

As seen on TV: your new favourite sports team

A master's thesis on sports documentaries, audience engagement, and sports fandom

Student Name: Sjoerd Willemsen

Student Number: 529241

Supervisor: Dr. Alexandre Diallo

Master Media and Creative Industries

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

Sports have been popular throughout the world for hundreds of years. Accompanying this phenomenon are sports documentaries, whose popularity has greatly increased. Though ample research exists into the effect partaking in sports themselves have on people, little exists on the effects sports documentaries have on their viewers. Thus, the research question reads: “How do sports documentaries influence the viewers' emotions on the shown sports teams?”. By conducting theoretical research, important concepts such as the narrative, audience engagement, and sports documentaries are examined. The semi-structured interviewing method was used to interview ten different participants, each of whom had seen at least one season of the “All or Nothing” football documentary, produced by Amazon Prime. Through utilizing the grounded theory approach, five main themes were uncovered: sports culture, sports in general, the sports documentary, the media, and football fans. Comparing these five themes to the data gathered, supplied four aspects to answering the research question; information, compassion, never neutral, and fandom trumps a new team. Information relates to sports documentaries providing fans with exclusivity, educating them on the teams shown resulting in higher amounts of engagement. Compassion refers to information showing a different side of the athletes in question, generating a higher level of compassion with fans. Never neutral relates to sports documentaries never being of a neutral nature, rather, having a certain agenda from the onset. This can help promote the teams being shown, though this depends on the documentary's aim. Finally, fandom trumps a new team relates to the occurrence in which a viewer is already a fan of a team in the same competition as the team shown in the documentary, in which case the viewer will opt to keep supporting their original team. The answer to the research question can be concluded as being multi-faceted, with each of the four factors being interconnected with each other. Limitations to the research are the size of the interviewee pool and the focus being on just one sport, which in turn are also part of the recommendations given for future research.

KEYWORDS: *Sports Documentaries, Fan Engagement, Fandom, Semi-structured Interviews, European Football*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Background

The initiation of professional sports can be traced back to the early beginnings of human civilization. Since the first Olympic Games took place in ancient Greece, in which only men were allowed to compete in sports now known as “track and field”, professional sports have developed in many ways since (Young, 2007). Not only have new globally popular sports entered the arena such as football, (ice)hockey, cycling, and skiing, men no longer hold the monopoly on being allowed to play football. Women’s sports are currently at the height of their popularity, with new attendance records being broken constantly all over the world (Osborne & Skillen, 2023). This is not to say women’s sports are at the same level as men’s in terms of popularity in any way, though they are on the rise which at the time of the first Olympic Games was likely not even a possibility in most people’s minds. What this constant evolution of sports means is that throughout these many years, not only sports have evolved, but everything connected to it and surrounding it as well. This goes for sports viewing too.

Whereas before modern technology viewers would only be able to see sports live at the venues, they can now be seen throughout the world on media devices of all formats, from handheld phones to television screens, enabled by a plethora of streaming services such as DAZN, ESPN, and ViaPlay (Hutchins et. al., 2019). This technological boost to differentiate sports watching has not only provided several interesting angles of many different sports in action, but it has also allowed the fans to get a lot more up close and personal with their favourite sport and athletes than they were previously able to. From following their favourite athlete on social media to receiving personalised messages, fans can currently have it all. One aspect of sports which was lacking for a long time, however, was the look behind the scenes of a professional sports team. This is where the sports documentaries come in.

Sports documentaries provide the fans with never-before-seen insights into what goes on in a professional sports team on a day-to-day basis, offering a unique backstage pass (Lee-Wright, 2010). Sports documentaries naturally differ from each other, though the one common denominator is usually this exclusive look behind the scenes and the inclusion of added information that fans had not yet previously found out about. Through these

documentaries, fans can engage more with their favourite teams, resulting in more fans overall. However, whether this is true or not has not yet been researched, thus bringing forth the research gap this master's thesis will aim to fill. The relationship between sports documentaries and fan engagement is an under researched topic within the field of sports and engagement studies. Through this research, which will focus specifically on European football, answers will be looked for the aforementioned relationship and if any, what type of effect one has on the other. This will be done by discussing the main research question, "How do sports documentaries influence the viewers' emotions on the shown sports teams?".

1.2 Societal relevance

Several factors contribute to the societal relevance of this research. Firstly, this research will be useful for judging the way in which sports documentaries influence and shape the culture of a sport. Sports documentaries potentially have the power to influence the ways in which people engage with their sports, though as this has not been previously proven, research into this can be insightful. Additionally, regarding fan engagement, sports documentary research can be used to see in which ways they can be used to enhance the fan experience. New and "better" sports documentaries can be created when it is known what kind of effect they have on the audience, to achieve maximum success. This research can also be useful for the sports broadcasting business at large. Researching sports documentaries and the engagement audiences have with them provides insight which can potentially aid the broadcasting services. This research can furthermore provide a steppingstone for broadcasters to see what type of content their sports audience likes to consume, and adjust their broadcast accordingly. For example, if it turns out that the audience prefers interesting storylines in addition to a football game, the broadcaster can opt to highlight said storyline before the game to appeal more to the audience. An example of this phenomenon was the most recent American football Super Bowl, which was dubbed the "Kelce Bowl" in the popular media, after it turned out two brothers, Jason and Travis Kelce, were to play on opposite sides during the game (Sutelan, 2023). In the weeks leading up to the game, all the media focussed on was the matchup of the two brothers, even inviting the parents onto live shows to drive the story further. Lastly, this research also has the opportunity to help in encouraging diversity within the world of sports. Sports documentaries have the potential to show the otherwise underrepresented athlete, in turn making the fans more aware of athletes who come from a

different background than the usual popular athlete. Sports documentaries and by extension this research have the potential to help improve inclusivity within sports.

Additionally, the sport of football itself holds a large societal relevance when considering economics. With some of the worlds' most popular football players being in the top ten of most followed people on Instagram, it is safe to say the sport is booming (Jedelhauser et al., 2022). Even though the origins of the sport have not been pinpointed precisely, it is currently one of the most popular sports in the world, having roughly 3.5 billion fans worldwide (Walvin, 2014; Worldpopulationreview, 2023). Not only is football considerably popular as a spectator sport, the business of football is also one of the worlds' biggest sports markets (WTO, 2022). The total estimated output of the entire football industry lies around two-hundred billion dollars, out of which just one third is generated outside of Europe. Additionally, this number is expected to increase by another hundred billion once the markets of China and the United States are fully optimized. Players also benefit from these numbers, with the norm for players' salaries being above thousands of euros a week, and the top earner, Cristiano Ronaldo, earning over three and a half million euros per year (Harris, 2023). Add to this the entrance of new markets and countries into the sport, such as Qatar during the most recent world cup, and it becomes clear that football is more than just a sport, it is a highly relevant, billion-dollar business. Due to the highly international nature of the sport, this research focuses on participants from more than one nationality. Participants from multiple different nationalities has the potential to bring about interesting results not only on the types of sports they watch, but also on how different nationalities see different sports issues and topics.

1.3 Academic relevance

Little information and previous research exist on the topic of sports documentaries and their effect on fan engagement. This gap in and lack of research can potentially be ascribed to the recent increase in interest in sports documentaries due to the rise of streaming platforms such as Netflix and HBO Max (Snyman & Gilliard, 2019). As these platforms emerged, sports documentaries became more easily and readily accessible to people who normally would otherwise not watch sports documentaries. There is however ample previously conducted research on either topic separately.

For example, looking at research done solely on sports documentaries, valuable research and results appear at the forefront. First off, the genre of documentaries as a whole. Documentaries are a film subgenre that has many different subgenres, out of which each of them carries different specific traits. Sports documentaries are usually defined by stories of redemption (Frederick et al., 2019). In essence, sports documentaries are unscripted movies which are portrayed by “real” people and not actors. What makes sports documentaries different from regular sports broadcasts is that whilst the regular broadcast focuses purely on the competitive aspect of the game, the documentaries tend to focus more on storylines happening within the sport and team. Sports documentaries focus more on emotion rather than being a summary of the past competition.

Research into fan engagement is vast. The term fan engagement itself refers to high levels of fandom, people identifying with a team they support, and the potential emotional attachment a person has to a team or sports franchise (Vale & Fernandes, 2017). Fanbases around the world are driven through and through by fan engagement. New technologies and applications, such as TikTok and Instagram have allowed fans to engage with their favourite sports teams in a way that they were not able to before (Su et al., 2020). Sports documentaries and fan engagement are intricately linked together as the one allows the other. Sports documentaries offer unique engagement with the fans as they can show behind-the-scenes footage that would otherwise not be seen, providing them with info that is exclusive, making the fan feel part of a highly exclusive group.

Having established the research gap and both of the main concepts individually, the theoretical background following this introduction will delve more in-depth into the aforementioned concepts as well as multiple others. After this, the methodological framework will lay out how the research has been conducted and how it has been analysed. The results and subsequent discussion will interpret said results and answer the research question.

1.4 Research Question and Research Objectives

To start filling the previously mentioned gap in the research this paper will aim to answer the research question “How do sports documentaries influence the viewers' emotions on the shown sports teams?”. One of the main objectives of the research is to find out

whether or not sports documentaries have an effect on the engagement of fans, and if so, to what extent this occurs, and whether or not it happens positively or negatively. From the researchers' own experience, it is expected that sports documentaries have a mainly positive effect on fan engagement with a sports team. Additionally, the objectives of this research are to function as a steppingstone which future research can use when researching similar fields and to kickstart the research into sports documentaries, as it is a business that is ever-increasing and on the rise.

1.5 Methodological framework

To gather the most insightful and useful data possible, this research will be of a qualitative nature and will be conducted via semi-structured in-depth interviews. Qualitative research has more to do with meaning-making and the interview subject's feelings, rather than pure raw numerical data, which is more closely related to quantitative research (Boeije, 2010). Semi-structured interviews have been chosen as the research method of choice for a multitude of reasons. First of all, the interview type as a whole allows a researcher to get up close and personal with the participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Whereas other research methods might feature a large sample with rather general and surface-level data, interviews often feature a smaller sample, which provides a large array of in-depth data. Through its longer form, researchers can take the time to get well acquainted with their interviewees, allowing for more personal and valuable responses. The semi-structured form of interviews was opted for as it allows both researcher and interviewee more freedom in the sense that, even though there are general guidelines and lines of questioning to be done, there is a lot of room for veering off the path to delve even more into interesting questions and topics. Ten interviews have been conducted, in accordance with the requirements set by the master thesis faculty board (Janssen & Verboord, 2021). The desired participants for this research are males between 18 and 35 years old, and they need to have seen the aforementioned sports documentary. Other, more specified, features of the preferred participant will be discussed later on in the research during the methodology section of the paper. The participants have been looked for through various social media websites, which will also be discussed more detailed in the methods section. After conducting the interviews, they have been transcribed after which they have been analysed using the Atlas.ti decoding software, which has aided in analysing the transcriptions for recurring themes. Ethical factors

have been considered when setting up this research, which will be laid out in detail in the methods section as well.

2. Theoretical background

Before diving deeper into the research itself, a thorough literature review is required to establish a theoretical background and identify the research gap.

2.1 *Sports documentaries*

First, it is important to discuss the concept of sports documentaries itself. Documentaries as a genre have become increasingly popular over recent years, however, sports documentaries have acquired an additional dose of popularity on top of that (Ingle, 2013). Take for example research conducted by media research firm Parrot, which discovered that out of the most in-demand documentary types, sports documentaries are among the highest growers with over 65 percent growth in demand between 2019 and 2021 (Hamilton, 2022). Combining this with a slow but steady increase in the percentage of time people spent watching content on streaming services, it is relatively safe to say documentaries are on the rise (Nielsen, 2022). Documentaries have been around for a long time (McLane & Ellis, 2006). One could say the first modern English-spoken documentary was released in 1922, with Robert Flaherty's release of his "Nanook of the north". Flaherty proceeded to release a number of additional documentaries after the success of his initial documentary. Around the same time, documentary films also started appearing in the Soviet Union, depicting daily life and the, often, appalling living conditions of its inhabitants. Through the second world war documentary film was heavily used to depict the events happening. After the world war, as the world was rebuilding itself, the documentary film started to depict more than simply ordinary life. Documentaries would be centred around faraway lands, heretofore unknown to the viewer, as well as other aspects of life, such as sports. Sports themselves have been put on film essentially since the emergence of the film (Philips et al., 2007). Horseracing in Melbourne, Australia, has been recorded on film since at least 1898, and the potential is there for other events to have been recorded even before this date. For a long time, sports would be shown purely for the competitive aspect, though this changed with Ken Burns' release of his nineteen-hour-long baseball documentary aptly titled "Baseball". Over the following years, sports documentaries would depict a large array of different sports and athletes.

Documentaries, and by extension sports documentaries, have become their own genre within the world of film, resulting in very profitable endeavours with little to next-to-no investment necessary by the production company responsible for the documentary (Ingle, 2013). In order to properly lay out what this research will cover, a clear-cut definition of the sports documentary must be laid out. Sports documentaries differ from regular documentaries and other sports content in a number of ways. First of all, all different documentary types carry different sets of typical traits. What often makes a sports documentary unique is a story of redemption (Frederick et al., 2019). This means that most sports documentaries feature stories and tales about athletes fallen from grace trying to reach the top again, teams which normally were not the best trying to beat their opponents, the underdog stories, or other stories of the same nature. Whereas other, non-sports, documentaries might make an attempt at teaching the viewer about nature, society, or other aspects of life, sports documentaries usually tell the viewer a story. Sports documentaries are unscripted movies, portrayed not by actors but by real people. The way in which sports documentaries differ from sports content at large is that whilst most other sports content shows the actual sports itself, sports documentaries are less concerned with showing the matches and instead focus on the narrative that comes with sports (Poulton & Roderick, 2008). Though sports documentaries' main topic is sports, it is not always the main focus of the film. Documentaries often incorporate the sport and the match as a tool to keep the storyline of the documentary interesting and engaging. Sports documentaries are largely interested in the social and personal lives of the athletes portrayed, the interaction between athletes, and the way they handle losses and wins. Thus, the matches are used as more of a way to show these emotions rather than the documentary being centred around the matches.

Considering the above, football documentaries in particular must be shone a light upon. After considering both documentaries in general, and then sports documentaries more specifically, the final step left over is to dive into the very specific world of football documentaries. Even though they were some of the earliest produced films about sports, films about football did not seem to catch a foothold with the wider audience (Huck, 2011). Even still, when scholars consider what documentaries are among the most influential documentaries ever made, only seven of them are about sports, none of which feature football, which seems counterintuitive as football is one of the biggest sports in the world (WTO, 2022). Where football documentaries specifically differ from other sports is that they rely heavily on notions of nostalgia and a fetishization of the past. Rather than telling stories

of modern teams, and perhaps even future teams, football documentaries often opt to relive the past and show the “glory days”. An example of such a documentary is Netflix’ “Azzurri, road to Wembley”, which tells the story of the Italian squad’s successful charge to win the European Championship in 2020 (Netflix, 2021).

Additionally, besides hooliganism being an issue within football culture at large, several popular documentaries have been produced on hooliganism (Poulton, 2008). This in itself should not necessitate change, though through showing hooliganism in a particular way, it has started to become part of popular culture in Britain. This phenomenon has started to blur the lines between fictional hooliganism meant for entertainment of audiences, and factual hooliganism which has the potential to seriously harm football fans and their culture, which cannot be seen as a positive development. These so-called “shock-docs” are meant to entertain, whilst containing some information to remain under the guise of being a documentary. In these types of documentaries the narrative is key, which can lead viewers to and from hooliganism, based on the path the documentary chooses to walk. Considering this, some documentaries stray away from these trends, such as the relatively recent “Welcome to Wrexham” and “Sunderland till I die” documentaries. Both of these documentaries do not only show the sunshine and rainbows of a professional football club, as it were (FX, 2022; Netflix, 2018). Rather, both documentaries show the struggles that arise for teams, especially in the lower leagues, and how everyone, the owners, the fans, the players, the staff, etc., tries to navigate these struggles. With both shows having massive success, it will be of no surprise to see similar shows about other football clubs in the near future (Parrot Analytics, 2023; Saenz, 2020).

2.2 Fan engagement

Secondly, an important concept is fan engagement. Fan engagement refers to the high levels of fandom, identification and emotional attachment to a team a person has (Vale & Fernandes, 2017). Fan engagement is what drives fanbases for sports teams around the world, and without it, fan groups would be less involved and less present. With the emergence of new technologies such as social media fan engagement has steadily increased as different platforms allowed fans to engage with their sports teams in different and new ways. Social media platforms such as Instagram and the newly popularized TikTok allow fans to engage

with their favourite athletes in a way they could not before, allowing them to get a closer look at what an athlete's life is like outside of the competition (Su et al., 2020). An example of this phenomenon is European football player Alphonso Davies, who at the time of writing, has amassed a following of 7 million followers on TikTok (TikTok, 2023). Davies is a football player at the German Bundesliga team Bayern Munich, and on his social media page, he provides a look at how he trains, both individually, as well as with his teammates. Additionally, he provides information on what it is like to play away games, how it is to travel constantly, etc. Aside from the information Davies provides about football, his following has also grown fond of Davies himself as he shares a lot about his personal life, his thoughts, and his feelings on his social media, allowing for an ever deeper level of engagement with the fans. Fan engagement in this form is tightly linked with sports documentaries as it allows the fans to not only get an exclusive look behind the scenes of their favourite sports franchise but it also allows fans to see the interrelations between the athletes that they normally only see during the matches. It provides the fans with an extra, exclusive, dimension to their favourite team.

This is, however, not to say that fan engagement is only prevalent in sports. Whilst fan engagement is easily visible in sports, it can also occur in other entertainment sectors, such as the music industry (Bennet, 2012). For example, fan engagement in other sectors allows fans to be involved even though they might not be able to physically attend events such as concerts of their favourite bands. Furthermore, it allows fans of a band to teach the band members more about their own fanbase in return through band members asking where people are listening from, what they would like to see and/or hear more of, etc. Besides bands, academic institutions also have the potential to fall under the fan engagement umbrella as it were (Brech et al., 2016). Over recent years both regular and prestigious universities have begun to use social media as a means of marketing and promoting themselves to both potential student candidates and stakeholders. Through platforms such as Facebook, and more recently Instagram, academic institutions make use of social media marketing to promote their academic results, their worldwide ranking, their extracurriculars, and more. The term social media marketing refers to a managerial process in which people get products and services that they desire, through them being marketed to them by the use of internet applications enabling collaboration, sharing of information, and communication (Chan & Guillet, 2011). In other words, social media marketing is a term that encapsulates all the ways in which companies, institutions, people, and more, use social media websites to market their

products and/or services. Sports teams and institutions make use of social media marketing as well, which will be discussed momentarily.

2.3 Sports-specific fan engagement

Moving from general fan engagement to sport-specific fan engagement brings about several noteworthy findings. When talking about online platforms and social media websites, research has shown that fans' views and their thoughts on a team are highly favourable to a good team-to-fan relationship (Santos et al., 2019). What this means is that whilst many fans like to engage with their teams by sharing pictures and videos their favourite team posts on social media, fans find it especially great when their team makes an effort to reach out to the fans. This could be through announcing a giveaway, a meet and greet with the players, an invitation to see the catacombs of the stadium, etc. Additionally, it has been shown that more fan knowledge creates not only fan co-creation but also adds to the feeling of identification with a sports team a fan can have (Behnam et al., 2023). This shows that fans who are very knowledgeable about a specific sport not only have the power to convert other previously non-fans to become a part of their fandom, but it can also mean that these fans identify with a particular team on a greater level than other fans. This could be a reason for a professional sports team to consider producing a documentary, as it will inform their fans about the team, in turn making them more knowledgeable about the sports and the behind-the-scenes, which in its turn is likely to make them even more of a fan of said particular sports team.

Fan engagement is, however, not necessarily always positive towards a team (Huettermann et al., 2019). On the one hand, fan behaviour can be positive throughout good and bad times. This is often seen by fans still wearing the team's jersey even if the team is not doing well in the national competition, or by the fans in the stadium singing and making noise to try and push their team forward when they need their support most. On the other hand, fans can also have a negative impact on the team. This can, for example, be seen by fans rejecting management in difficult times for the team. When this occurs, teams are at an increased risk of their fans coming closer to going through the three-stage detachment process, which explains how sports fans grow detached from their team (Martin & Goldman, 2016). The first stage in this process is dissolution, which happens after initial negative events such as unmet expectations of performance, and other teams that seem more attractive

to bandwagon. This stage is followed by the exit phase, which is the phase where the fan cuts ties with its, by then, former team and it usually occurs at pivotal moments such as at the renewal stage of seasonal tickets. The last stage is the post-dissolution phase, which is the stage at which the fan has completely left the team, and is now a fully committed fan of a new team. Exemplified here is that fan engagement in sports is not only sunshine and rainbows, it is, among other factors, highly dependent on, for example, on-field performance.

Considering football fan engagement in specific, one of the main factors that comes forth is the need for social interaction amongst fans themselves (Vale & Fernandes, 2017). Football clubs provide fans with a sense of community and belonging, which is becoming increasingly rare in the fast changing online environment of social media. Another driving factor for football fan engagement is information. Teams are increasingly quick to inform their fans on anything remotely related to the team in question, allowing the fans to stay up to date at all times, enhancing the sense of community and belonging even more by being “in the know”. In football there exist groups of people who live and die for their club, go to all games, organize stadium events and protect their club if necessary; the ultras (Atkinson, 2022). These ultras are some of the most engaged fans, as they stand close to their club, occasionally speak to players and coaches on what they do and don’t like, and will let their voices be heard above all other during home and away games. When looking at fan engagement in football, one can hardly get more engaged than ultras.

2.4 The narrative

Another important aspect of sports documentaries is the narrative. The narrative of a documentary is a concept which can be explained in many different ways, however, this study will use the definition of Abbott, who states that “the narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story is an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events as represented” (Ryan, 2007, p.2). This definition states that the narrative of something is the way in which events are stated and represented. In relation to sports documentaries, the narrative is the story which is being told during the duration of the documentary. The narrative can naturally change or be different during a documentary series, but usually, a documentary will hold on to a particular narrative. For example, if a nature documentary has a narrative of “save the amazon rain forest” at the

start, it is not likely to suddenly shift to “deforestation is good” over the course of the documentary.

2.4.1 The narrative in relation to documentaries

When looking at the aforementioned narrative in relation to sports documentaries in specific, the purpose of the documentary must first be discussed. A documentary can be produced for a multitude of reasons, such as monetary gain or to educate the audience (Buehler, 2020). Monetary gain naturally refers to the potential extra streams of revenue a sports documentary could bring in for the clubs and teams projected. Educating the audience lies a little more nuanced, however. Any documentary is made with a goal in mind (Ryan, 2007). For football documentaries specifically, these narratives can range. One of the possible narratives is the educating of the audience. Through a documentary a member of the audience can learn more about not only the team projected, but also the sport of football as a whole. Another narrative can be the promotion of a specific team. If the documentary at hand is about a recent season, and features just one team, chances are one of the aims, if not the solitary aim, is to promote the team shown in the documentary. Promoting the team can bring in new streams of revenue, such as merchandise, ticket sales, etc.

One of the ways in which this promoting of the team is done is through the earlier mentioned social media marketing (Chan & Guillet, 2011). One of the ways in which sports teams utilize social media for marketing ends is through the power social media holds to tell the followers a story (Laurell & Södermann, 2018). Storylines have been ever present in sports, and the technological advancements made over the past decade have made it so that these stories can be enlarged and brought to an ever increasing number of fans. Through these stories, the teams aim to acquire not only new fans, but also new stakeholders. A recent example of this phenomenon occurred for the German Bundesliga team Borussia Dortmund.

2.4.2 The Sébastien Haller case

Over the summer transfer window in 2022, right before the ‘22/’23 season, the German team acquired Ivory Coast international Sébastien Haller, a striker coming from the

Dutch Ajax team for roughly thirty one million euros (Stone, 2023). Haller had just finished a highly successful run at the Dutch club of a year and a half in which he scored four goals on his Champions League debut, the highest level of the multiple European Leagues, scoring eleven goals in total in his first season, a record (Visser, 2022). The move to Borussia Dortmund, BVB for short, following his success came with a major setback instantaneously, as it was discovered two-weeks into his tenure that Haller had a malignant testicular tumour (BVB, 2022). Haller recovered, making his, albeit postponed, debut for the team on the 22nd of January 2023, after which he fittingly scored his first goal for the team a short number of weeks later on the 4th of February, also known as World Cancer Day (Bundesliga, 2023).

Though Borussia Dortmund respected Haller's right to privacy whilst he was under chemotherapy to fight the cancer, releasing only the necessary updates to keep the fans up to date on his progress and process, the team was quick to jump on the story once it was clear Haller would be able to make a full recovery. Through their posts on Instagram it can be seen that the team attempted to use the sympathy connected to the story, and Haller's eventual return to professional football, in such a way as to benefit the team. Though no figures are available as of the moment of writing, a quick look at the comments underneath the post of the team are an indication of the emotions evoked with promoting the story as they did, with comments such as "Gives me chills", and "Today's game was about more than just the win" (Blackyellow, 2023). By using the emotions of the story within their posts, the team has the opportunity to connect new fans to their team, eventually increasing the revenue as a result (Laurell & Södermann, 2018). What this means is that through utilising the story of Haller, Borussia Dortmund has the opportunity to create a positive narrative surrounding the team. Fans are able to see a different side of the team than they normally would, learning more about the positive side of football, rather than purely discussing the on-the-pitch performance. Through stories such as the Sébastien Haller case, teams are able to create goodwill between themselves and the outside world, humanizing the team in a unique way through the narrative.

After laying out a theoretical foundation for the research, the following section will go further into depth on the methods of research as well as how the research has been conducted.

3. Methodology

3.1 *All or Nothing*

This research will not focus on all sports documentaries ever made, rather, a number of specific documentaries will be chosen which will serve as a guide and starting point for potential future research. The documentaries chosen to feature are all centred around the sport of European football. The documentaries are all part of Amazon Prime's "All or Nothing" series, which features a new sports team every season (IMDB, 2022). The aforementioned documentaries all feature exclusive behind-the-scenes footage and information that was not shown before, following the designated team for the entirety of a season. The documentaries follow the teams on the pitch as well as behind the scenes in the locker room and at the practice facility. Some players are highlighted and filmed individually at home, which gives the viewer an even more unique look into their lives. The teams shown in these documentaries are English teams Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, and Manchester City, and Italian team Juventus.

3.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

To uncover an answer to the research question, a qualitative method of semi-structured in-depth interviews will be used. Whereas quantitative research methods focus more on surface-level metrics and go into the "to what extent" part of the research, qualitative research is more focused on going in-depth and looking at the meaning-making of people (Boeije, 2010). This research will use semi-structured interviews as this specific type of data collection offers the researcher ample opportunity to dive into the participant's feelings and thoughts on certain topics (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Additionally, semi-structured interviews will work best as they provide a rough outline of where the interview is supposed to go, though it allows for enough addition of questions throughout the interview if necessary. This approach will work best as the effects on the feelings after seeing the documentaries are what the participants will be questioned on, rather than how much they liked a certain series. Following the guidelines provided by the faculty, which state that between ten and fifteen interviews should be conducted for a master's thesis, this master's thesis will use a number of ten interviews conducted over the span of three weeks (Janssen & Verboord, 2021).

3.2.1 Interview participants

For the interviews, a certain type of respondents was sought after. Interviews were conducted with people who have seen either one or more of the aforementioned sports documentaries' seasons. The ideal respondent had seen at least one or more full season of the aforementioned documentaries. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 35 years old, and the gender was to be male, with a potential for female interviewees. This specific age range was chosen as it had been shown to contain the highest percentages of sports fans, and frequency of sports documentary viewership (Bridge, 2021). Additionally, this age group ranks highest in the level of increase of interest in sports after having viewed a sports documentary. Participants were found online through the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit. A post was made on several football-specific pages on these platforms, asking for people who have seen these documentaries to reach out, after which it would be determined whether or not they were a fit with the aforementioned criteria. The main platforms through which participants were found were Instagram and Facebook, with each platform respectively contributing six and four participants. The participant-gathering process, albeit successful, was a frustrating one, especially on Reddit. The posts made on the site would get a lot of exposure, with all the posts gathering a collective count of at least twenty-eight thousand views, though only roughly thirty people reached out. Out of these thirty people, only four were able and willing to participate in the study.

The snowball sampling method was used, which was the most optimal sampling method for this research (Bhardwaj, 2019). What makes this method ideal is that it has the chance of providing a large set of samples rapidly which includes a higher chance of potentially suitable interviewees. The interviews took between 45 and 60 minutes, in accordance with the faculty-set guidelines (Janssen & Verboord, 2021). After the interviews, the data was analysed for re-occurring themes through coding in the Atlas.ti software, which was done once all interviews have been transcribed. This data analysis was conducted by using the grounded theory method, which involves three main stages, through which the themes and codes found within the interview transcriptions will be analysed more thoroughly (Williams & Moser, 2019). This method had been chosen as it allowed for multiple re-readings of the interview transcripts, interpreting passages in different ways, and allowing

themes to emerge naturally rather than looking for specific themes throughout the transcripts hoping they will pop up.

As mentioned above, a total of ten interviews were conducted with ten different interviewees. The interviewees' ages ranged from twenty-two to thirty-nine. Even though the aforementioned ideal age range went up to and until thirty-five, it was seen as beneficial to the research to continue to interview the two participants that were slightly over this limit, the participants were thirty-six and thirty-nine years of age, as both interviewees brought about highly interesting and insightful comments. The participants originated from all over the world, with countries represented such as Switzerland, Germany, The Netherlands, The United States, India, and The United Kingdom. Additionally, the participants were all in quite different stages of their lives, with some being active students, and others already having children and a full-time job, which also showed interesting differences between the answers given. A full overview of the participants and their traits can be found in appendix A.

3.2.2 Interview structure

The structure of the interview was held among the following lines, for which the English and Dutch interview guides can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C accordingly. Rather than being a collection of questions that happen to have been put together at random, the interview guide should be seen as its own entity, as its own scientific document. Where some heavily structured interviews leave little room for flexibility and adaptiveness, a semi-structured interview guide leads the interviewer through the conversation, while being adaptive and flexible in the questions and their order (Turner, 2010). An interview guide thus serves as a tool for the researcher to get a general handfast of how to ask the questions and what questions to ask, though many questions are able to be moved around if they were to fit the flow of the conversation better.

The interview guide has been set up through meticulous processes and pre-tests, due to which the interview guide has seen multiple versions, out of which the final versions can be found in appendices B and C. While most of the interviews were held in English, three interviews were conducted in Dutch, which necessitated the use of a Dutch interview guide. Even though it could potentially have been possible to translate the questions from English to

Dutch during the interviews, it might have put off the researcher as it would move focus from listening to the participant to finding out the translation of a question. Additionally, different languages come with different nuances which can influence the ways in which a question needs to be phrased and/or is received (Inhetveen, 2012). To avoid this problem and in addition to translating the interview guide into the language at hand, it is recommended to conduct an extra pre-test of the interview guide (Squires, 2009). In this instance, an extra pre-test was conducted with a native Dutch participant to establish whether or not the questions still carried the desired weight and covered the intended topic.

Rather than being a number of loosely connected questions simply put together in a document, the interview guide has been put through a comprehensive framework which has been developed by combining techniques used throughout a plethora of different research papers, all of which are using the semi-structured interview format (Kallio et al., 2016). Through their research, Kallio, and fellow researchers settled on five main phases an interview guide must go through in its development. Rather than discussing all five of them, two will be highlighted; formulating the preliminary interview guide, and pilot testing the guide. Firstly, formulating the preliminary interview guide refers to setting up a list of carefully thought-out questions which have the potential of guiding both the interviewer and interviewee through their conversation. Some aspects that were kept in mind whilst setting up the guide were that questions had to be clearly worded and not leading, in addition to them being participant oriented. As can be seen in the guides in the appendices, interview guides consist of two main parts; questions and follow-up questions. These questions allow the researcher to go deeper into the given answers and extract more useful information. The order in which the questions can be asked, and were asked, is fluid, as it matters more that all desired data is collected, rather than the order in which this has been done.

The next phase, which has been briefly mentioned before, is the pre-testing of the guides. The aim of this phase of the process is to confirm whether the questions brought up in the previous phase cover all the bases that the researcher wants covered and provide sufficient data (Kallio et al., 2016). Additionally, pre-testing the interview guide will reveal whether certain questions need to be rephrased or re-thought entirely. This was also the case for the two interview guides listed in Appendices B and C, as the phrasing of some questions did not lead to the intended conversations due to the interviewees interpreting the questions in different ways. In such instances, the question would be rewritten to be more specific, thus

guiding the interviewee to a specific topic rather than keeping the conversation broad and unspecific. It was also during this step that a difference between the two guides came forth, as some English questions did not translate the same to Dutch, causing them to need to be rewritten slightly.

Following these steps, the final versions of the interview guides slowly appeared, which were then both used in the interviews to come. As previously mentioned, the complete guides can be found in the appendices, though a general summary of the guides can be found below.

First, in an effort to break the ice as it were, the interviewer will tell a little bit about themselves to make the interviewee acquainted and familiar. The scope and aim of the study will be explained, and the interviewer will ask for informed consent for both the recording and transcribing of the interview. Then, a number of establishing questions will be asked. These questions will be about gender, age, nationality, etc., and are not only meant to establish the type of respondent, but they will also allow the participant to get acquainted with the interviewer and start to feel at ease. Following this step, questions introducing the main topic of the interview will be asked. These questions will slowly go more into the topic, warming the participant up to the real in-depth questions as it were. Questions fitting this stage of the interview are “Have you seen [insert specific “All or Nothing” season]”, and “What were your general ideas when watching this documentary”, to name a couple. This leads to the main and final sets of questions. This set of questions will go in-depth into the participants’ feelings toward featured sports franchises during and after watching sports documentaries. This portion of the interview will mainly aim to gather the most insightful data, as well as incorporate most of the previously discussed theory into the interview. The aforementioned theory will serve as a starting point for the line of questions laid out in the interview guide, after which the natural course of the conversation will likely take over. Questions that will fit with this part of the interview will be “What were your feelings when watching the sports documentary”, “Would you say your feeling of being a fan increased or decreased after watching this documentary, and why so”, and lastly “What would you say was the main effect the documentary had on your feelings toward the team portrayed”. Throughout the interview, there will be time and ample room for additional questions thought of on the spot by the interviewer. After all the necessary questions have been asked, there will

be room for the interviewee to state any final remarks, after which the interview will conclude and the transcribing of the interviews can start.

3.3 Ethical considerations

In terms of ethical issues, several factors were considered. According to previous research, there exist four main ethical issues which can be related to the process of conducting interviews; reducing the risk of harm, protecting personal information, informing, and lastly reducing exploitation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The authors furthermore state that researchers need to be able to provide psychological support if the situation calls for it. As this research focuses on feelings connected to a sports team, there is little chance of such situations, however, they can never be completely out of the question. Secondly, anonymity and consent are key (Silverman & Ryen, 2011). The interviewees and their transcripts will be kept securely and anonymously. Pseudonyms and/or initials were used whenever the situation called for it, as is common practice (Allmark et al., 2009). Additionally, all interviewees were asked for consent and gained full knowledge about the nature of the study, prior to conducting the interviews. A list of basic elements for informed consent as proposed in previous research was used (Nijhawan et al., 2013). Lastly, the interviewees were at no time exploited, by which is meant that their cooperation and contribution is thoroughly stated throughout the research (Orb et al., 2001). Interviewees participated out of free will, and were not reimbursed for their time by use of gift cards e.g.

4. Results

4.1 The Themes

Throughout the aforementioned coding process, a total of five main themes appeared at the forefront. Through the grounded theory and its open, axial, and selective coding, 863 codes were combined into 43 groups, which were then combined into these five themes; The Sports Documentary, The Media, Sport Culture, Football Fans, and Sports. These themes and their underlying groups can be found below in Table One. Each code will be described and exemplified in detail below, as each theme contains pieces necessary to answer the research question. Specific quotations from the interviews are used below, for which a number of specific interviews have an excerpt below in Appendix D.

Table 1. Final coding themes

| The Sports Documentary | The Media | Sports Culture | Football Fans | Sports |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Documentaries | Media | Culture | New fans | Athletes |
| Documentary criticism | Media interest | Rivalry | Fandom | Football |
| Documentary goal | Social media | Negativity | No games | Business |
| Documentary result | Content | Change | Picking up a sport | Business research |
| Documentary traits | Influence of media | Emotion | Involvement | Experience |
| Audience | Engagement | Human emotions | Social impact | Popularity |
| All or Nothing | Appearance | Positivity | Merchandise | Sports |
| New information | | Opposing views | Results | |
| Advantages | | Social issues | Team | |
| Influence | | | Indifferent | |

4.1.1 The Sports Documentary

The first theme is “The sports documentary”. This theme encapsulates all codes connected to sports documentaries at large, going into detail on their goals, traits, results, audience, and influence. An interesting passage from the interviews which falls under this originates from an interview with Interviewee Two, who states “... [you] see certain things that they discuss pre-game. They only show you a little bit, never the whole conversation” in relation to the code “not a complete image”. Another interesting quote from this theme comes from Interviewee Ten who, when asked about the influence documentaries have on racism issues within sports says “It’s definitely important to highlight those aspects [racism among fans] ... I think those things are important to highlight”.

When looking at the research question, one of the main answers to the research question that this theme provides is the general consensus amongst the interviewees that sports documentaries are never neutral. For example, Interviewee One stated:

I can imagine that at such a club [Arsenal], you’ve got a camera team and of course they cannot be everywhere at the same time. You also have this spokesperson of Arsenal saying to the camera team where they can and cannot go. So yeah I think they [the documentary makers] are nudged in certain ways.

Adding to this view, Interviewee Four had the following opinion:

I almost hesitate to call them [All or Nothing] documentaries. I'm not sure if that's the right term to use because it's so positive and, you know, it's an exercise in public relations. A documentary is really something a little bit more hard hitting and a little a little bit you know more aggressive, perhaps you know. We don't talk about, you know, the nature of football ownership in these documentaries, and we don't talk about like you know whatever social issue they impact the cheating for example, the impact on children and so on and so forth.

4.1.2 The Media

The second theme, “The Media”, refers to sports media at large, containing codes such as media interest, engagement, and appearance. A quote from Interviewee Three shows

the difference between documentaries and other sports media “I think sports media, in general, can be opinion based but it’s very generalistic. ... whereas the documentary brings us an angle that we have never had access to thus far”. Another interviewee, Interviewee Eight, stated the following when asked whether or not the sports documentary popularity had increased over recent years “... it’s the general age of content right now, it’s booming. You have 10-minute documentaries on YouTube, where before documentaries had to be a big budget undertaking”.

Similar to the earlier mentioned “the sports documentary” theme, “the media” also contained a lot of codes in which the interviewees stated their ideas on documentaries not being neutral. For example, when asked about sports documentaries and their purpose Interviewee Eight states “ I think cause it shows you everything about the club, the history, current, present, past future. It's like basically like a marketing campaign for the club, but showing it to you as real as it can get”. Additionally, after prompted with a question regarding the purpose of sports documentaries, Interviewee Ten states:

Like even if there's like, even if it's mostly educating the fans, there's also there's definitely an aspect of the public relations there like I guess I would just interpret it right now as All or Nothing like showing the whole team, and not just picking and choosing certain players to depict their view of the club. Or in their view of certain situations, it's more like um, it's more encompassing than with this whole view of the players and the managers altogether now.

4.1.3 Sports Culture

The third theme “sports culture” contains any category related to football culture, emotion, opposing views, and social views. Culture, one of the largest categories within this theme is well contained with a quote by Interviewee Three when talking about football culture “[football culture] is massive. It’s a religion in England. There’s so much, there's a lot of inside rules and knowledge about football culture in England, and going to stadiums is the pinnacle of that”. After being asked about the fierce rivalries that exist in English professional football and what effect documentaries might have on them, Interviewee Ten

said "...it's [rivalries] definitely rooted in a lot of tradition and history. I would say it's definitely beneficial".

Whereas the previous two themes contained a lot of codes related to the biased nature of sports documentaries, the theme "sports culture" relates heavily to the interviewees' statements on education being a major part of sports documentaries. Interviewee Eight shows this by saying:

100% a documentary can very easily enlighten someone who has little or no knowledge about something extensively. Show them the ins and outs of it, how it works, how it doesn't, and all the different kind of things. So I think yes, a documentary we can definitely be used to educate a viewer.

Related to this phenomenon, Interviewee Ten adds:

Definitely like, I'm a Dortmund fan, so like, learning about the history, I mean, just about the club and how it like ties into this city and the history also of the region and things like that it can make the fans, as well as the club, a lot more. I mean you feel a lot closer to them and I guess, or understood by others who are there and be like, oh, I know exactly what they're feeling and what they're talking about.

4.1.4 Football Fans

The penultimate theme refers to football fans and their own involvement, their fandom, new fans, social impact, and the team. When asked about how clubs define some very devoted fans and whether or not documentaries can have an influence on this notion, Interviewee Five stated:

...maybe it can. I think it'd be really hard because that stuff takes time and you need fans to buy into it. I have a hard time seeing that. ...that stuff is built on hundreds of years of history and takes time to unravel and I don't know that the documentary is the way to do that.

Additionally, Interviewee Two stated that “[documentaries] can have an influence. You get a certain image, and if that image suits you, you might feel right at home”, when being asked about whether a documentary can influence how fans engage with a football team.

The fourth theme relates to the notion that fandom trumps any new team that can be seen in a documentary, which was a phenomenon that became apparent throughout the interviews. Interviewee Two states for example that:

If someone already has preconceived notions or feelings about a specific team, then a sports documentary is not going to do a whole lot about them liking or disliking a club more or less. I think it may be a bit different for individual players, because for individual humans it may be easier to change.

Furthermore, Interviewee Three put it slightly differently by saying:

You know they [Tottenham Hotspur] just exploded from the sky and came crashing. And that was, as a football fan from a different club, amazing to watch. But you know, it's two different situations and I think that's really the main change. I don't think there would be much change in the fans perceptions of what's going on around the teams, but I mean watching Jose [Mourinho] I mean, yeah, it will definitely want to make you watch more of him.

4.1.5 Sports

Fifth and final is the theme “Sports”, which encapsulates sports in general, the athletes, the business of sports, and their popularity. When speaking on the leadership of the participants’ favourite team Arsenal, Interviewee Four noted; “Even though I’m an Arsenal fan, I wasn’t very impressed by Mikel Arteta. ...he just didn’t come across as very inspirational. ...it didn’t seem like world-class management”. Lastly, when speaking on the difference between live sports and documentaries, Interviewee Four also said that:

...you wait a whole week in between matches, and when you watch the next match it’s a continuation of the last match in a sense, right. And these documentaries have room to sort of fill in the gaps, or tag along as the season goes. And whoever does that first, I think they’ll smash it out of the park.

This final theme, when looking at the interviewees' quotes and statements was best in showing the compassion connected to sports documentaries. Interviewee Three describes it by saying:

In the end, documentaries still have storylines, you know? And so you still engage into a storyline where you see the other person's limitations and all of a sudden you kind of feel for them. Yeah, I watched a boxing one, I don't know much about boxing, but I watched the boxing one that convinces you about this guy, uh Golovkin, who fought with Canelo, one of the biggest like fights in the past ten years in boxing and I only knew one of the two boxers, and so I was automatically kind of supporting him, you know.

Interviewee Four has a similar idea through stating:

I think it brings them down to Earth, they may become more human. You see the real disappointment that they experience when they have an injury or the real challenges ... so you empathize with football players because it's not a stable career. You know your income changes, your career trajectory changes, and so yeah, it really sort of made me feel for individual players more, you know, rather than what an idiot and you know, these guys are lucky and all that kind of stuff. They're human beings.

4.2 Discussion

Taking a look back at the research question of this master's thesis "How do sports documentaries influence the viewers' emotions on the shown sports teams", a number of factors stand out when putting it next to the aforementioned interview results. The answer to the research question central to this research can be found in four ways, which have each been slightly highlighted previously when laying out the general results, but will be delved into more in-depth in this section. These four parts to answering the research question are information, compassion, never neutral, and fandom over a new team. As will become apparent through the discussion below, the four parts are tightly linked with one another. Without the one, the others have a harder time existing.

4.2.1 Information

The first step to answering the research question lies with the notion of information. As noted during the section on the theme “sports culture”, interviewees heavily mentioned the importance of it being able to educate for a sports documentary. The exclusive behind the scenes look that the viewer gets to enjoy whilst watching a sports documentary is one of the main advantages sports documentaries have over other types of sports media, according to many of the interviewees, which can be seen by this quote from Interviewee Three:

And so it [sports documentaries] differs because it brings us an angle that we have never had access to this far. Yeah, it also gives you a storyline, I mean cause we only get the two hours on the weekend where they play, but we haven't got the story in the whole week of how the team fell down after that game last week and they had to, I don't know, do some sort of team building exercise the next day and then they went back into training and trying to how do you boost confidence back into your team again. And then you get that sort of a feeling towards the end of the week that maybe you got something to do this weekend and then there's this whole story that's put together. And it is something you don't get from an article or from a YouTube video or whatever.

What stands out especially is that all of the interviewees feel as though sports documentaries provided them with information that they would not be able to acquire anywhere else. This relates back to the earlier mentioned idea of documentaries straying away from the traditional trends of showing the “entertaining” aspects of football, such as hooliganism and the drama during the matches, and rather show the “real” side of football, with the manager, individual players, the fans, etc. (Poulton, 2008). This offers fans a unique view, which in turn is rewarded by more empathy towards the shown athletes, as depicted in this statement by Interviewee Six: “It gave me appreciation for kind of particular moments in the sport that I hadn't appreciated before or hadn't really known about before”.

Education on a team and athletes can influence how they are perceived in the public eye, though education in some areas might not change a lot. Sensitive topics such as hooliganism, racism, and the culture of football as a whole, are too deeply rooted to be influenced by a sports documentary. This could be seen throughout most of the interviews, where each of the interviewees were asked whether sports documentaries can have an effect

on each of these aforementioned topics, and the answer was a virtually unanimous “no”, which can be seen by the following excerpt from Interviewee Six:

I don't necessarily think so, right? I mean, kind of like I said earlier, these sports are so massive, I mean, hundreds of clubs, you know, especially in football, the clubs are hundreds of years old. It's the same in baseball in the States, but you're talking about clubs that are hundreds of years old, leagues that are hundreds of years old. Clubs that have you know, 10's of millions of viewers on any given week and documentaries that, you know, not only come out as constantly right, you don't have the same weekly feedback as you do with sports and really daily when you toss on outlets like the athletic and podcasts and everything else. It's kind of a drop in the ocean in some ways for these things, so. I wouldn't necessarily expect a documentary to change the culture of the whole sport.

Thus, looking back at the research question, the interviewees were affected by the information they received from the documentaries, though only to a certain extent. People have the potential to change their view on individual athletes, and potentially teams, though larger issues and topics within a sport are largely unscathed as they are simply too large to be changed by a singular sports documentary.

4.2.2 Compassion

A second piece to answering the research question is compassion. Compassion was previously named in regards to the “sports” theme, and it has a lot to do with the story telling aspect of sports documentaries. As noted before in the theoretical background, one of the main traits of sports documentaries is the story of redemption (Frederick et al., 2019). Through this redemption story, or any other personal story for that matter, depicted in the documentary, the viewer will see more than just the athletes’ performances. The athlete their personal lives are shown, turning the on the pitch performance into more of a side quest rather than the bane of their existence. This creates compassion, according to the interviews conducted. For example, Interviewee Six put it by saying:

You know, maybe it [the documentary] builds frustration with certain players, maybe it really helps you fall in love with a certain player because you've seen their attitude

or their shining moments and in the documentary as well, you know, it certainly allows us to be frustrated with Dele Ali, but also it does a good job really showing his ascendancy and some of the highlights there. So you know, maybe you've come into it or you've just got all of his shortcomings on your mind, but you watch this documentary and you're taken back to those glory days and then it shifts it to, you know, maybe you feel bad for him, or maybe you wish it turned out better. But you've got at least more positivity around him than you did before.

In other words, through providing the viewer with more information on a specific athlete, and through highlighting their achievements in the past, sports documentaries are able to alter the personal attachment viewers have to said specific player (Buehler, 2020). This can be related back to the information point noted earlier, as more information equals a bigger frame of reference, which in turn allows the viewer to form a better and bigger picture of an athlete beyond simply judging them off of their performance on the pitch. A big factor of the way in which athletes are framed, however, has to do with the earlier exemplified narrative concept. Take for example this other statement by Interviewee Six:

I mean, it depends how it's framed, right? I got, you know, I got a few interviews with Dele or Eriksen, for instance, in that documentary and you know, I feel like I understand at least a good amount of the story from Eriksen's perspective, and you get some of the frustration from Bergwijn. For instance, I think it's another one that you got that from, but certainly I think some of the players can come off worse for how the story is framed, Dele probably being among them you know, being portrayed as lazy and just not wanting to do his work.

The key word in this quote is portrayal. Portrayal relates heavily to the notion of the narrative. The narrative, which in short is the term for the way in which events are represented and stories are told, has the potential to show athletes in many different ways (Ryan, 2007, p.2). Sports documentaries are never neutral, which will be discussed momentarily, and this can have a very large impact on how particular players are perceived in front of the audience. which can be seen in the cases of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Dele Alli. Both players feature respectively in the All or Nothing seasons of Arsenal and Tottenham, in which they are shown in a less than favourable light (Potts, 2022; Calcutt, 2023). First off, Aubameyang was shown as being an irresponsible player who does not uphold deals and appointments he has made with the team, ultimately causing his departure

from the team (Potts, 2022). Dele Alli was shown as being a lazy player relying too much on his high level of natural talent, not willing to work to get better, which would ultimately drive him towards the exit of the club as well (Calcutt, 2023). Both of these players were portrayed as being the adversary to the clubs depicted, in other words the players were made out to be “the bad guys”. As Interviewee Three puts it, in the end it is the result that matters to the teams above all else, causing underperforming players to have to leave.

Same with Dele Alli, you could see him lose his love for football kind of as the series went on and in a different way he was the same. You had to tell him to, you know do something to help himself otherwise he was gonna go. And there was nothing possible for the managers or the people around him to do, because this is not about who you are as a human. This is a job and if you're not good at your job, you get sacked.

Interviewee Four adds to this by stating:

You know, all professionals in the world live and die by their behaviour and showing up late for training or not turning up at all, or coming three days late and things like that, I had to sympathize with someone who's anyway gonna earn new wages at a new club and so on and so forth. Bad guy, good guy. It doesn't really matter to me. You know the fact is that it's hard to deny unprofessional behaviour when you're unprofessional.

What these two examples in combination with the interview quotes show is that the way in which events and specific players are framed can have a large impact on how they are perceived. Many sport documentaries are not made to purely entertain or enlighten the fans, they are also meant as a form of marketing (Buehler, 2020). If it turns out to be beneficial to the team to paint players in a specific, negative, way to further their own image and point, they can easily do so through the documentary, as can be seen by the two examples. Thus, answering part of the research question, the viewers’ emotions are influenced in such a way to like or dislike a player, by the sports documentary.

4.2.3 *Never Neutral*

The third piece to answering the research question relates closely to the earlier explained compassion topic. In it, it was already stated how the way in which particular events and/or athletes are framed can have a large impact on how viewers perceive them. All documentaries are made with a goal in mind (Ryan, 2007). Even though the actual goal of the documentary can vary from documentary to documentary, the purpose of it makes it so it can never truly be neutral. To lead into the examples, Interviewee Five puts it fittingly by saying:

I would, now I look back at it and this goes back to like the marketing thing that I was saying earlier is like, yeah, like it did what it was supposed to, right? Like yeah it painted the club in such a way as like oh, look like they've got a good coach, everything is shiny. Let's go. Let's go like win the league, at least get top 4 right. So yeah.

What Interviewee Five shows here is the promotional aim of the *All or Nothing* series. With the series being focussed on only one team, and through its main highlights being the successes and positive aspects connected to the team, it can be safe to assume one of the main reasons for production was to promote the teams depicted. By Interviewee Five stating that the series did what it was supposed to, they are referring to the show influencing them in such a way that they too started to believe in this dream of reaching the top four of the league. Sport documentaries show what they need to show, in order to get across the narrative that they want to convey (Poulton & Roderick, 2008). Interviewee Seven noted a similar idea about the series after being asked about its transparency:

Obviously you cannot say how much, but the things you see, yeah, often they are natural and all of that, but yeah, I do think that they [the teams] have quite some influence on the things being shown. Or not being shown for that matter. If they didn't have that kind of influence I don't think they would even agree to partake in a series like this.

When looking back at the research question the unneutral nature of sports documentaries can have both a positive and a negative effect on the viewers watching. On the one hand the viewer can start to harness compassion for the team and athletes depicted. On the other hand, themes that are beneficial to the team to be shown in a negative light, will also be seen by many of the audience from said negative angle.

4.2.4 Fandom > new team

The fourth and final piece to answering the research question is the instance of fandom over a new team. Throughout the interviews, all of the interviewees were asked whether or not watching the All or Nothing series had an impact on them being and becoming more of a fan of the team depicted. Considering the previous discussion point, it might seem surprising that many of the interviewees stated to having not been influenced by the documentary. Further investigation into this phenomenon showed that whilst many of the interviewees said to have liked the series on its own, they were already supporting a team in the English Premier League, which prohibited them from being able to support the teams in the series. Rivalries and hooliganism are two big factors that can be attributed to this phenomenon (Poulton, 2008).

In many football competitions, and especially the English Premier League, once a person is a fan of a team, they will likely stick with that specific team forever (Poulton, 2008). Amongst other interviews, this became especially apparent during the interview with Interviewee Three, who already introduced himself as follows:

Well, I'm [Interviewee 3], a football boy, I'm a massive West Ham fan as my whole family are extremely West Ham fans and I had no real choice in the matter, and well I've been a football fan ever since I could think properly I think. Especially for my dad, a big West Ham fan and where I was taught not to like the Spurs [Tottenham Hotspur] and Arsenal as a kid.

The fact that Interviewee Three already introduced himself as a West Ham fan before introducing any other aspect of himself goes a long way in showing the identity part connected to being a football fan. Not only Interviewee Three admitted to their fandom being part of their identity. When asked whether watching All or Nothing made Interviewee Eight a bigger fan of the teams shown, they replied by saying "Not really, no. No chance. I don't think so. I was just curious to see how they showed United [Manchester United] in the documentary".

What these two examples show is that whilst interviewees have stated to have been influenced by the All or Nothing series into liking a team and more often into liking specific athletes, the documentary cannot alter their fandom altogether. It shows that if a person is a fan of a team within the same league as the team depicted prior to watching the documentary,

the documentary itself will not have an effect on said person becoming a fan of the team depicted.

4.2.5 Interconnectedness

Taking a look at the four parts described above, it is apparent that they are tightly interconnected. Information relates closely with compassion. Compassion ties in closely with never neutral, which in turn links to current fandom over a new team. With the information fans are able to retrieve from the documentaries they consume, compassion is created for the teams shown. Compassion and never neutral are tightly linked as the un-neutral nature of sports documentaries feeds into the compassion aspect of the fan, thus creating an even larger base of compassion for an athlete or team. Fandom over a new team is tightly linked with all three of the aforementioned parts, as it has the power to nullify each of them. No matter the information provided, no matter the initial aim of the documentary, and no matter how much compassion they might create for the viewer, when it comes down to it, the viewer will remain loyal to the team that they were a fan of prior to watching the sports documentary. What this interconnectedness means is that when looking at the answer to the posed research question, a single part will not suffice. All of the four parts shown above are vital to determining what the influence of sports documentaries on the notion of being a fan will be which, as can be seen, is very multi-faceted.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this master's thesis the aim was to uncover an answer to the research question "how do sports documentaries influence the viewers' emotions on the shown sports teams?". In order to uncover the answer, ten interviews were conducted which centred around several seasons of the highly popular sports documentary "All or Nothing", produced by Amazon Prime. The results were uncovered through open, axial, and selective coding, and can be divided up into four main parts that together form an answer to the research question.

The four main parts explain that the answer to the research question is far more nuanced than a simple yes or no answer. What makes this research and its outcome especially unique is that the answers are highly dependent on the person being interviewed and their motivations for watching the show in the first place. Die-hard Arsenal fans will likely never root for Tottenham, though they could be brought to like individual athletes. This research has shown that as a documentary producer it is key to not only know the aim of the documentary beforehand, but the audience also needs to be understood through and through for the documentary to have its desired effect. Namely, as the interviews have shown, when it comes to viewers being attracted to new teams through a documentary, it is either All, or Nothing.

Sport documentaries provide viewers with exclusive information that they are not able to receive in any other place. Many of the interviewees noted that one of the reasons for them to like the series as much as they did was that they became more educated in the sport of football, which in turn led them to appreciate not only the individual athletes more, but the business side of the sport as well. The viewers became more educated on the culture surrounding football, making them more of a fan of the sport as a whole. Educating the viewers on teams had less of an effect of the like or dislike toward said team, as many of the interviewees were fan of a Premier League team prior to starting the documentary.

Secondly, compassion. Through the aforementioned educational aspect viewers got a look into the lives of the individual athletes. Viewers were able to see not only how the athletes interact with each other, support staff, the coach, and fans throughout the day, but viewers also got to see what a selection of players were like at home, in a different environment. This different environment allowed the viewers to see the athlete as a person existing beyond football, rather than being just one of the eleven people they would root for

during two hours each weekend. Humanization of the athletes can be used by teams to share on their social media, i.e. the Sébastien Haller case, to improve their social media marketing and the likeability of the club. Thus, sports documentaries and their result of humanization of athletes is a major opportunity for teams to promote themselves.

Third, and relating to the earlier point, sports documentaries are never neutral. All sport documentaries are made with a preconceived goal in mind, whether that be team promotion, athlete promotion, exposing illegal or illicit practices, education, entertainment, and many more. In the case of *All or Nothing*, a big portion of its purpose is promoting the teams that are depicted. When looking at the interviewees, they stated that in their eyes the documentary did what it had to do, it got them, even if it were just a little bit, excited for the teams shown. Thus, through promoting the teams by showing them in a positive light, viewers are lead to like the teams shown, thus affecting their overall attitude towards the team.

Fourth and final, pre-existing fandoms trump any fandom created by the documentary. Even though the sports documentary in question has the aim of promoting the teams depicted to viewers, this is only successful to a certain degree. Throughout the interviews conducted it appeared that whilst the documentaries definitely had an effect on how viewers perceived individual athletes, they did not have as big of an effect on the levels of fandom changed for the teams. What this means is that when a viewer is a fan of a team within the same league, prior to watching the documentary, then they are unlikely to become a fan of the team they have seen in the documentary. If the viewer is not a fan of a team prior to watching the documentary, they have a larger chance of becoming a fan.

5.1 Limitations

Though the research conducted brought about interesting and insightful results, there were limitations with regards to multiple facets of the research. First of all, the most apparent limitation was the fact that only one sports documentary was examined. Whilst the *All or Nothing* series is a highly popular sports series that has been viewed by many football fans, it could have been an improvement to the interviewee base to include different football documentaries (IMDB, 2022). This could have widened the research up to more different

takes from interviewees spread over the planet, as not all football documentaries are the same, and some contain very different messages than others (Buehler, 2020). Additionally, the relatively small base of interviewees is a factor that could have been a limitation to the research. With limited resources and time, the current amount of interviewees was the maximum possible amount, though more interviewees could have provided a larger number of interesting and useful insights (West & Kreuter, 2018). Lastly, through conducting the research by doing interviews, it becomes difficult for the results to be generalizable to the population at large. As the results of this research stem from ten personal accounts that people have shared throughout the interviews, the results become more of a starting off point and a suggestion, rather than a clear definitive new theory (Polit & Beck, 2010). To improve this to the point where the results would have been generalizable, a higher number of interviewees would have to be interviewed, which this specific research did not have the capacity nor the resources for.

5.2 Future research

The limitations section shown above leads well into the suggestions for future research, as the two are closely related. First off, it could prove interesting to take a look at sports other than football. Football is not the only highly popular sport in the world, and it is certainly not the only sport that has sports documentaries being made about it. Though it might be that other sports and sports documentaries will have the same results as exemplified in this study, it cannot be taken for granted. Thus, looking at other sports, such as tennis, volleyball, basketball, and many more might bring about different, or similar, results. Adding to that, one of the earlier mentioned limitations also adds to the future research suggestions, different football documentaries. As this was a research conducted on a singular documentary, many of the results can only be ascribed to said documentary. It might thus be interesting to look at other football documentaries and compare the results. A third and final suggestion is to include different participants in future research. It could be interesting to look at different genders and how they perceive similar instances. People from other countries, upbringings, and walks of life may also bring about insightful comments and results.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interviewee Overview

| Interviewee | Age | Nationality | Education | All or Nothing season |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Interviewee One | 22 years old | Dutch | College Education | Arsenal |
| Interviewee Two | 23 years old | Dutch | College Education | Tottenham |
| Interviewee Three | 22 years old | English | University Education | Arsenal & Tottenham |
| Interviewee Four | 39 years old | India | Not Disclosed | Arsenal & Tottenham |
| Interviewee Five | 36 years old | The United States | Not Disclosed | Tottenham |
| Interviewee Six | Not Disclosed (within desired age range) | The United States | Not Disclosed | Tottenham |
| Interviewee Seven | 26 years old | Dutch | University Education | Arsenal & Manchester City |
| Interviewee Eight | 23 years old | Indian | University Education | Arsenal & Manchester City |
| Interviewee Nine | 21 years old | German | University Education | Arsenal, Tottenham & Manchester City |
| Interviewee Ten | 25 years old | German | University Education | Arsenal |

From the above-shown interviewees, their thoughts, opinions, and feelings on sports documentaries and the All or Nothing series specifically were collected.

Appendix B: Interview Guide English

Introductory statements and questions

- Begin introducing myself.
- Explain the purpose of the study.
- Inform the participant of the estimated length of the interview.

General, opening questions

- Can you introduce yourself?
 - Age, gender, education, place of occupation, country of residence
- What are your favourite sports?
- Why do these specific sports interest you?
 - What do they have that other sports do not?
- How often do you watch sports documentaries?
 - (Documentaries about either teams, countries, or singular athletes)
 - Which sports documentaries have you recently seen?
- You noted watching the “All or Nothing series”, what are your general opinions and thoughts on the series?
 - Why did you watch the show?
 - What did you like?
 - What didn't you like?

In-depth questions

- Do you think sports documentaries have an effect on the way people interact with a team?
 - What about the way they think of the sport?
 - What about their own involvement in the sport?
 - Do sports documentaries have an effect on your personal engagement with a team?
 - If so, can you explain in what way?
- Do you feel sports documentaries differ from other types of sports media?
 - If so, in what way?

- Do you think sports documentaries in general can have a hand in altering larger issues within sports by bringing them to light?
 - Can a documentary change the culture of sports?
- Do you think a sports documentary can teach a viewer about a team's history?
 - Do you think this adds to the value of a documentary?
- Do sports documentaries have the power to inspire viewers to go and pick up the sport themselves?
- Do you think sports documentaries' popularity has increased over recent years?
 - If so, what has driven this increase in popularity?
- Did the "All or Nothing" series have an influence on how you think of the team? If so, can you explain in what sense?
 - What about the sport itself?
- In your opinion: does "All or Nothing" give you more insights into aspects other than the match itself? Can you explain?
 - Do you feel as though this documentary is the only place where you can get this type of insight?
 - "All or Nothing" features the business side of the sport quite heavily, think Deadline Day. Is this an added value or can you do without it?
- Do you think "All or Nothing", compared to other documentaries, has a different potential to change the way people view the sport and its athletes?
 - Does "All or Nothing" have an effect on your enjoyment of the sport?
- Do you think "All or nothing" can attract or push away new fans to the team depicted?
- In your opinion, is "All or Nothing" successful or unsuccessful in engaging fans with the team shown?
- Would you recommend watching the "All or Nothing" series?
 - Why yes/no?
- Do you think the impact "All or Nothing" has on the fans' engagement depends on the team shown?
 - What about the way in which the team is portrayed?
- Have you attended football matches due to watching "All or Nothing"?
 - Why yes/no?
 - Did you get involved in new ways of engagement with the team because of watching "All or Nothing"?

- What about merchandise?

End of interview

- Thank the participant for their time spent
- Ask if the participant has anything else to add that was not touched upon during the interview
- Ask for any final thoughts
- Ask if the participant wants to be put in the email listing

Appendix C: Interview Guide Dutch

Interviewgids Nederlands

Inleidende uitspraken en vragen

- Begin mezelf voor te stellen.
- Leg het doel van het onderzoek uit.
- Informeer de deelnemer over de geschatte duur van het interview.

Algemene, openingsvragen

- Kun je jezelf voorstellen?
 - Leeftijd, geslacht, opleiding, woonplaats, land van verblijf
- Wat zijn je favoriete sporten?
- Waarom interesseren deze specifieke sporten jou?
 - Wat hebben zij dat andere sporten niet hebben?
- Hoe vaak kijk je naar sportdocumentaires?
 - (Documentaires over teams, landen of individuele atleten)
 - Welke sportdocumentaires heb jij onlangs gezien?
- Je hebt aangegeven dat je naar de "Alles of niets-serie" hebt gekeken, wat zijn je algemene meningen en gedachten over de serie?
 - Waarom heb je naar de serie gekeken?
 - Wat vond je leuk?
 - Wat vond je niet leuk?

Diepgaande vragen

- Denk je dat sportdocumentaires een effect hebben op de manier waarop mensen omgaan met een team?
 - Hoe zit het met de manier waarop zij over de sport denken?
 - Hoe zit het met hun eigen betrokkenheid bij de sport?
 - Hebben sportdocumentaires effect op je persoonlijke betrokkenheid bij een team?
 - Zo ja, kunt u aangeven op welke manier?
- Vind je dat sportdocumentaires verschillen van andere soorten sportmedia?

- Zo ja, op welke manier?
- Denk je dat sportdocumentaires in het algemeen een rol kunnen spelen bij het veranderen van grotere kwesties binnen de sport door ze aan het licht te brengen?
 - Kan een documentaire de sportcultuur veranderen?
- Denk je dat sportdocumentaires de kijker uitleg kan geven over de historie van een team?
 - Denk je dat dit veel toevoegd aan een documentaire?
- Kunnen sport documentaires mensen aandrijven om zelf de sport te gaan beoefenen?
- Denk je dat de populariteit van sport documentaires is toegenomen over recente jaren?
 - Zo ja, waardoor komt dit denk je?
- Heeft de serie 'Alles of niets' invloed gehad op hoe je over het team denkt? Zo ja, kunt u aangeven in welke zin?
 - Hoe zit het met de sport zelf?
- Naar jouw mening: geeft All or Nothing je meer inzicht in andere aspecten dan de wedstrijd zelf? Kun je dit uitleggen?
 - Heb je het gevoel dat deze documentaire de enige plek is waar je dit soort inzichten kunt krijgen?
 - Zijn er andere manieren om aan deze informatie te komen?
 - All or Nothing focust behoorlijk op de business kant van voetbal, denk aan Deadline Day. Is dit van toegevoegde waarde of kan je ook zonder?
- Denk je dat 'Alles of niets', in vergelijking met andere documentaires, een ander potentieel heeft om de manier waarop mensen naar de sport en zijn atleten kijken te veranderen?
 - Heeft alles of niets invloed op uw plezier in de sport?
- Denk je dat "Alles of niets" nieuwe fans kan aantrekken of weggagen voor het afgebeelde team?
- Is All or Nothing naar jouw mening succesvol of niet succesvol in het betrekken van fans met het getoonde team?
- Zou je aanraden om de serie "Alles of niets" te kijken?
 - Waarom wel/nee?
- Denk je dat de impact van 'alles of niets' op de betrokkenheid van de fans afhangt van het getoonde team?
 - Hoe zit het met de manier waarop het team in beeld wordt gebracht?

- Heb je voetbalwedstrijden bijgewoond omdat je naar "Alles of niets" hebt gekeken?
 - Waarom wel/nee?
 - Ben je betrokken geraakt bij nieuwe manieren van betrokkenheid bij het team door het kijken naar "Alles of niets"?
 - Hoe zit het met merchandise?

Einde interview

- Bedank de deelnemer voor de tijd die hij heeft besteed
- Vraag of de deelnemer nog iets toe te voegen heeft dat tijdens het interview niet aan bod is gekomen
- Vraag naar eventuele laatste gedachten
- Vraag of deelnemer de scriptie wilt ontvangen

Appendix D: Interview Excerpts

Interview excerpts with Interviewee 3

Interviewee

Well, I'm [Interviewee 3], a football boy, I'm a massive West Ham fan as my whole family are extremely West Ham fans and I had no real choice in the matter and well I've been a football fan ever since I could think properly I think. Especially for my dad, a big West Ham fan and where I was learned to, I was taught not to like the Spurs and Arsenal as a kid. And yeah, I don't know just this kind of how I went into the series I guess as a sports fan.

Interviewer

OK, OK. So. You already had a pretty preconceived notion before even watching it.

Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, definitely. I mean I've been watching the Premier League probably since 2004. Something like that. So I was three years old and I was already at the time being told which are the teams I like and which I don't.

Interviewer

All right. OK, so that decision was kind of made for you.

Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer

Yeah, I feel is that is that common in England that that's just the way it goes.

Interviewee

Well, yeah the general consensus around being a football fan is you either support your dad's team or support your local team. So you either support the team you're closest to or in in the country, or the team your dad supports. And yeah, I grew up in France, but my dad being English. So he told me anything about the football that was around, really. And yeah, you either support your, your dad's team, or your local team.

Interviewer

Right. Would you say that that football culture is a big thing in England?

Interviewee

Ohh yeah massive. It's a religion. It's a religion in England, it's a crazy football culture. There's so much like even just saying you're only allowed to support teams that your dad or your local team and you know, they do so many like sort of rules like going to games. You don't buy a half and half scarf you don't wear a full kit. There's a lot of inside rule and knowledge and football culture in England and going to stadiums is I guess the pinnacle of that. I think if you really want to experience the English football culture and they kind of a lads thing they have in the back. And that is out, even outside of the football. It's a way of life, it's a population of people behaving in a certain way. It's like I don't know every weekend in the afternoon, the city kind of transforms into this trying to let everyone through to go and see the stadiums and especially the 3:00 o'clock kick offs so there are a lot of them so.

Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And when we talk about like perspectives of the documentary, because like obviously it's made with a purpose to like promote the team, so some features will be only shown from their point of view and when you think of the Deli Ali situation or in the Arsenal one, the one with Aubameyang, that was only pretty much shown from the perspective of Arsenal. Would like to see their perspective as well?

Interviewee

The thing is, you kind of have to show that perspective, cause if you think about, put yourself in Arsenal's shoes for a second as well or Aubameyang was their captain and you got to think that what can they show to a player like that that arrives late that you know comes from holiday later that is just basically showing them that he's not interested or doing anything that he can't to show them. You gotta put a foothold somewhere because otherwise, other players are going to start doing it and you gotta show a distance towards him. You gotta show strength towards him and then it's more of a management thing you know. And that was really interesting to watch. Same with Dele Ali, you could see him lose his love for football kind of as the series went on and in a different way he was the same. You had to tell him to,

you know do something to help himself otherwise he was gonna go. And there was there was nothing possible for the managers or the people around him to do, because this is not about who you are as a human. This is a job and if you're not good at your job, you get sacked.

Interviewer

Yeah. Do you think a documentary like this and the way they portray the athletes and like the issues that then arise, do you think it could be harmful for the athletes?

Interviewee

It can be. But I guess I trust like that big of an organization between the football club and Prime as well I mean, especially the football club itself to preserve it's own athletes, I guess that would be the most important thing and I think they wouldn't release or let the cameras in for footage. There would be really detrimental to either the player or the club. I mean, especially for you know clubs like Arsenal and Tottenham, which have massive fan bases and not Manchester City, of course, but this thing is also you know they used to only show what they want to show to the fans and I think there is a certain limit to those cameras in the Prime background. You know I think if Arteta and Aubameyang get into a very, very heated argument I don't think we'd see that as much.

Interview excerpts with Interviewee 5

Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, for sure. Do you think documentaries can have an influence on the way people are involved with the sport? So not just the way they look at it, but really their involvement in it.

Interviewee

I think they can. They do right? Like I wanted to like, I mean I've got two kids, so joining a Sunday League or whatever is not something that I can do right now but I'd really like to because it looks like fun and I always wanted to play soccer and I was never involved with team sports as a kid, like I was, but I wasn't good. That was small, so I just didn't succeed and so on but, I would love to be a part of the Sunday League and with no especially anything more than getting some exercise and having fun, but yeah. Would I actually do that? No, not right now. Because of other factors, but you know I'm sure, there are people that were inspired to join the Sunday League by watching football. Or they race go karts because they saw, like, you know, five year olds do it in F1 training or something?

Interviewer

And when you look at the documentaries you've recently seen, do you think they've had an effect on your personal engagement with the team? So not necessarily the Tottenham one, because I mean, obviously you were already a fan, but have you followed any other teams more because of the documentaries you've watched?

Interviewee

Not because of the documentaries, and Sunderland, I mean Sunderland is the is the obvious, that's the outlier. Yeah, that was a really good one pretty compelling the first season, the first season especially was really compelling for me. So I, like I said, I follow them, I follow their results and watch games sometimes and stuff. Other than that, no, not really. I mean, I watch Arsenal to see if they're losing, which. I don't know the result of today's game, they were up when I when we started. But I don't know.

Interviewer

Yeah, alright. It feels as though there have been a lot of, I mean, with the Drive to Survive getting massive popularity, Full Swing coming out, here's one coming out about the Tour de

France in a couple months, I think in July or June or early June, do you think sports documentaries' popularity has increased over recent years?

Interviewee

I definitely think so. I never would have watched anything like, I mean I only watch shows by recommendation pretty much. So that someone would see F1 and be like dude, this is fascinating, you have to watch it. And I'm like, yeah, I don't want to, like, watch people crash their cars. And they're like, no, it's a whole thing like you don't understand. It's a whole thing, so yeah. I think in my mind that someone was one of the first ones to come out that kind of they kind of started it like oh, there's interest in this stuff. Yeah, I definitely think they've got more popular. I've seen so many more of them lately, than, maybe a couple of years ago.

Interviewer

What do you think has driven this increase in popularity?

Interviewee

I think it's just like just entertaining, like. OK. I mean, I guess there's some like some people are curious because it's like, oh, this is like, I would never care about tennis? Like I don't care about tennis, but the same people that made the F1 thing made this and so, sure. Yeah, I don't know like maybe? I guess people have learned, I think maybe like we've got examples of like you can. You can watch a thing about a sport and kind of understand the sport without needing to watch the whole league and really do the deep dive. And I think that's appealing. It's like the equivalent of why would you read the book when you can watch the movie.

Interviewer

And did it make you think differently of the sport?

Interviewee

Not really. I don't think so. Probably because I'd already been. Yeah, I mean it's again. Like Levy saying, this is the hardest thing that I've ever done? Yeah. Like that made me kind of a little bit more wise to like the business side of it. Like it's there's so much money in it like I that kind of that always missed for me, I guess I didn't understand at that point like there's so much money in this like unfathomable amounts of money. And it's like, at its heart, it's entertainment, right? Like you're trying to, you're trying to, like, make money for the club and

for the investors and like so that and your sponsors like is a business and so I think that's one thing that really came out, but in terms of like the game of football, I didn't, it didn't really move the needle for me too much.

Interviewer

And the business side. So All or Nothing features it quite heavily as opposed to maybe some other documentaries. They have quite a big chunk on the deadline day and the hectic features of that with like contracts being signed a minute before the deadline. Do you think this is an added value to show or do you think you could have done without it?

Interviewee

I mean, I think it's like part of the business. I think it's like that's part of what gives it whole? Right. Like that's the stuff that people like people like me don't see like that's what that's what gives you the reason to keep watching? Are you gonna take the risk and like you know. Yeah, yeah. So I think I definitely think that gives it that almost that almost feels like it's a popular thing that people would want like almost like he got to build tension somewhere and that's one of the ways that you can do it aside from are they going to win this game.

Interview excerpts with Interviewee 9

Interviewer

Okay and do you think sports documentaries can have an effect on the way people are involved in the sport?

Interviewee

I think it depends on what kind of state you are. I think if you're already really engaged and might just be nice to watch if you don't know much about football or the league or the team think it can get you really engaged in the league and to maybe continue to watch more of their games. I think it depends on how engaged you were before, but I think in general it can have an impact for sure. Just depends on how much or how they go.

Interviewer

Okay and for you personally, do sports documentaries have an effect on your personal engagement with the team?

Interviewee

Yes, I think it does. I think it just for me that the Premier League is quite an exciting league to watch, that there's a lot of competitors, it's always quite fast-paced and interesting, and then if you get to see each of the teams and have some perhaps struggling more than others or like the transfer market and stuff like that, I think it engages me to watch the Prem more than I did before or follow Arsenal more than I perhaps did in previous years, for example.

Interviewer

And if you think about sports other than football? So for example you mentioned that you watched a documentary about rugby this week.

Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, I think I learned a lot about this world because, I mean, I knew about it, but I didn't know how aggressive it is, or like how it is and how intense it can be. So I think you learn a lot about the sport, if you do know about it before. I watched one about golf, which I had no idea about, but you still learn about the sport and perhaps people that are the most popular or for example Formula One. I didn't know much about it before and now I follow it

a little bit, so I mean it does peak like interest into the sport a little bit, even if it's just a little bit, they gained another fan that they probably didn't have before.

Interviewer

Okay. The culture of football is quite prominent, with a lot of cases where people like live for football, but you also have hooliganism. This loyal following that will follow the club. Do you think a documentary can change the culture of the sport?

Interviewee

No, I don't think so. I think we can talk about it, but I don't think you can change it. I think to change the sport has to be like on a national level. I think. Like your attitude has to change something. Not sports documentaries, because not everyone will watch it, so not everyone will get the message that this type of culture is not acceptable, accepted or this culture is quite prominent, and that's the way it is. I think they would show hooliganism is quite prominent, but they wouldn't actively change anything. I think actively change like the culture of football has to be at a global level or European level. I think personally because I don't think everyone will watch a documentary or wants to or care like that? What they talk about like underlying. Oh, this is should be changed, you know, so I don't think so. I think it can mention it, and it's important to talk about, but I don't think you can have a prominent enough effect to actually change the culture of football.

Interviewer

Okay. Do you think a sports documentary can teach a viewer about the team's history?

Interviewee

Yes 100%, I think they usually go into usually the first episode to like talk about it or throughout that they're like, oh, this is how many times they've won, this is usually their culture and it has been their culture for a while so I do think you learn about the history of the sport in general, but also more specifically. The club, the source of the documentary is promoting the club, so I think they want to show all aspects of their club. So I do think they promote their history subconsciously perhaps?

Interviewee

Oh yeah, for sure. I mean, you've seen like how they trained for matches like when they're eating lunch together with the whole team, the coach chats with them and like talks to them and like what he expects of them. And you don't get to see those things normally, so I think it's more than just watching the match or knowing or just seeing the results. You never know what goes on behind that. There's a lot of preparation, a lot of watching previous games, focusing on what players can do better specifically.

Interviewer

Do you feel as though this documentary is the only place where you can get this type of insight?

Interviewee

Yes, I think like on YouTube you have these bench cams or whatever. But that's just of the game, it's not what goes on after or before. I think it's just like very much just the game. And that's it. Nothing else. Just the game. And that's it. Like, cool to see the trainer celebrate when there's a goal, but I am particularly interested in after the game or during halftime and all that stuff.