the top of the list is establishing and maintaining a good relationship with the press. All eight of the SIDs considered this quality to be of utmost importance. The press are the

SIDs' aim to reach the public and it is obviously of great importance that the two be on good working terms.

Projecting an honest insight into their schools' athletic programs is also an important role of the sports information directors. Seven respondents said this quality is "very important" to have, while one said it is "important." Thus, as was discovered previously in the discussion on crisis news situations, sports information directors are firm believers in presenting an honest image of their schools' athletic programs.

Maintaining a good relationship with the coaches is another important trait an SID should develop. Four respondents said this is a "very important" trait, while four said it is "important." It is the responsibility of the SIDs to work with the coaches on nearly a daily basis and see that their programs are receiving the proper publicity. A poor working relationship between the sports information director and coach could result in less than desirable working conditions and result in a breakdown of communications within the athletic department.

Being knowledgeable of sports is another important trait for the SID to have. Six respondents believed this to be a "very important" quality, one said it is "important" and one said it is "unimportant." Since the SID is involved with publicizing his school's athletic program, it is almost a necessity that he be fairly knowledgeable of sports.

Having good writing skills was only considered to be the fourth most important quality or skill for an SID to have. Four respondents

believed it is "important" to have good writing skills, three thought it is "very important" and one believed it is "unimportant." As mentioned in the literature review, there are conflicting opinions toward the importance of being a good writer in sports information work. However, having good writing skills is considered to be fairly important by the majority of SEC SIDs. Other areas which received consideration included producing timely mailings and quality publications.

The findings of the sports editors' opinions toward the qualities and skills important for SIDs to have are nearly identical. Seven editors believed that providing an honest insight into the school's athletic program is "very important" for the SID to do. One respondent considered this quality to be "important." Again, this can be traced back to the sports editors' policy that providing the truth is the responsibility of the SID during crisis news situations.

Maintaining a good relationship with the press was also considered to be an important quality for SIDs to have by the sports editors in this study. Six respondents believed this is a "very important" trait to have, while two said it is "important" to have this trait.

Maintaining a good relationship with the coaches and being knowledgeable of sports are two other qualities editors think are important. In each case, five respondents felt the quality is "very important" and three felt it is "important." Producing quality publications and timely mailings also received considerable merit from the sports editors.

The sports editors said having good writing skills is of less

importance than the SIDs said. Five respondents indicated that this is an "unimportant" skill, while two said it is "important," and one said it is "very important."

The coaches' views toward the importance of certain traits in evaluating the work of an SID are fairly similar to those of the editors and SIDs. Producing credible work and maintaining a good relationship with the press were judged to be the most important qualities for an SID to have by the coaches, with seven respondents deeming these to be "very important" qualities, and one "important" for both.

Maintaining a good relationship with the coaches and providing an honest insight into the school's athletic program are two other traits believed to be important by coaches. Six coaches thought each of these qualities are "very important" and two thought they are "important."

Being knowledgeable of sports and having good writing skills received considerable consideration. Five respondents believed the former quality to be "very important" and three believed it to be "important." Coaches thought having good writing skills is much more important for SIDs to possess than the other two groups thought. Five respondents felt being a good writer is a "very important" skill for an SID to have and three felt it is "important." These results are shown in Table 12.

The sports editors were also asked to present their views toward the importance of traits for basketball coaches to have in order to maintain a successful working relationship with the press. First of all, being accessible to the press is considered to be an extremely

TABLE 12

IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS IN EVALUATING PERFORMANCE OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

Traits	Unimportant			Important			Very Important		
	SIDs	Editors	Coaches	SIDs	Editors	Coaches	SIDs	Editors	Coaches
Has good writing skills	1	5	0	4	2	3	3	1	5
Is knowledgeable of sports	1	0	0	1	3	3	6	5	5
Maintains good relationship with press	0	0	0	0	2	1	8	6	7
Maintains good relationship with coaches	0	0	0	4	3	2	4	5	6
Produces quality publications	1	0	0	4	4	0	3	4	0
Produces timely and newsworthy mailings	0	0	0	5	2	0	3	4	0
Is alumnus of school	4	8	8	3	0	0	1	0	0
Provides honest insight into school's athletic program	0	0	0	1	1	2	7	7	6
Produces credible work*						1			

N=8 of 10 SIDs, editors, and coaches

*Only asked of coaches.

important quality for a coach to possess. Seven editors said this is a "very important" quality and one said it is "important." Easy accessibility includes returning telephone calls from the press, being available for interviews, and providing the press with a legitimate response to a particular issue.

Being sincere and straightforward are other important traits for the coach to have according to the editors. Six respondents said these traits are "very important" and two said they are "important." Being personable is another quality which received substantial attention. Five respondents felt it is "important" for coaches to be personable in their dealings with the press, two felt it is "very important," and one felt it is "important." These results are found in Table 13.

TABLE 13

EDITORS' VIEWS TOWARD IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS FOR COACHES TO HAVE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A SUCCESSFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESS

Traits	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Accessible to press	0	1	7
Sincere and straightforward	0	2	6
Personable	1	5	2
Alumnus of school	8	0	0
N=8 of 10 editors			

VI. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCES OF SPORTS INFORMATION

DIRECTORS, SPORTS EDITORS AND BASKETBALL

COACHES IN THE SEC

This section takes a look at the SIDs', sports editors' and basketball coaches' evaluations of one another's work. Special emphasis is directed toward the sports editors' and basketball coaches' appraisals of the sports information operations in the SEC.

The sports editors were asked to evaluate the performances of the SIDs at the schools they normally covered and compare their performances to the other operations around the SEC and around the country. Six SIDs were judged to be "moderately successful" in carrying out their duties in the eyes of the sports editors, while two were deemed to be very successful. Therefore, the editors believed that for the most part, the SEC SIDs are successful in performing their job.

When asked to compare their particular assigned schools' SIDs to the rest of the SEC's, seven were found to be about the same, while one was found to be not as good. The sports editors regarded the SEC SIDs' performances as being better or about the same in comparison to other SIDs they have been associated with. Four editors said the SEC SIDs are better than most other SIDs in the country in carrying out their duties, while four said they rate about the same.

Two sports information operations stood out among the rest when their overall effectiveness was rated by the SEC sports editors. Alabama and LSU received six votes apiece in the sports editors' poll. Next were Mississippi State and Tennessee, each with three votes.

Auburn and Mississippi received two votes apiece, while Florida and Vanderbilt each had one vote, respectively. Schools failing to receive recognition were Georgia and Kentucky.

The sports editors were also asked to comment on the helpfulness of their paired schools' SIDs in providing them with feature angles for stories. Sports editors frequently pick up story ideas from SIDs because they have the inside track to the school's athletic program. Three SIDs were determined to be very helpful in providing feature angles, while two were found to be moderately helpful. Two SIDs were said to be "not helpful" in providing the sports editors with feature angles. One sports editor, when asked to comment on one SID's helpfulness in providing feature angles, expressed "no opinion."

The basketball coaches were also asked to evaluate the performances of the SEC SIDs. Six SIDs were judged to be "very successful" in carrying out their duties. Two SIDs were deemed to be "moderately successful" in their job appraisals.

When asked to compare the other SEC SIDs' performances to their own schools' SIDs, six coaches thought their performances were about the same. Two SIDs were judged to do a better job in comparison to the rest of the conference's. In comparing the overall performances of the SEC's SIDs to that of other SIDs around the country, five coaches thought the level of performances was about the same, two thought the SEC's SIDs did a poorer job, while one thought they did a better job.

As far as rating the top sports information operations in the SEC, the operations at Alabama and Tennessee were judged to be the best

by the coaches, with each receiving five votes. Georgia and Kentucky were next with three votes apiece, while LSU received two votes. Auburn and Vanderbilt each gathered one vote. Those sports information operations which did not receive recognition were Florida, Mississippi and Mississippi State. Results are recorded in Table 14.

TABLE 14

TOP SPORTS INFORMATION OPERATIONS IN THE SEC AS EVALUATED
BY EDITORS AND COACHES

SID Operation	Editors*	Coaches	Total
Alabama	6	5	11
Auburn	2	1	3
Florida	1	0	1
Georgia	0	3	3
Kentucky	0	3	3
LSU	6	2	8
Mississippi	2	0	2
Mississippi State	3	0	3
Tennessee	3	5	8
Vanderbilt	1	1	2

*Number of votes received from editors and coaches.

The coaches were also asked to comment on any areas of their schools' SIDs' job performance which could stand improvement. Three coaches responded giving the following answers:

More quality publications, improve record-keeping for the press and more individual publicity pushing players for honors.

Innovation--developing human interest stories. Could also improve public relations with home town newspapers.

More daily coverage during pre-season practice.

Hosting the press at athletic events is the duty of the SID and it is his responsibility to direct a smooth ship when it comes to meeting the needs of the working press. The sports editors were asked to present their opinions on what constitutes an efficiently run press facility for basketball. Several criteria were listed as being vital in maintaining an efficiently run press facility.

First of all, adequate working space with electrical outlets and telephones is a must. The writers require a certain amount of room to operate and electrical outlets and telephones are essential to their getting the story back to the newspaper. Second, access to the players and coaches is necessary in order to make the media's job easier. A specific room set aside for player and coach interviews enables the media to get the story they are after. Third, quick and accurate game statistics, along with coaches' post-game comments are essential. Writers, especially those who work for wire services, need to have the game statistics in front of them as quickly as possible following the game in order to expedite the filing of their stories.

Other areas that were mentioned included having a suitable seat to watch the game, having a quiet place to work, and a cooperative attitude on the part of the sports information department.

While the majority of basketball press rooms in the SEC offer food and drinks of some sort, usually sandwiches and soft drinks, it was the opinion of the SEC sports editors that the SIDs should not be

responsible for providing a three- or four-course pre-game meal for the working press. All eight of the editors who responded to this survey thought a pre-game meal is not necessary. However, two sports editors thought the idea sounded reasonable:

Because of the timing of many events and the hassle of big crowds, it often is impossible for the sportswriter to eat elsewhere.

[Pre-game meals] For basketball, no, for football, yes, although elaborate food service is not necessary.

Tennessee was judged to have the most efficiently run press facility for basketball in the SEC by the sports editors, receiving five votes. Alabama and LSU were next with four votes apiece, while Kentucky received two votes and Mississippi received one vote. Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi State and Vanderbilt failed to receive recognition from the sports editors. Results are available in Table 15.

Both the SIDs and coaches were asked to judge the performances of the regional sports editors. According to the SIDs, George Lapidès (The Memphis Press-Scimitar), Bill Lumpkin (The Post-Herald, Birmingham), and Billy Reed (The Louisville Courier-Journal), were judged to do the best work, with each receiving four votes. Furman Bisher (The Atlanta Journal), Paul Borden (The Clarion-Ledger, Jackson), David Lamm (The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville), Robert Roesler (The Times-Picayune, New Orleans), and Alf Van Hoose (The Birmingham News), followed with three votes apiece. The remaining sports editors, Al Dunning (The Commercial Appeal, Memphis), and Lee Baker (The Jackson Daily News), along with John Bibb (The Tennessean, Nashville), who was not an original member of the population, but whose name was added by the SIDs, picked up two votes each. Six other names, Butch Moir (The Baton Rouge

TABLE 15

SPORTS EDITORS' RATINGS OF BASKETBALL PRESS
FACILITY OPERATIONS IN THE SEC

School	Sports Editors*
Alabama	4
Auburn	0
Florida	0
Georgia	0
Kentucky	2
LSU	4
Mississippi	1
Mississippi State	0
Tennessee	5
Vanderbilt	0

*Number of votes received from sports editors.

Advocate), Dan Hardesty (The Baton Rouge State Times), Fred Russell (The Nashville Banner), Marvin West (The Knoxville News-Sentinel), Ben Byrd (The Knoxville Journal), Austin White (The Chattanooga News-Free Press), and Al Browning (The Tuscaloosa News), were added by SIDs to the list of top sports editors in the Southeast. The majority of the write-in names were sports editors of local newspapers in cities where SEC schools are located.

The poll of coaches resulted in nearly identical ratings. Once again, Lapidès, Lumpkin and Reed headed the list, joined by Bisher and Borden, with all five receiving three votes apiece. Dunning, Van Hoose

and West each gathered two votes. One new name, Perry Ballard (The Opelika News), was added by a coach to the list as being a top sports editor in the SEC. Again, Ballard worked for a newspaper which is located in the close vicinity of an SEC school.

Therefore, both the SIDs and basketball coaches agreed that Lapidès, Lumpkin, and Reed were the top sports editors in the SEC, followed closely by Bisher and Borden. Eight names were added to the original population as being top sports editors, with West receiving noteworthy consideration from both the SIDs and coaches. Generally, these added sports editors worked for the hometown newspapers of the particular SEC school. The results are shown in Table 16.

The SIDs and sports editors were asked to judge the degree of cooperation of the SEC basketball coaches in making themselves available to the press. The majority of the editors believed that on the whole, the SEC basketball coaches are "moderately" to "very cooperative" in working with the press. Four editors thought the coaches are "moderately cooperative," while three thought they are "very cooperative." One editor expressed "no opinion" in reply to this question.

In the poll of SIDs, Sonny Smith (Auburn), Dale Brown (LSU), Don DeVoe (Tennessee), Hugh Durham (Georgia) and Jim Hatfield (Mississippi State), were judged to be the most cooperative in working with the press. Smith received six votes, while Brown, DeVoe, Durham, and Hatfield received five votes apiece. Norm Sloan (Florida) gathered three votes, Wimp Sanderson (Alabama), and Bob Weltlich (Mississippi) had two votes apiece, while Joe B. Hall (Kentucky) and Richard Schmidt (Vanderbilt) managed just one vote each.

TABLE 16

TOP SPORTS EDITORS IN THE SEC AS EVALUATED
BY SIDs AND COACHES

Sports Editors	SIDs*	Coaches	Total
Lee Baker	2	1	3
Furman Bisher	3	3	6
Paul Borden	3	3	6
Al Dunning	2	2	4
David Lamm	3	1	4
George Lapidès	4	3	7
Bill Lumpkin	4	3	7
Billy Reed	4	3	7
Robert Roesler	3	1	4
Alf Van Hoose	3	2	5

*Number of votes received from SIDs and coaches.

The sports editors judged the coaches fairly similarly. Brown topped the list with six votes, followed by DeVoe, Durham, and Sander-son with five votes apiece. Hatfield and Weltlich picked up four votes apiece. Smith, the leading vote-getter among the SIDs, gathered three votes. Hall, Schmidt, and Sloan each received one vote. One sports editor, in commenting on one coach remarked: ". . . at times he is cooperative, and at other times he isn't."

Thus Brown, DeVoe and Durham were judged to be the most cooperative SEC basketball coaches in working with the press. Hatfield,

Sanderson, Smith and Weltlich also received considerable recognition for their efforts in being accessible to the press. Hall, Schmidt and Sloan were judged to be the least cooperative in working with the press. These results are recorded in Table 17.

TABLE 17

AVAILABILITY OF SEC BASKETBALL COACHES TO PRESS
AS EVALUATED BY SIDS AND EDITORS

Coaches	SIDs*	Editors	Total
Dale Brown	5	6	11
Don DeVoe	5	5	10
Hugh Durham	5	5	10
Joe B. Hall	1	1	2
Jim Hatfield	5	4	9
Wimp Sanderson	2	5	7
Richard Schmidt	1	1	2
Norm Sloan	3	1	4
Sonny Smith	6	3	9
Bob Weltlich	2	4	6

*Number of votes received from SIDs and editors.

VII. IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF SPORTS

INFORMATION DIRECTOR'S WORK

The job of the SID has expanded into a far-reaching profession encompassing a number of activities. The SID is an interpreter, information source, media host, public relations man, and much more. In short, he is the voice of college athletics on his campus.

There exist, however, several functions which are of utmost importance in the work of the SID. All three groups in this study were asked to comment on what they thought were the most important functions of the SID. According to the SIDs, working as a liaison between the athletic department and the media is the most important function of their work. Providing the media with the necessary information and materials is of utmost importance in the work of the SID. This also includes stimulating the media's interest through promotional and publicity tactics in order to warrant their attention in the school's athletic program.

Other areas of importance included maintaining a credible image for the athletic department and holding the confidence of the coaches and athletic administration.

The sports editors believed that helping arrange interviews with players and coaches is among the most valuable duties SIDs perform. Accommodating the needs of the press at athlete events was deemed to be another valuable asset of SIDs. One editor said that the SID's honest insight into a critical news situation is invaluable:

It is important that the sports information director tells me the truth when I ask him a question about a situation or

personality which may be embarrassing to his employers and he trusts me to guard his confidence.

Other areas mentioned by the sports editors in which the SID makes valuable contributions included giving tips for feature columns, providing up-to-date statistics, and supplying historical background material on the school's athletic program.

The coaches responded that the publishing of the basketball media guide is among the most valuable contributions of SIDs. Coaches use media guides not only as information sources, but as recruiting tools, as well. Their importance to the basketball program is significant, yet often goes unnoticed.

Keeping the coaches informed of their responsibilities to the media was frequently mentioned as being a valuable duty of SIDs. In their diligence to develop and maintain competitive basketball programs, coaches often neglect their obligations to the media. SIDs are there to keep the coaches abreast of their various media responsibilities.

Several areas were indicated by the SIDs as posing the greatest challenges in their work. Accommodating the press at athletic events and handling crisis news situations are two of the biggest challenges they face in their work. Obtaining credibility in the eyes of the media and devoting an appropriate amount of time for the coverage of non-revenue sports were other challenges frequently mentioned by the SIDs. The wide range of sports sanctioned by SEC schools (basketball, football, baseball, track, golf, tennis, swimming, cross-country, and wrestling) makes it difficult for SIDs to devote an appropriate amount of time and effort for the coverage of each sport, especially the

non-revenue sports--track, golf, tennis, baseball, swimming, cross-country and wrestling.

Toward the end of the questionnaire, the SIDs were asked to comment on what they thought the biggest challenge was in their work. The responses were fairly diversified, yet provided the researcher with a keen insight into the work of SIDs. Several of the more thorough and revealing responses are listed below:

. . . Maintaining a delicate balance between good "in-house" publicity with the media and not being accused of being a "positive (to the extreme) mouthpiece" of the university's athletic department.

. . . Always being caught in the middle of a great number of working relationships--coach-media, coach-athlete, athlete-media, coach-public, athlete-public, media-public.

. . . Maintaining credibility with the media while also keeping the confidence of your coaches and athletic administration.

. . . The most difficult aspect of this job is constantly being on guard not to make a mistake that might upset a member of the media or result in hurting the athletic department's image, while at the same time maintaining an aggressive and progressive public relations office that strives to constantly promote the athletic program in the best possible manner.

VIII. CREDIBILITY OF WORK

This section begins a series of discussions on the perceptions of the SIDs, editors and coaches in regard to the credibility of their work, accuracy and consistency of the editors' coverage, and the working relationships which exist among the three groups.

Maintaining credibility in the eyes of the editors was found to have been a major challenge in an SID's work. All three groups were asked to assess the credibility of the SEC SIDs in the eyes of others

around the conference. It was discovered that the SIDs believed that their work is perceived as being "moderately" to "very" credible in the eyes of the SEC basketball coaches. Five respondents indicated that they believe their work is apprehended as being "moderately credible" by the coaches, while two thought their work is perceived as being "very credible."

The SIDs firmly believe that their work is perceived as being more credible in the eyes of the editors who cover the SEC. Seven respondents said that the editors perceive SIDs' work as being "very credible," while one respondent said that their work is perceived as being "moderately credible."

The sports editors were also asked to assess the credibility of the SEC SIDs' work. For the most part, the editors perceived the work of the SIDs as being credible. Six SIDs were designated as producing "very credible" work, while two SIDs were perceived as producing "moderately credible" work. One sports editor, in commenting on the credibility of the sports information director he was paired with in this survey was a bit hesitant in evaluating his work in the eyes of other media members:

I suppose his work is extremely credible in the eyes of the rest of the media in the league, provided their working relationship is similar to ours. We try to cultivate mutual trust.

The coaches' perceptions of the SEC SIDs' work were found to be nearly the same as the editors'. Seven SIDs were perceived by the coaches as producing "very credible" work in the eyes of the states' media. One SID was considered to produce only "moderately credible" work.

The coaches were also asked to comment on the credibility of the sports editors' work. Three sports editors were perceived by their respective paired coaches as producing "very credible" work in the eyes of the remaining media members in the SEC. Two coaches indicated that they did not know about the credibility of their paired sports editors in the eyes of their colleagues and therefore expressed "no opinion" on the matter.

IX. ACCURACY AND CONSISTENCY OF COVERAGE

The SIDs and coaches were polled concerning the accuracy and consistency of the coverage provided by the SEC sports editors. SEC SIDs subscribe to many of the largest circulating newspapers in the South to keep abreast of the coverage given to their school and the rest of the conference. The SIDs were asked whether or not the sports editors they were paired with in this survey provided their schools' basketball teams with an equal (or better) amount of coverage compared to other schools' teams in the state. Six respondents reported that the sports editors indeed gave equal (or better) coverage to their schools' basketball teams. The remaining two respondents did not know whether or not the coverage was equal or not. One SID answered by saying that the sports editor he was paired with covers his school less than two other major universities in the state, but more than the rest.

The SIDs were also asked about the accuracy of the sports editors' coverage. Again, six respondents said that the coverage was "very accurate." One SID said that the sports editor he was paired with only furnished "moderately accurate" coverage. As in the previous

question on consistency of coverage, one SID expressed a "don't know" response.

The coaches were also asked to respond to the type of coverage provided to their teams from the SEC sports editors. Six respondents said that the editors they were paired with provided an equal (or better) amount of coverage compared to the other schools in the state. One coach said that the coverage provided to his school was not equal in comparison to the other schools in his state. Another coach indicated that he "did not know" whether the coverage was equal or not.

The same six coaches indicated that they received accurate coverage from the sports editors. Two coaches said that they did not know whether the coverage was accurate or not.

X. PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

The final section of the findings takes a look at the perceptions of the working relationships among these three groups. Each group was asked how they perceived their working relationship with each respective group. Also, each group was given the opportunity to comment freely on any aspect of the working relationship among the SID, sports editor and basketball coach.

The SIDs were asked about their working relationships with the editors they were paired with. Five respondents perceived their working relationships as being "very close" with the sports editors. Three respondents said their working relationships with the sports editors were "moderately close."

Four SIDs perceived their working relationships with their

schools' basketball coaches as being "very close," while the other four respondents said that their working relationships with their coaches were only "moderately close."

The sports editors were asked to describe their working relationships with the SIDs they were paired with. Four editors indicated that their working relationships with the SIDs were "very close," while three respondents perceived their working relationships as being "moderately close." One sports editor said his working relationship with the SID was "not close." Another editor, while perceiving the working relationship with his paired sports information director as being "very close," had this to say:

We aren't drinking buddies, but when he tells me something I believe it and from a professional standpoint, I guess that's close.

In describing their working relationships with the basketball coaches they were paired with, four editors perceived their working relationships as being "moderately close." Two respondents said their working relationships were "very close." The remaining two respondents said their working relationships with the basketball coaches were "not close."

Five coaches perceived their working relationships with the member(s) of the sports information department who concentrates on basketball publicity as being "very close." Three coaches said their working relationships were only "moderately close."

The coaches were also asked to describe their working relationships with the sports editors they were paired with. Four coaches perceived their relationships with the editors as being "moderately

close," while two coaches described their working relationships with the sports editors as being "very close." One coach said his working relationship was "not close" with the sports editor he was paired with, while another coach expressed no opinion on the matter. These results are available in Table 18.

TABLE 18

PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS, SPORTS EDITORS AND BASKETBALL COACHES IN THE SEC

Degree of Closeness of Relationship	SID- Editor	Editor- SID	SID- Coach	Coach- SID	Editor- Coach	Coach- Editor
Not close	-	1	-	-	2	1
Moderately close	3	3	4	3	4	4
Very close	5	4	4	5	2	2
No opinion	-	-	-	-	-	1

Several of the SIDs responded to the open-ended question concerning the working relationship among the three groups. Their comments, which are paraphrased below, provided the researcher with a more thorough insight into the relationship.

. . . There seems to be a growing sentiment in several portions of the country that the sports information director should serve as an "image-builder" for the coach and not as an information disseminator for the entire basketball program. This places the sports information director in an even tougher position between the coach and the athletic director.

. . . I feel a sports information director makes a mistake when he sympathizes with either a sports editor or coach

when those two are having a personal difference. In the long run, the editor and the coach will make up and that leaves the sports information director with bitter feelings still existing against him. . . . A sports information director must keep things in perspective, whether his team is winning or losing. Don't get too cocky when you win, you may need those guys (sportswriters) later on.

. . . Coaches need to become more educated concerning the way the media functions and why it functions. . . . The media should become more educated concerning the basic problems a coach faces in his daily effort to build a solid program. Sports information directors individually try to bridge these gaps.

Two of the sports editors' responses to the open-ended question are listed below.

. . . The sports information director needs to understand that a newspaper, particularly a large, aggressive urban daily, is going to get a story it goes after. The sports information director can either cooperate and help get the establishment point of view into print, or he can be evasive and wind up looking like a horse's ass. Nobody ever made a mistake by being honest in the news business, including sports information directors.

. . . Honesty, in the working relationship, is of utmost importance. This is especially true for the coach whose secretary may take your name and number when the coach has no intention of returning the call. Better for the coach to say he can't get back with you that particular day than maintain the charade . . . in dealing with sensitive matters, a no comment is better than a lie.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter will provide a summary of the findings from the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach surveys. The author will also assess the findings and suggest conclusions. An attempt will be made to characterize the SEC SID, both personally and professionally. In addition, an analysis of the working relationships among the three groups will be presented.

I. JOB DESCRIPTION OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

The title of the sports information director has been widely misinterpreted. SIDs have been referred to as publicists, promotions directors, and media relations directors. The discrepancy in job titles has made it difficult for the common public to comprehend the nature of work performed by the SID.

However, the majority of men holding the position in the SEC go by the title of sports information director. In cases where the SID has worked at the school for an extended period of time, he often carries the additional title of assistant athletic director in charge of sports publicity. Carrying this title normally means that the individual has a greater influence in the administration of the athletic program and earns a higher salary.

The job of the SID encompasses a wide variety of activities. The findings suggested that serving as a liaison between the athletic

department and the media is the major function of the SID. By filling the role of an intermediary, the SID must serve as an information source to the media and provide all the basic material they need in order to sufficiently cover his school's athletic program. Arranging interviews and handling press relations for the athletic department are important areas of the SID's work, as indicated by this study.

The SID is also responsible for editing and publishing all athletic department printed material. This includes media guides, brochures, press releases, game programs and team statistics summaries. The SID is coordinator of all on-campus athletic events and serves as host to the media, writers and photographers who attend and cover the events. He also represents the university at athletic events held off campus. Finally, it is the responsibility of the SID to project and maintain a credible image of his school's athletic program to the sports editors and public.

Every SID who responded to this survey has at least one assistant, one secretary and a few student assistants to provide work support. It is important that the SID surround himself with people who are not only talented, but dependable and responsible. Four SEC schools have two assistant sports informations directors, while four have one. The SID frequently delegates a great amount of responsibility to the students including release writing, coverage of non-revenue sports, and assisting in hosting the media at athletic events.

The assistant SID is a valuable member of the SID's staff. In the SEC, the assistant SID is primarily responsible for basketball publicity, which includes traveling with the team during the regular season, and devotes much of his time to the coverage of non-revenue sports. In

those instances where the sports information department covers both men's and women's athletics, the assistant is responsible for covering the entire women's program. The assistant SID is also usually accountable for the editing and publishing of the football and basketball game programs.

Publicity mailings are a valuable tool of the SID in reaching a mass quantity of media outlets. The size of the basketball mailing lists varied in this survey, but it is apparent that the SEC schools do make good use of mailings in order to publicize their athletic program to as many media outlets as possible.

Timeliness and newsworthiness must be emphasized when discussing publicity mailings. Old news is usually not better than no news in this case, and untimely information is not only irritating to the media, it reflects a lack of organization and common sense on the part of the sports information office. Mailings that are timely and presented in a neat and organized fashion can be of great use to the SID, but ones that fail to meet these requirements do more harm than good.

The SEC SIDs have a limited role in the negotiation of radio and television contracts for coverage of their schools' athletic programs. The SID might write up bid specifications, but is usually not included in the final decision-making process concerning radio and television coverage. Normally, the athletic director, originating station and play-by-play announcer handle the bulk of the radio/TV contract negotiations.

Handling press tickets is a tedious part of the sports information director's job. The SID develops a press ticket policy and adheres to it strictly during the course of the season. The findings

suggested that most of the SEC SIDs provide the press with complimentary tickets upon request, which is a diplomatic gesture on their part. Complimentary tickets are not to be provided in return for favors, however, and most SIDs' ticket policies apply to everyone equally, with no exceptions, barring unusual circumstances.

It is the SID's responsibility to see that food is provided for the media in the press facility at athletic events. Sandwiches and soft drinks are the norm in the SEC press facilities. The author believes that good food in a press facility makes a favorable impression with the press. The SID is often in the position of providing the press with complimentary meals. While excessive wining and dining of the media is frowned upon, an occasional free meal, providing the athletic department allows for it in its budget, builds good rapport with the media personnel.

The findings suggested that the sports editors give the impression that complimentary tickets and meals are unethical, but the majority of them accept both on occasion. In most instances, the sports editors who regularly attend a school's athletic events purchase tickets from the athletic department for family members. Complimentary meals, while not considered to be a must in accommodating the press, are usually welcomed by the editors.

II. FREQUENCY OF CONTACT AMONG THE GROUPS

The SID is more likely to initiate frequent contact with the sports editor than is the editor with the SID. The sports editor is the SID's arm to reach the public and is his most utilized means of obtaining coverage for his school's athletic program. The SIDs normally

contact the key SEC sports editors at least twice a week. Their contact with local sports editors is much more frequent, in some cases occurring on a daily basis.

The frequency of contact between the sports editors and coaches varies, usually occurring on the average of once a week. Again, the contact between the sports editor of the home city newspaper and the coach is much more frequent than with many of the key sports editors used in this survey. The findings also suggested that the key sports editors in the Southeast do not regularly cover and attend basketball games. Usually, a reporter assigned that particular beat will be in attendance at the contest. The key sports editors normally concern themselves only with the "big" games and provide a wider scope of sports coverage. However, these editors often rely on the SIDs for ideas and information for use in their columns.

Surprisingly, the majority of sports editors state that they usually do not use the SID as a channel to arrange interviews. The general consensus was that these key sports editors go after the story on their own, using their own sources and contacts. This is especially true for controversial stories. However, the opposite holds true for the coaches. They depend upon the SID to handle the bulk of their press relations, specifically arranging interviews and radio and television appearances. The coach realizes that the coordination of his press relations is a major function of the SID and seems to take full advantage of the situation. The SID is there to keep the coach informed of his responsibilities to the press and the smart coach will seize the opportunity and rely on his SID to serve as his press liaison.

III. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPORTS INFORMATION

DIRECTOR, SPORTS EDITOR AND BASKETBALL COACH

The SEC SIDs are quite experienced in their field of work. The majority have more than 15 years of experience in sports information work. Most of the SIDs possess a strong background in newspaper work, specifically sportswriting. It is the author's opinion that a solid background in journalism, whether it be through newspaper, magazine, or teaching, is an invaluable asset to the SID. This additional experience allows him to develop his own writing style and provides him with an insight into the work of coaches and journalists.

The majority of SEC SIDs are alumni of the schools they were working for in 1981. The SID maintains strong ties with his school and has a strong sense of loyalty to the athletic program. He considers it a rewarding experience to come back and work for his alma mater. This sense of loyalty on the part of the sports information director is a valuable trait. He must believe in the school's athletic program. However, he must also maintain a standard of professionalism and not become overwhelmed with subjectivity in his work. A fine line needs to be drawn between his loyalty to his school and his responsibility to provide the news to the media. This is often difficult for the SID to do.

As expected, journalism is the most prevalent college major of the SID. However, other college degrees such as history, political science and English are common among SIDs.

Most SEC SIDs earn between \$20-29,999 per year. The salary of those SIDs who carry the additional title of assistant athletic director

or who have served in their position for an extended period of time, usually fall into the upper bracket of this salary range. The ages of the SIDs vary, with most being either under 40 or over 50 years of age.

The key sports editors in the Southeast are likewise an experienced group. Most have an average of more than 20 years of newspaper experience to their credit.

While the majority of editors in this survey earned college degrees, the author was surprised to discover that two respondents did not have college degrees. The findings indicated that these editors had among the greatest number of years of experience in newspaper work, evidently foregoing a college education for practical work experience. It is highly unlikely that a writer could get a job with a major newspaper without a college degree today. English was the most common major course of study for those editors with college degrees.

The editors in the SEC generally earn an income between \$25-40,000 per year, with salary usually dependent upon number of years' experience and size of the newspaper. Thus, from all indications, the sports editors at the key newspapers in the SEC are in a slightly higher income bracket than the SIDs. The majority of these editors are under 45 years old.

The average SEC basketball coach has more than 15 years of coaching experience, but is a relatively recent addition to his school's coaching staff. The majority of the SEC coaches have been in their present coaching positions for less than five years.

There appeared to be no correlation between the coaches' alma maters and where they coached in 1981, unlike the SIDs' strong ties with their colleges. Coaching is an extremely competitive field and

while many coaches may desire the opportunity to return to their alma maters, circumstances do not always allow it.

The average salary paid to the SEC basketball coaches is between \$40-49,999, thus making them the highest paid among these three groups. This figure can be a bit low, however, as coaches accumulate a sizeable portion of their income from summer camps and radio and television contracts. Most SEC basketball coaches are under 45 years of age.

IV. OPINIONS TOWARD JOB SITUATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

The sports information director frequently finds himself confronted with a crisis news situation. A player may be suspended for disciplinary reasons, a coach fired in the heat of controversy, or the team may become engulfed with dissension, producing a delicate news situation requiring careful management on the part of the SID.

The findings suggested that reporting the story as honestly and accurately as possible is the best policy for the SID to follow when handling a crisis news situation. The SID menaces his credibility by lying or attempting to cover up the truth. An aggressive reporter will most likely discover the true story and an honest account eliminates the possibility of untrue stories and embarrassment to the athletic department.

Basketball coaches often find themselves caught in the middle of a crisis news situation. Many times it is their reputation that is on the line and they believe that certain information which could result in injury to one's name or character should be withheld from the press. When the case of breaking the law arises, involving members of an

athletic team, coaches often feel the need to protect their players and attempt to keep certain information confidential.

This puts the SID in a bind. He is inclined to be an advocate for reporting the news as honestly as possible yet is sensitive to those involved. The coach may try to exert pressure upon the SID to withhold certain information from the press. Yet, the SID is obligated to serve as an information source to the editors and provide them with all the necessary facts regarding a crisis news situation. The newspaper readers, which include alumni and fans, virtually demand to be kept abreast of the happenings surrounding the athletic program. It is up to the SID to exercise a strong standard of ethics when reporting on crisis news situations and remember that a "no comment" reply is much better than a lie.

The level of cooperation the SID receives on information from the athletic administrators and coaches is a factor in his ability to report all the facts to the press. In some cases, the SID may not be totally included in the confidentiality circle within the athletic department, resulting in a poor channel of communication to the press. It is imperative that the SID be kept abreast of everything that is happening within the athletic department. Otherwise, a breakdown in communications can evolve between the athletic department and the media.

The work schedule of the SID is often unpredictable. He may have a checklist of items he needs to attend to and be unable to devote his full attention to them because of unforeseen circumstances which may require his immediate attention. However, the findings suggested that three areas of an SID's work required the greatest amount of time and

effort--accommodating the press, working on brochures, and arranging interviews.

The SID is the host to the media at all athletic events. It is his responsibility to see that the reporters are provided with all the information and materials they need in order to facilitate their coverage of the event. Organization of game day press relations is a time consuming chore and the SID must be able to play the role of the perfect host when it comes to accommodating the press on game day.

The publication of brochures is nearly a year round activity for the SID. The great amount of time spent writing, editing, proofreading and designing a sports brochure is enormous and is one aspect of the SID's job that is consistently demanding a great deal of his attention.

Arranging interviews for the media means that the SID usually spends much of his day on the telephone. While the findings suggested that for the most part, the key sports editors in the Southeast handle their own interviews, the SID still maintains contact with these journalists and may be of some help in setting up the interview. The SID also maintains frequent contact with the local sportswriters and keeps them informed of daily happenings around the athletic department.

Publicity mailings are a common tool for SIDs to use in reaching the media with news of their athletic programs. The findings suggested that in the eyes of the editors and coaches, the team statistical summary is the most useful piece of mail sent from the sports information department. While the weekly release, which provides advance information on an upcoming event, and the feature story, which is a practical means of publicizing players for individual honors, are useful in their

own right, it is the statistics which provide the editors and coaches with the most valuable information.

The publicity dispatched from the sports information office is of some importance in the selection process of all-SEC teams. The publicity makes the news people who select the teams more aware of certain players' accomplishments and serves as a reminder to those who receive it that a particular player is worthy of all-star consideration.

For the most part, the SEC SIDs do not spend as much time and effort publicizing their schools' basketball programs as they do the football programs. Football is the leading revenue-producing sport in the SEC, however, and is therefore expected to receive more attention. Basketball publicity in the SEC is primarily handled by the assistant SID and in a sense plays second fiddle to football publicity. Other sports and women's programs usually take third place.

V. IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS IN EVALUATING WORK PERFORMANCES

The SID must be a versatile individual with the ability to adapt to different situations and relationships. The findings suggested that the SID must develop and maintain a solid working relationship with the press in order to become successful in his work. This means that a mutual trust and respect need to be developed in order to grant the two groups the opportunity to have a comfortable and successful working relationship. Journalists are the SIDs' arm to reach the public and it is obviously important that the two be on good working terms.

It is essential that the SID gear his work around projecting an honest image of his school's athletic program. As previously discussed,

honesty is the best policy in sports information work and it is the responsibility of the SID to uphold the strongest of ethical standards in reporting the news.

Producing credible work is another trait the SID should strive to attain. Obtaining credibility in the eyes of the press and coaches was discovered to be an area of concern among SIDs but it is a quality that can be developed over a period of time provided the SID maintains an honest image for the athletic department and produces quality work.

The SID also needs to cultivate a solid relationship with the coaching staff in order to become totally successful. Gaining the coaches' respect and confidence is vital for the SID in his efforts to serve as an effective information source. The SID should keep the coaches informed of their media obligations and offer advice on media-related matters. At the same time, the SID should be sensitive to the coaches' allegiance and dedication to the development of a successful athletic program.

Since the SID is involved with publicizing his school's athletic program, it is a necessity that he be fairly knowledgeable of sports. Being aware of the time, effort, and preparation that go into achieving success on the athletic field, as well as a general knowledge of the sport, equips the SID with a more thorough insight into the ideas, events, and people he is publicizing.

The findings suggested that there exists a difference in opinion over whether having good writing skills is important in order to become a successful SID. The SID can depend upon his assistant(s) to do the bulk of the writing, but being a skillful writer makes the SID a more valuable publicist and tends to make his job a more effective one.

Certain qualities are recommended for coaches to have in order to maintain a successful relationship with the press. Coaches should make themselves as accessible to the press as possible and exercise a willingness to cooperate. Tactful coaches realize the value of good press and are able to work with journalists in producing positive publicity for their teams. Those coaches who snub the press and are wary of what may be written about them only create an undesirable working environment. Coaches should also attempt to be as sincere and straightforward as possible when dealing with the press. The coach who tends to evade the issue and paint an unrealistic picture often finds himself the victim of an unmerciful writer.

VI. EVALUATION OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS, EDITORS AND COACHES IN THE SEC

Three sports information operations--Alabama, LSU and Tennessee--stood out above the rest when evaluated by the editors and coaches. The SID at Alabama chose not to participate in this survey, therefore data on this operation is unavailable. However, several statements can be made in regard to the effectiveness of the sports information operations at LSU and Tennessee.

Both SIDs, Paul Manasseh of LSU and Haywood Harris of Tennessee, have more than 25 years of experience in sports information work. Manasseh has been at LSU between 11 and 15 years, while Harris has been at Tennessee for more than 20 years. Both are alumni of their universities and are in the \$25-29,999 salary bracket which ranked the highest among SEC SIDs. Harris had previous experience in newspaper work as a

sportswriter, while Manasseh did not indicate any previous related work experience.

LSU covers both men's and women's athletics in its department and has two assistant SIDs, one whose primary responsibility is coverage of the women's program. Tennessee covers only the men's program in its department, with a separate SID handling women's publicity. Both LSU and Tennessee have four student assistants, with only one other responding school having more. LSU, Tennessee and Alabama were judged to have the best basketball press facilities in the SEC.

Therefore, experience, coupled with a solid work staff, are vital ingredients in the development of a successful sports information operation. Granted, experience comes with time, but it is important for the prospective SID to be exposed to as much of the daily routine of a sports information operation as possible and become knowledgeable in as many areas of sports publicity work as he can in order to best prepare himself for a career in the field. Working as a student assistant is an excellent means of gaining experience and opens the door to future job possibilities.

The top SEC sports editors, as evaluated by the SIDs and coaches, were George Lapides of The Memphis Press-Scimitar, Bill Lumpkin of The Post-Herald in Birmingham, and Billy Reed of The Louisville Courier-Journal. All three have extensive experience, with Lumpkin having more than 30 years of newspaper work to his credit. Lumpkin and Lapides were alumni of the schools they were paired with in this survey. While Lapides did not reveal his income, Lumpkin and Reed both indicated being in the \$25-34,999 salary bracket. All three had college degrees, two editors majoring in English and one in history. Therefore, it

appears that the top key sports editors in the SEC have an average of more than 20 years of newspaper experience and earn among the highest salaries of sports editors in the South. While these key editors may not regularly attend and cover a particular team's athletic events, they still hold the respect of the SIDs and are considered to be just as important, if not more important, media outlets as the local sports editors.

Three SEC basketball coaches--Dale Brown of LSU, Don DeVoe of Tennessee, and Hugh Durham of Georgia--were judged by the SIDs and editors as being the most cooperative in working with the press. Again, experience appears to be a factor, with Brown and Durham each having over 20 years of coaching experience. Brown and DeVoe indicated that they did not use their SIDs to arrange their media relations, while Durham said he relied on his SID to handle his media contacts. All three indicated earning a salary as paid by the university of between \$40-49,999. None of the three coaches was an alumni of the universities where he coached in 1981. Experience, coupled with a cooperative attitude in dealing with the media, is a key quality for coaches to have in order to maintain a good working relationship with the press.

The findings suggested that several elements go into the running of an efficient basketball press facility. Adequate working space with a sufficient number of electrical outlets and telephones is a must. The journalists should have easy access to the players and coaches, with a specific press area designated for player and coach interviews a common practice. Accurate game statistics, along with coaches' post-

game comments, should be distributed to the media as quickly as possible following the game.

Running a basketball press facility requires organization, attention to detail, and patience on the part of the SID. Making sure that the media's needs are taken care of is the SID's primary concern and an efficiently run press facility provides the SID with the basis for a smoothly flowing press operation at athletic events.

Each group expressed opinions toward what they thought the most important functions of the SID were. The SIDs believed their most important functions were to serve as a liaison between the athletic department and media, serve as an information source for the athletic program, and through their work, maintain a credible image of the athletic department. The editors believed accommodating the needs of the journalists, including arranging interviews and serving as host at athletic events, were the most important functions of the SID. The media guide is of utmost importance to the basketball program and preparation of it was considered to be the most valuable function of the SID by the coaches. The media guide is used not only as an information source, but as a recruiting tool, as well. Coaches take great stock in their media guides and expect an attractive book published and delivered on time.

While the SID faces a multiplicity of job responsibilities, several areas of his work appear to present the greatest challenges--accommodating the press at athletic events, handling crisis news situations, obtaining credibility in the eyes of the media and devoting an appropriate amount of time to the coverage of non-revenue sports (e.g., track, baseball, golf, swimming, wrestling and tennis).

VII. PERCEPTIONS OF CREDIBILITY OF SIDs' WORK IN EYES
OF EDITORS AND COACHES

For the most part, the SEC SIDs' work is perceived as being very credible in the eyes of the sports editors of the largest newspapers in the Southeast and the basketball coaches in the conference. The SIDs work closely with the editors to provide them with all the basic materials they need to cover their schools' athletic programs. In short, the editor is the SID's instrument in reaching the public with news of his school's athletic program and is therefore the target of utmost consideration from the SID.

Coaches, who for the most part recognize the value of the SID, are not in the news business. They are primarily concerned with developing sound basketball programs to win games and tend to ignore the publicity disseminated by the SIDs. Team statistics and media guides are what they considered to be the most important contributions of the sports information office and they often pay minimal attention to a vast amount of the publicity created by the SID.

VIII. ACCURACY AND CONSISTENCY OF SPORTS
EDITORS' COVERAGE

The findings suggested that the sports editors generally provided consistent and accurate coverage of the SEC schools' basketball programs. Schools located in southeastern states with more than one major university often must compete for coverage. It is the responsibility of the SID to keep the editors informed of the happenings within his school's athletic program and give the editor every opportunity to

provide as much coverage as possible. Ideas for feature stories, daily sports reports, and advance notices of press related activities are utilized by the SID in order to obtain a maximum amount of coverage from the editors.

IX. PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE THREE GROUPS

From this study, it can be concluded that the SEC SIDs have fairly close working relationships with both the key sports editors and basketball coaches. The editor-coach relationships do not appear to be as close. The actual reasons for this were not identified in this study, but one can speculate that personal conflicts between the two groups would likely be a major cause for a breakdown in the relationship. A story written about a coach or his team may have been viewed as being derogatory by the coach, thus giving him a poor opinion of the editor. Likewise, an uncooperative attitude on the part of the coach in dealing with the press, whether it be limiting his time to reporters or evading the issues, can result in the editor's formulation of a prejudicial opinion of the coach. Consequently, a working relationship between the editor and coach that is not close could evolve.

X. SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The sports information director has the potential to fulfill a vital role in the administration of his university's athletic program. While serving as the liaison between the athletic department and the media, disseminating information about his school's athletic program, and maintaining a credible image of the athletic department may be

recognized as the SID's primary job responsibilities, the work of an SID encompasses a wide range of activities, making his job one of the most demanding assignments in collegiate athletics. The successful SID must be a well-rounded individual with the ability to adapt to different work situations and cope with a number of diverse relationships. The SID must be able to establish a solid working relationship with the press and earn their respect and trust. He must also work closely with the coaches within his school's athletic department and project their programs in the best possible manner. In short, the SID works to direct the communication channel between the athletic department and the media in an attempt to provide the best possible coverage for his school's athletic program.

Many different areas of inquiry were probed in this thesis and the results indicate the need for future research in some of these areas. It appears that a closer, more in-depth study of the working relationships among the SID, media and coach, might prove beneficial to athletic program administrators, news media, and coaches of intercollegiate sports. While this thesis took a brief look at the closeness of these relationships, a more thorough examination focusing on the nature of the relationships might provide an even sharper insight into these areas.

A national sample of SIDs, editors and coaches could be taken, with the results being more generalizable to these three groups as a whole, rather than being somewhat restricted as this study was with the SEC. A study examining the difference in structure of those sports information departments who cover both men's and women's athletics as

opposed to those departments who provide separate coverage could be undertaken. The findings of this study might reveal which method is more feasible and functional in the present day administration of inter-collegiate athletics. Finally, with football the main revenue generator for financing most athletic programs at many major universities, a study involving football coaches might prove to be useful. These are just several areas where future research could benefit those involved in the ubiquitous world of collegiate athletics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF TOTAL SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR POPULATION

1. Jack Perry--Alabama
2. Buddy Davidson--Auburn
3. Norm Carlson--Florida
4. Claude Felton--Georgia
5. Russell Rice--Kentucky
6. Paul Manasseh--LSU
7. Ralph Carptenter--Mississippi
8. Bo Carter--Mississippi State
9. Haywood Harris--Tennessee
10. Lew Harris--Vanderbilt

APPENDIX B

LIST OF TOTAL SPORTS EDITOR POPULATION

1. Lee Baker--The Jackson Daily News (Jackson, Miss.)
2. Furman Bisher--The Atlanta Journal
3. Paul Borden--The Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, Miss.)
4. Al Dunning--The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)
5. David Lamm--The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, Fla.)
6. George Lapides--The Memphis Press-Scimitar
7. Bill Lumpkin--The Post-Herald (Birmingham, Ala.)
8. Billy Reed--The Louisville Courier-Journal
9. Robert Roesler--The Times-Picayune (New Orleans, La.)
10. Alf Van Hoose--The Birmingham News

APPENDIX C

LIST OF TOTAL BASKETBALL COACH POPULATION

1. Dale Brown--LSU
2. Don DeVoe--Tennessee
3. Hugh Durham--Georgia
4. Joe B. Hall--Kentucky
5. Jim Hatfield--Mississippi State
6. Wimp Sanderson--Alabama
7. Richard Schmidt--Vanderbilt
8. Norm Sloan--Florida
9. Sonny Smith--Auburn
10. Bob Weltlich--Mississippi

APPENDIX D

BREAKDOWN OF SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS, SPORTS EDITORS AND BASKETBALL COACHES RETURNING SURVEY

Sports Information Director 8-10

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Buddy Davidson--Auburn | 5. Paul Manasseh--LSU |
| 2. Norm Carlson--Florida | 6. Bo Carter--Mississippi State |
| 3. Claude Felton--Georgia | 7. Haywood Harris--Tennessee |
| 4. Russell Rice--Kentucky | 8. Lew Harris--Vanderbilt |

Sports Editors 8-10

1. Furman Bisher--The Atlanta Journal
2. Paul Borden--The Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, Miss.)
3. Al Dunning--The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)
4. David Lamm--The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, Fla.)
5. George Lapides--The Memphis Press-Scimitar
6. Bill Lumpkin--The Post-Herald (Birmingham, Ala.)
7. Billy Reed--The Louisville Courier-Journal
8. Robert Roesler--The Times-Picayune (New Orleans, La.)

Basketball Coaches 8-10

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Dale Brown--LSU | 5. Jim Hatfield--Mississippi State |
| 2. Don DeVoe--Tennessee | 6. Wimp Sanderson--Alabama |
| 3. Hugh Durham--Georgia | 7. Sonny Smith--Auburn |
| 4. Joe B. Hall--Kentucky | 8. Bob Weltlich--Mississippi |

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SID

January 26, 1981

Paul Manasseh
Sports Information Director
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70893

Dear Mr. Manasseh:

I am conducting a survey of sports information directors, sports editors and basketball coaches in the Southeastern Conference for my Master's Thesis in Communications at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The purpose of this survey is to construct a profile of the major college sports information director and examine the working relationship with two of his closest associates--the sports editor and basketball coach. With your help, I want to compare the sports information operations around the SEC and develop a study that provides insight into the working relationship of the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach. I'm very interested in the sports information field and hope someday to work at the major college level.

Of course all answers are confidential and will be used only in combination with those of other sports information directors, sports editors and basketball coaches. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

If you are interested in receiving a report on the findings of this research, just write your name and address at the end of the questionnaire and I'll be glad to send you a complimentary copy when ready.

I know you are a very busy man, but this questionnaire is very important to me for the completion of my graduate work. Completion of this questionnaire should take only 10-15 minutes. Please return the completed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Kerry Tharp

Kerry Tharp
3700 Sutherland Ave. Apt. A-17
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

NEWS COVERAGE OF SEC SPORTS
SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions deal with the working relationship between the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach in the South-eastern Conference. Please indicate your answer to each question by circling your desired response. As mentioned in the accompanying letter, your answers will remain in the strictest of confidence. Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

1. What is your official title?
 - a. Sports information director
 - b. Sports publicity director
 - c. Director of sports promotions
 - d. Assistant athletic director in charge of sports publicity
 - e. Other (please list)
2. In the space below, list the primary functions of your department.
3. Which of the following positions report directly to you?
 - a. Assistant sports information director (indicate number__)
 - b. Secretary (indicate number__)
 - c. Student assistants (indicate number__)
 - d. Other (please list)
4. What duties does your assistant(s) perform?
5. Does your department cover women's athletics?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If no, who does?
6. Approximately how many media outlets are on your school's basketball mailing list?

a. Less than 100	d. 300-399
b. 100-199	e. 400-499
c. 200-299	f. 500 or more
7. Do you assist in radio and/or television negotiations for coverage of your school's athletic program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If yes, what is your role?

8. In a crisis news situation (for example, team dissension, player suspension or coach dismissal), should the sports information director--(Circle one or more of the following)

- a. Report the story as honestly and accurately as possible
- b. Give the press little information on the matter
- c. Reveal the total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved
- d. Channel responsibility off unto coach involved
- e. Withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may result
- f. Other (please list)

9. In your opinion, how good is the cooperation you receive on information from your school's athletic director and basketball coach?

- a. Limited cooperation
- b. Good cooperation
- c. Excellent cooperation
- d. Don't know/No opinion

10. In your opinion, how important are each of the following in becoming a successful sports information director? Please indicate your value of importance with a check (✓).

- a. Has good writing skills
- b. Is knowledgeable of sports
- c. Maintains good relationship with press
- d. Maintains good relationship with coaches
- e. Produces quality publications
- f. Produces timely and newsworthy mailings
- g. Is alumnus of school
- h. Provides honest insight into school's athletic program

UNIMPORTANT IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

11. In your opinion, which of the following presents the biggest challenge in your work? (Circle one or more of the following)

- a. Meeting deadlines
- b. Handling crisis news situations
- c. Accommodating the press at athletic events
- d. Accommodating the needs of the coaches
- e. Devoting an appropriate amount of time for coverage of non-revenue sports
- f. Obtaining credibility in the eyes of the media
- g. Other (please list)

12. In your opinion, how much of your time and effort is directed toward each of the following? Please indicate your amount of time and effort with a check (✓).

- a. Producing releases
- b. Accommodating press at games
- c. Working on brochures
- d. Making speaking engagements and special appearances
- e. Setting up interviews
- f. Other (please list)

VERY LITTLE TIME SOME TIME VERY MUCH TIME

13. How much input does the basketball coach provide when putting together the basketball brochure each year?
- a. Very little input
 - b. Some input
 - c. Very much input
14. In your opinion, just how credible is the work of the SEC sports information directors in the eyes of the basketball coaches in the league?
- a. Not credible
 - b. Moderately credible
 - c. Very credible
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
15. In your opinion, just how credible is the work of the SEC sports information directors in the eyes of the media who cover the league?
- a. Not credible
 - b. Moderately credible
 - c. Very credible
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
16. Who normally travels with the basketball team during the regular season from your department?
- a. You
 - b. Your assistant
 - c. Both you and your assistant
 - d. Other (please list)
17. How would you describe your working relationship with your school's basketball coach?
- a. Not close
 - b. Moderately close
 - c. Very close
18. In your opinion, does the sports editor of _____ provide your team with an equal (or better) amount of coverage compared to other schools' basketball teams in the state?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/No opinion
19. In your opinion, just how accurate is the coverage of your school's basketball team from the sports editor of _____ ?
- a. Not accurate
 - b. Moderately accurate
 - c. Very accurate
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
20. How would you describe your working relationship with the sports editor of _____ ?
- a. Not close
 - b. Moderately close
 - c. Very close

21. In your opinion, who are the top sports editors who cover the SEC? (Circle one or more of the following in the alphabetical list)
- a. Lee Baker--The Jackson Daily News
 - b. Furman Bisher--The Atlanta Journal
 - c. Paul Borden--The Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, Miss.)
 - d. Al Dunning--Memphis Commercial Appeal
 - e. David Lamm--The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, Fla.)
 - f. George Lapides--Memphis Press-Scimitar
 - g. Bill Lumpkin--The Post-Herald (Birmingham, Ala.)
 - h. Billy Reed--The Louisville Courier-Journal
 - i. Robert Roesler--The Times-Picayune (New Orleans, La.)
 - j. Alf Van Hoose--The Birmingham News
 - k. Others (please list)
22. What is your policy regarding complimentary tickets, meals, etc., provided for the working press at your school?
23. On an average during the basketball season, how often do you talk with the sports editor who covers your team?
- a. Once a week
 - b. Twice a week
 - c. Less than once a week (indicate how often)
 - d. More than twice a week (indicate how often)
24. In your opinion, which SEC basketball coaches are most likely to make themselves available to the press? (Circle one or more of the following in the alphabetical list)
- a. Dale Brown--LSU
 - b. Don DeVoe--Tennessee
 - c. Hugh Durham--Georgia
 - d. Joe B. Hall--Kentucky
 - e. Jim Hatfield--Mississippi State
 - f. Wimp Sanderson--Alabama
 - g. Richard Schmidt--Vanderbilt
 - h. Norm Sloan--Florida
 - i. Sonny Smith--Auburn
 - j. Bob Weltlich--Mississippi
25. How long have you been sports information director at the school you now work for?
- a. First year
 - b. 2-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years
 - d. 11-15 years
 - e. 16-20 years
 - f. More than 20 years
26. How long have you been involved in sports information work of any kind?
- a. Up to five years
 - b. 6-10 years
 - c. 11-15 years
 - d. 16-20 years
 - e. 21-25 years
 - f. More than 25 years
27. List any other related work experience (for example, newspaper, radio or TV work).

28. Are you an alumnus of the school you now work for?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If not, where?
29. Please list college degree(s), if any, and major.
30. Which of the following best describes your present salary as paid by the university?
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| a. Under \$20,000 | d. \$30-34,999 |
| b. \$20-24,999 | e. \$35-39,999 |
| c. \$25-29,999 | f. \$40,000 or over |
31. How old are you?
- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| a. 40 or under | d. 51-55 |
| b. 41-45 | e. 56-60 |
| c. 46-50 | f. Over 60 |
32. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge in your field of work?
33. In your opinion, what is the most important function of your department?
34. If there is any area of the working relationship between the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach you would like to comment on, please feel free to do so below.

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDITORS

February 1, 1981

Bill Lumpkin
Sports Editor
The Post-Herald
2200 North 4th Ave.
Birmingham, Alabama 35202

Dear Mr. Lumpkin:

I am conducting a survey of sports information directors, sports editors and basketball coaches in the Southeastern Conference for my Master's Thesis in Communications at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The purpose of this survey is to construct a profile of the major college sports information director and examine the working relationship with two of his closest associates--the sports editor and basketball coach. With your help, I want to compare the sports information operations around the SEC and develop a study that provides insight into the working relationship of the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach. I'm interested in the sports information field and hope someday to work at the major college level.

Of course all answers are confidential and will be used only in combination with those of other sports information directors, sports editors and basketball coaches. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

If you are interested in receiving a report on the findings of this research, just write your name and address at the end of the questionnaire. I'll be glad to send you a complimentary copy when ready.

I know you are a very busy man, but this questionnaire is very important to me for the completion of my graduate work. Completion of this questionnaire should take only 10-15 minutes. Please return the completed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Kerry Tharp
3700 Sutherland Ave. Apt. A-17
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

NEWS COVERAGE OF SEC SPORTS
SPORTS EDITOR QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions deal with the working relationship between the sports information director and sports editor in the Southeastern Conference. Several questions dealing with the working relationship between the sports editor and SEC basketball coaches are also included. Please indicate your answer to each question by circling your desired response. As mentioned in the accompanying letter, your answers will remain in the strictest of confidence. Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

1. In your opinion, how important is each of the following in evaluating the work of a university's sports information director? Please indicate your value of importance with a check (✓).

- a. Has good writing skills
- b. Is knowledgeable of sports
- c. Maintains good relationship with press
- d. Maintains good relationship with coaches
- e. Produces quality publications
- f. Produces timely and newsworthy mailings
- g. Is alumnus of school
- h. Provides honest insight into school's athletic program

UNIMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT

2. In your opinion, how successful is the sports information director at in carrying out his duties?

- a. Unsuccessful
- b. Moderately successful
- c. Very successful
- d. Don't know /No opinion

3. In your opinion, how successful are the other SEC sports information directors in performing their duties? (Compared to sports information director)

- a. Better
- b. Poorer
- c. About the same

(Compared to other sports information directors you have been associated with)

- a. Better
- b. Poorer
- c. About the same

4. In your opinion, which are the most effective sports information operations in the SEC? (Circle one or more of the following)

- a. Alabama
- b. Auburn
- c. Florida
- d. Georgia
- e. Kentucky
- f. LSU
- g. Mississippi
- h. Mississippi State
- i. Tennessee
- j. Vanderbilt

5. Is the majority of your contact with a school's basketball coaches and/or players arranged through the school's sports information director?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If not, how?
6. How helpful is the sports information director at _____ in providing you with feature angles?
- a. Not helpful
 - b. Moderately helpful
 - c. Very helpful
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
7. In a crisis news situation (for example, team dissension, player suspension or coach dismissal) should the sports information director--(Circle one or more of the following)
- a. Report the story as honestly and accurately as possible
 - b. Give the press little information on the matter
 - c. Reveal the total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved
 - d. Withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may result
 - e. Other (please list)
8. In your opinion, does the sports information director at _____ usually level with you when providing confidential information regarding a crisis news situation?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/No opinion
9. In your opinion, how credible is the work of _____ sports information director in the eyes of your state's media?
- a. Not credible
 - b. Moderately credible
 - c. Very credible
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
10. In your opinion, just how credible is the work of _____ sports information director in the eyes of the remaining media who cover the SEC?
- a. Not credible
 - b. Moderately credible
 - c. Very credible
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
11. In your opinion, which are the most efficiently run press facility operations for basketball in the SEC? (Circle one or more of the following)
- | | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| a. Alabama | f. LSU |
| b. Auburn | g. Mississippi |
| c. Florida | h. Mississippi State |
| d. Georgia | i. Tennessee |
| e. Kentucky | j. Vanderbilt |

12. In your opinion, is it the responsibility of the sports information director to provide a pre-game meal for the working press?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know/No opinion
13. In your opinion, what constitutes an efficiently run press facility operation for basketball?
14. What is your paper's policy regarding complimentary meals, tickets and other related expenses in covering a school's athletic program?
15. In your opinion, how useful is the publicity you receive from the SEC sports information directors? Please indicate your level of usefulness with a check (✓).
- | | NOT USEFUL | MODERATELY USEFUL | VERY USEFUL |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| a. Weekly release | | | |
| b. Statistics | | | |
| c. Player feature | | | |
| d. Other (please list) | | | |
16. How important is the publicity generated by the SEC sports information directors when it comes to selecting all-SEC teams?
- Not important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
 - Don't know/No opinion
17. In your opinion, how does the treatment from the sports information director toward the print media compare to the treatment of the radio and television media?
- Print media not as well treated
 - Equal treatment for both
 - Better treatment for print media
 - Don't know/No opinion
18. On an average during the basketball season, how often do you talk with the sports information director at ?
- Once a week
 - Twice a week
 - Less than once a week (indicate how often)
 - More than twice a week (indicate how often)
19. Approximately how many men's basketball games did you attend and cover last year?
- Less than five
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - 16-20
 - 21-25
 - More than 25

20. How would you describe your working relationship with the sports information director at _____ ?

- a. Not close
- b. Moderately close
- c. Very close

21. In your opinion, what duties does the sports information director perform that are of the most value to you as sports editor?

22. In your opinion, how important are each of the following for a basketball coach to have in maintaining a successful relationship with the press? Please indicate your value of importance with a check (✓).

- a. Is accessible to press
- b. Is sincere and straightforward
- c. Is personable
- d. Is alumnus of school
- e. Other (please list)

UNIMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT

23. During basketball season, how often do you talk with the basketball coach at _____ ?

- a. Once a week
- b. Twice a week
- c. Less than once a week (indicate how often)
- d. More than twice a week (indicate how often)

24. On the whole, how cooperative are the basketball coaches in the SEC in working with the press?

- a. Not cooperative
- b. Moderately cooperative
- c. Very cooperative
- d. Don't know/No opinion

25. How would you describe your working relationship with the basketball coach at _____ ?

- a. Not close
- b. Moderately close
- c. Very close

26. In your opinion, which of the following SEC basketball coaches are more likely to make themselves available to the press? (Circle one or more of the following in the alphabetical list)

- a. Dale Brown--LSU
- b. Don DeVoe--Tennessee
- c. Hugh Durham--Georgia
- d. Joe B. Hall--Kentucky
- e. Jim Hatfield--Mississippi State
- f. Wimp Sanderson--Alabama
- g. Richard Schmidt--Vanderbilt
- h. Norm Sloan--Florida
- i. Sonny Smith--Auburn
- j. Bob Weltlich--Mississippi

27. How long have you been sports editor of the paper you now work for?
- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| a. First year | d. 11-15 years |
| b. 2-5 years | e. 16-20 years |
| c. 6-10 years | f. Over 20 years |
28. How many years have you been involved in newspaper work of any kind?
- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| a. Up to five years | e. 21-25 years |
| b. 6-10 years | f. 26-30 years |
| c. 11-15 years | g. Over 30 years |
| d. 16-20 years | |
29. Are you an alumnus of ?
- | |
|------------------|
| a. Yes |
| b. No |
| c. If no, where? |
30. Please list your college degree(s), if any, and major.
31. Which of the following best describes your present salary as paid by the newspaper?
- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| a. Under \$20,000 | d. \$30-34,999 |
| b. \$20-24,999 | e. \$35-39,999 |
| c. \$25-29,999 | f. Over \$40,000 |
32. How old are you?
- | |
|----------------|
| a. 40 or under |
| b. 41-45 |
| c. 46-50 |
| d. Over 50 |
33. If there is any area of the working relationship between the sports information director, sports editor and basketball coach you would like to comment on, please feel free to do so below.

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BASKETBALL COACHES

October 27, 1980

Wimp Sanderson
Head Basketball Coach
University of Alabama
University, Alabama 35486

Dear Coach Sanderson:

I am conducting a survey of basketball coaches, sports information directors, and sports editors in the Southeastern Conference for my Master's Thesis in Communications at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The purpose of this survey is to construct a profile of the major college sports information director and examine the working relationship with two of his closest associates--the basketball coach and sports editor. With your help I want to compare the sports information operations around the SEC and develop a study that provides insight into the working relationship of the sports information director, basketball coach, and sports editor. I'm very interested in the sports information field and hope someday to work at the major college level.

Of course all answers are confidential and will be used only in combination with those of other basketball coaches, sports information directors, and sports editors. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

If you are interested in receiving a report on the findings of this research, just write your name and address at the end of the questionnaire. I'll be glad to send you a complimentary copy when ready.

I know you are a very busy man, but this questionnaire is very important to me for the completion of my graduate work. Completion of this questionnaire should take only 10-15 minutes. Please return the completed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Kerry Sharp
3700 Sutherland Avenue Apt. A-17
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

NEWS COVERAGE OF SEC SPORTS
BASKETBALL COACH QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions deal with the working relationship between the sports information director and the basketball coach in the Southeastern Conference. Several questions dealing with the working relationship between the coach and sports editors who cover the SEC are also included. Please indicate your answer to each question by circling your desired response. As mentioned in the accompanying letter, your answers will remain in the strictest of confidence. Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

1. In your opinion, how important are each of the following in evaluating the work of a sports information director? Please indicate your value of importance with a check (✓).

- a. Has good writing skills
- b. Is knowledgeable of sports
- c. Maintains good relationship with press
- d. Maintains good relationship with coaches
- e. Is alumnus of school
- f. Produces credible work
- g. Provides honest insight into school's athletic program

UNIMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT

2. In your opinion, how successful is the sports information director at your school in carrying out his duties?

- a. Unsuccessful
- b. Moderately successful
- c. Very successful
- d. Don't know

3. In your opinion, how successful are the other sports information directors in the SEC in performing their duties? (Compared to your school's sports information director).

- a. Better
- b. Poorer
- c. About the same

(Compared to other sports information directors in the country you have been associated with).

- a. Better
- b. Poorer
- c. About the same

4. In your opinion, which are some of the top sports information operations in the SEC? (Circle one or more of the following)

- a. Alabama
- b. Auburn
- c. Kentucky
- d. Florida
- e. LSU
- f. Mississippi
- g. Mississippi St.
- h. Vanderbilt
- i. Tennessee
- j. Georgia

5. Was the majority of your contact with the media last year arranged through your school's sports information director?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. If not, how?

6. Do you arrange the following basketball related communications with the media through your school's sports information director? Please indicate your answer with a check (✓).

Yes No If not, how?

- a. Interviews
 - b. Radio-TV talk shows
 - c. Public appearances
7. How much input do you provide when working with your school's sports information director on your basketball brochure each year?
- a. Very little input
 - b. Some input
 - c. Very much input
8. When negative coverage of your team results, should the sports information director be held accountable?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
9. In a crisis news situation, (for example, team dissension or player suspension) should the sports information director - (Circle one or more of the following)
- a. Report the story as honestly and accurately as possible?
 - b. Give the press little information on the matter?
 - c. Reveal total story, regardless of possible damage to those involved?
 - d. Channel the responsibility off unto coach involved?
 - e. Withhold information if injury to one's reputation or character may result?
 - f. Other (Please list below in space provided)
10. In your opinion, how much of an effect does what your players read in the newspaper about themselves and their team have on their performance?
- a. No effect
 - b. Moderate effect
 - c. Very much effect
 - d. Don't know
11. In your opinion, which of the following type of publicity has the greatest effect on your team?
- a. Positive write-up praising their performance
 - b. Negative write-up criticizing their performance
 - c. No opinion
12. In your opinion, just how credible is the work of your school's sports information director in the eyes of your state's media?
- a. Not credible
 - b. Moderately credible
 - c. Very credible
 - d. Don't know
13. In your opinion, how good is the cooperation the sports information director receives on information from your school's athletic director and other coaches?
- a. Limited cooperation
 - b. Good cooperation
 - c. Excellent cooperation
 - d. Don't know

14. How much attention do you pay to the publicity you receive from your opponents' sports information departments? Please indicate your amount of attention with a check (✓).

	No Attention	Some Attention	A lot of Attention
a. Weekly release			
b. Statistics			
c. Player features			
d. Other (please list)			

15. How important is the publicity generated by the SEC sports information directors when it comes to selecting all-SEC teams?
- Not important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
16. Does the sports information director at your school spend as much time and effort in publicizing your basketball program as he does your school's football program?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
17. Who usually travels with your basketball team during the regular season?
- Sports Information Director
 - Assistant Sports Information Director
 - Other (Please list)
18. How would you describe your working relationship with the member of the sports information department who spends most of the time covering your basketball team?
- Not close
 - Moderately close
 - Very close
19. In your opinion, what duties does the sports information director perform that are of the most value to you and your basketball program?
20. In your opinion, in what areas could the sports information director at your school improve in performing his job? Your answer to this question, as all other questions, remains in the strictest of confidence.
21. In your opinion, does the sports editor of provide your team with an equal (or better) amount of coverage compared to other schools' basketball teams in the state?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
22. In your opinion, does the sports editor of accurate coverage of your basketball team? give
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

23. In your opinion, just how credible is the work of the sports editor of
in the eyes of other sports editors who
cover the SEC?
- Not credible
 - Moderately credible
 - Very credible
 - Don't know
24. In your opinion, who are the top sports editors who cover the SEC? (Circle
any of the following in the alphabetical list)
- Lee Baker--The Jackson Daily News
 - Furman Bisher--The Atlanta Journal
 - Paul Borden--The Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, Miss.)
 - Al Dunning--Memphis Commercial Appeal
 - David Lamm--The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville)
 - George Lapides--The Memphis Press-Scimitar
 - Bill Lumpkin--The Post-Herald (Birmingham)
 - Billy Reed--Louisville Courier-Journal
 - Robert Roesler--The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)
 - Alf Van Hoose--The Birmingham News
 - Others (Please list)
25. On an average during the basketball season, how often do you talk with the
sports editor?
- Once a week
 - Twice a week
 - Less than once a week (indicate how often)
 - More than twice a week (indicate how often)
26. When unfavorable coverage of your team results, should the sports editor
receive the bulk of the blame?
- Yes
 - No
 - No opinion
27. How would you describe your working relationship with the sports editor
that covers your team?
- Not close
 - Moderately close
 - Very close
 - No opinion
28. How long have you been head coach at your present school?
- First year
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - Over 15 years
29. How long have you been involved in coaching, at any level?
- Up to five years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - More than 20 years
30. Are you an alumnus of the school you now coach for?
- Yes
 - No
31. Which of the following best describes your present salary as paid by the
university?
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| a. Under \$30,000 | d. \$50-59,999 |
| b. \$30-39,999 | e. \$60,000 or over |
| c. \$40-49,999 | |

32. How old are you?

- a. 40 or under
- b. 41-45
- c. 46-50
- d. Over 50

33. If there is any area of the working relationship between the sports information director, basketball coach and sports editor you would like to comment on, please feel free to do so below.

VITA

Kerry Wayne Tharp was born in Louisville, Kentucky on May 23, 1957. He attended Gideon Shyrock and St. Matthews Elementary Schools in that city and was graduated from Mayme S. Waggener High School in May 1975. The following August he entered Western Kentucky University, and in May 1979 he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations. During his time at WKU, he became a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and worked as a student assistant in the Sports Information Office.

In August of 1979, he entered the Graduate School of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and began study toward a Master's Degree in Communications. He received the Master of Science degree with a major in Communications in June 1981. During his two years at UT, he worked as a graduate assistant in the Sports Information Office and had the opportunity to attend and cover some of the finest collegiate athletic events in the nation.

The author is single and is seeking a position in the exciting world of communications and public relations. Mr. Tharp's ultimate career goal is to work in professional sports and retire in the beautiful Bluegrass region of central Kentucky.