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A whole new ball game: the symbiotic relationship between broadcast media and netball in New Zealand from cinema newsreels to high definition pay television.

By

MARGARET HENLEY.
ABSTRACT OF THESIS.

A whole new ball game: the symbiotic relationship between broadcast media and netball in New Zealand from cinema newsreels to high definition pay television.

This thesis draws on an understanding of television production practice to document the long struggle for netball to achieve a frequency and quality of media representation which matched the importance of the game in New Zealand women’s lives and within New Zealand society as a whole. It is a journey and outcome which is certainly unique and envied in the netball playing world and possibly unique for a women’s sport internationally. What is also unique is that netball, as a game designed to be played only by women, had to fight its own battles in its quest for primetime recognition. It had first to define itself as meritorious and then challenge the controlling hegemony to prove that the game was worthy of media attention - a valuable media property that had the capacity to create a significant and loyal audience. As this thesis will argue its current position as a high rating major sport on New Zealand television is not one that just naturally evolved over time with the maturation of television broadcasting and changing social attitudes regarding gender equity, but was the product of resourceful tactics and socially astute struggle.

The research undertaken for this thesis covers two interlinked aspects; the mediated images of the game with the main focus on the changing representation of netball on New Zealand television, and secondly the development of outside broadcast sport in New Zealand and its interface with netball. To understand the current media status of the sport it was necessary to go back to the founding narrative of the game and investigate its relationships with, and representation created by the broadcast media of cinema, radio and television. Radio and cinema are significant in their own right, but not a major focus of this study in contrast to television. However, they are considered necessary to an understanding of the sport’s place at the start of the television era in 1960 and its subsequent trajectory from being undervalued to discovered, developed and eventually achieving a strong television profile. It is impossible to separate the sport as a television product from sport as a cultural activity and throughout the research care had to be taken to place the development of the game within a social, technical, institutional and political context. It is only through consideration of this complexity of influences that the uniqueness of the journey of New Zealand netball to television primetime can be accurately assessed.
Dedication:

We realised that we needed to be up to date with the world but no way were we prepared to be put down because we could make a cup of tea and bake a few scones. So we had an attitude, we really did have an attitude.

(Marj Jenden, NZBA Secretary 1968-1975)

And to all the others in netball and New Zealand broadcasting whose ‘attitude’ made a difference

In loving memory of Lois Kenny (Pulford), second right. A nippy Jumping Centre in her day playing for New Plymouth Girls High School and in her later years never missed a game of netball on television.
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the things I loved the most about netball when I was growing up was that it was a team game. At the start of the season we barely knew each other but each winter Saturday, as our intuitive understanding of each other’s playing ability grew, we learned to make the most of our collective talents. Although writing a doctoral thesis is essentially a solitary endeavour it is totally impossible to achieve without team support. The journey of this thesis has been a long one with more timeouts than a game of American football. Some very long suffering family, friends and colleagues have helped me on the way and it is with sincerity and aroha that I acknowledge their contribution to giving voice to this uniquely New Zealand narrative.

To my supervisor Nick Perry who has been there for the whole journey. I thank him for his forbearance, positivity, intellectual insights and his kindness. I am very much in his debt. Thanks also to Roger Horrocks, Shona Thompson, Jan Crossthwaite, Brenda Allen and Laurence Simmons for their input and support over the last few years. Kia ora and aroha to my Tuākana team, Moana Oh, Sereana Patterson and Peni Fa’alogo who got on with the job and did it brilliantly when my efforts were sometimes focused elsewhere. Heartfelt thanks for the special friendships and for doing and saying all the little things that matter to my Fur Seal whanau with whom I have swum so many kilometres alongside. Special mention must be made to my editing team who dragged me across the finish line. Firstly, the insightful editing, chocolates and dedication of Brian Spong, Suze Wilmer and the eagle eye of Moyeen McCoy. They were backed by the finishing team of Carol Cameron and John Trevithick. It was a long shot to ask an American to edit a thesis on netball but Carol slashed her way through my rough draft with the efficient ruthlessness of an Aussie Wing Attack – humbling but good for me. John, the PC whisperer, made the right things happen in the dark world of IT with skills way beyond my comprehension.

It was important to me that this thesis put into practice John Grierson’s exhortation to New Zealand documentary makers in 1940 to tell stories about real people and see them engaged in the real things that New Zealanders do. Hopefully, I have achieved this through revealing the interweaving stories of netball and sports broadcasting. My thanks to Saffron Solley in the TVNZ Archive who did a wonderful job sleuthing down the fragile film footage and obscure news items that provide the visual heartbeat of this story. Thanks also to Tim Signal for his always cheerful and efficient footage wrangling. Particular thanks to Kevin Cameron, Head of SKY Sport and Outside Broadcast, who allowed me privileged access to netball OB productions. I am also grateful for the support of Netball New Zealand throughout this entire project, particularly Kerry Manders, Sheryl Wells and Judy Russell who opened doors to dusty file boxes as well as
to the right people. At the core of this thesis are the voices of broadcasters and netball stalwarts who agreed to be interviewed and who are the glue of this narrative. I thank them sincerely for their time, advice and enthusiastic contribution to ensure that this slice of media history has been recorded. You are the people whose energies and vision changed our part of the world so that young New Zealanders can grow up watching the athletic endeavours of women being treated with equal respect.

Last, but never least, my family. As the life cycle of this thesis has ground on, so has that of my family. We have buried parents and siblings but have also welcomed new family members and our four treasured grandchildren Katie, Lucy, Benji and Thomas into our whanau. To our children and partners; Megan, Todd, David, Claire, Sarah, Gareth and Gretchen, thank you as always for your unfailing love and irreverent advice. Thanks also to my brothers Geoff and John and the unfaaltering love of my dear old Mum Marj Henley who asked me every day how my thesis was going although she was not always sure how I could find so much to write about netball. At the heart of our family is the unequivocal love of my partner John. His belief in my work, his constant support, resolute determination and last but certainly not least, his gourmet meals, made this thesis happen. It has been a long journey.

My enduring aroha and gratitude to you all.
Margaret Henley
2012

*He aha te mea nui o te ao?*

*He tangata, he tangata, he tangata*
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A whole new ball game: the symbiotic relationship between broadcast media and netball in New Zealand from cinema newsreels to high definition pay television........................................................................................................................................... i  
ABSTRACT OF THESIS.................................................................................................................................................... iii  
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................................... vi  
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................................................................................................... viii  
Table of Figures......................................................................................................................................................... xv  

## Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1  
  Justification for Research........................................................................................................................................ 3  
  Literature Review.................................................................................................................................................... 4  
  Methodology........................................................................................................................................................ 4  
  Chapter Outline................................................................................................................................................... 7  
  1970s appendix case studies: ............................................................................................................................... 10  
  Resources .......................................................................................................................................................... 13  
  Netball and me .................................................................................................................................................. 16  

## Chapter 2: From Vapours to Vigour: Women, Exercise and Netball 1891-1960......................................................... 18  
  Seeking political endorsement.............................................................................................................................. 19  
  Why women were allowed to ‘play the [netball] game’ .................................................................................... 20  
  Mind those ovaries! Barriers to women engaging in ‘strenuous’ physical activity...... 21  
  A new game in the New World......................................................................................................................... 23  
  The new game in the Old World....................................................................................................................... 29  
  A new game for colonial women to make their own....................................................................................... 30  
  Courting the media to promote a ‘national sport for women’ ................................................................. 34  
  We did it our way - the 9 a-side game .................................................................................................................. 37  

## Chapter 3: The scarcity of representation on radio and in moving pictures 1923-1959 ................................................................. 40  
  Radio – the early years................................................................................................................................. 40
Netball and radio............................................................................................................ 42
Netball’s quest for moving images .............................................................................. 45
The Film Industry – the impact of the ‘talkies’ and the development of the sound
newsreel in New Zealand............................................................................................... 47
National Film Unit and the *Weekly Review* and *Pictorial Parade* newsreels ......... 48
Grierson’s legacy ......................................................................................................... 49
Cinema newsreel images of women playing netball............................................... 49
Case Study No 2: *Pictorial Parade*, ‘Basketball’s 50 Years – Canterbury wins NZ
Tournament’, 1955 .......................................................................................................... 54
Summary .................................................................................................................... 62
Knowingly crafting subtext......................................................................................... 63
Which medium gave the sport more exposure?....................................................... 64

**Chapter 4: The ‘Marriage’ of Television, Sport and Netball in the 1960s**............ 66

- Sport and television - a ‘Match Made in Heaven’ ............................................. 66
- Northern hemisphere televised sport and the influence of the BBC ................. 67
- Television arrives in New Zealand at last - but can we afford it? ....................... 69
- Sport on New Zealand television ....................................................................... 71
- Technical challenge and tight budgets .............................................................. 72
- The first OB Van arrives .................................................................................... 74
- Recording and slow-motion replays .................................................................... 75
- The First Rugby OB ............................................................................................ 76
- OB Coverage of Netball ..................................................................................... 77
- The southern netball OB – not for the faint hearted! ......................................... 79
- Netball’s first negotiations with television ......................................................... 79
- Television rights versus the turnstile ............................................................... 81
- The frequency of OB game coverage ............................................................... 84
- 1960s Case Studies ............................................................................................ 86
- Case Study No 1: 2nd World Basketball Tournament, 1967 ............................ 86
Chapter 5: 1970s – Netball’s Quest to be Part of the New Era in Television

Sport Production ........................................................................................................... 103

New technology and a new attitude ........................................................................... 103
Show us the money! ................................................................................................. 105
Academic response to issues of sport and gender in the 1970s ................................. 106
The expansion of television in New Zealand during the 1970s ................................. 108
A new era in television sport and the ‘Des Monaghan factor’ ................................... 108
Under-resourcing of television sports production ..................................................... 110
New Zealand sport and television – learning to work together ............................... 111
Sporting Life: Sports magazine programmes in the Monaghan era ........................ 111
The Commonwealth Games 1974 – a turning point for sports television ............... 112
The impact of the two channel system on sports production .................................... 114
Netball in the 1970s -a new name to match a new attitude ..................................... 115
The impact of feminist debate on New Zealand netball ........................................... 116
NZBC recognises netball as a major New Zealand sport ......................................... 118
Television coverage throughout the decade ............................................................. 118
The on-going struggle for archive footage .............................................................. 121
1970s Case Study No. 1: Television sports magazine item leading up to the 3rd World Tournament, Jamaica, 1970/71 ................................................................. 122
Chapter 5 Appendix: From lack of media recognition in 1973 to World Tournament Coverage in 1975

Demanding respect from the media

1970s Case Study No. 3: ‘Why don’t the media support netball?’ Sporting Life, NZBC, August 1973

Section 1: Introduction and hook
Section 2: Media Coverage and is Netball a Spectator Sport?
Section 3: Netball’s international success
Section 4: ‘It can be a tough game’
Section 5: ‘Men and the media don’t take them seriously’
Section 6: Who looks after the children?
Section 7: Endorsement from those who count in society
Section 8: Outro

Early Feminist critique of The Sporting Life extended news item:

Can value be found amongst ‘provocative banality’?

1970s Case Study No 4: Netball World Tournament, Auckland 1975

Cultivating the broadcaster
Getting a woman on the ‘inside’
Broadcast Coverage
Television Commentary Team
Reaching their audience
Camera Placement
Editing
Camera placement and cutting of the New Zealand/Australia final

A rudimentary OB but was it watchable?

Chapter 6: The 1980s - Stepping into the ‘Big Time’
The growing media sport nexus and the expansion of pay television .........................237
Television in New Zealand – maturation of the media sport product ......................239
Pay television enters the New Zealand market .....................................................241
Netball – the “rotting mullet” of televised sport ...................................................243
“Netball is money and netball is the 90s woman” ................................................244
The infamous TVNZ primetime showdown ..........................................................245
‘Let’s go Girls’ – the Coca-Cola Cup seeks a new television audience ..................248
Case Study 1999 World Netball Championships ..................................................251
Claiming column space and airtime .................................................................252
The all-important ratings ...................................................................................254
Camera placement ..............................................................................................256
The drama captured by the bench cameras .........................................................259
The visual impact of steadicam ..........................................................................260
Digital on-screen graphics (DOG) and slow-motion replays ...............................261
Constructing the game narrative: the last minutes of the Australia/New Zealand final .................................................................................................................................263
Negotiating the ‘fish hooks’ of a new contract ....................................................266
One giant step for netball, one small step for womankind ..................................269

Chapter 8: Post script: The end of the affair and a new beginning? ......................270

The retreat from free-to-air ..................................................................................270
Netball’s extended and digitally enhanced image .................................................271
The first step across the pay wall – netball’s final frontier? ..................................273
Netball World Championships (NWC) 2007 .........................................................275
Setting a new benchmark for televising the game ..............................................278
The Decree Nisi ....................................................................................................282
FastNet – but is it cricket? ....................................................................................285

Conclusion: Local versus Global – Can Netball Survive? ..................................287

Globalisation or bust? ..........................................................................................287

Glossary .............................................................................................................293
Standard Television Industry Terms and abbreviations.........................................................293
Standard framing and camera angles .................................................................................294

BIBLIOGRAPHY..................................................................................................................295

Newspaper articles.............................................................................................................305
Unpublished documents ....................................................................................................306
Unpublished theses ..........................................................................................................306
Videography .....................................................................................................................306
Personal Interviews ........................................................................................................307
Websites ............................................................................................................................308
Table of Figures

Figure 2: *Weekly Review* No.366, New Zealand versus Australia, 7a-side International, New Plymouth, 1948. .............................. 1

Figure 3: Firebirds versus Mystics, ANZ Championship, 2011 ................. 1

Figure 4: 1930s Netball ................................................................. 18

Figure 5: James Naismith ................................................................ 24

Figure 6: Senda Berenson, Smith College gymnasium ......................... 27

Figure 7: Senda Berenson with Women Basketballers, Smith College, Mass. c 1900 ................................................................. 28

Figure 8: Women Netballers, Bournville Club, England ca 1910 ............. 30

Figure 9: Basketball Teams, St Lukes Presbyterian Bible Class, Remuera, 1906 (Inset left: Rev JC Jamieson) ........................................ 31

Figure 10: School Basketball Competition, New Zealand ca 1910 ............. 32

Figure 11: Basketball Game on YWCA Hostel Roof, Boulcott Street, Wellington, 1943 .............................................................. 33

Figure 12: Schoolgirl Basketball Game, Nelson Area, ca 1925 .................. 34

Figure 13: New Zealand Netball Team at the First Netball World Tournament, Eastbourne, England 1963 ........................................ 39

Figure 14: *Weekly Review* No 246, ‘The Season Opens’, 1946 ................ 40

Figure 15: Analytical shot list, *Weekly Review* No: 246, 1946 .................. 51

Figure 16: Analytical Shot list, Pictorial Parade 1955 ................................ 55

Figure 17: Introductory section (40” duration) ........................................ 56

Figure 18: Main Story: variety of game coverage (1.30” duration) .......... 58

Figure 19: Outro sequence, presentation of trophies (13” duration) ........ 62

Figure 20: 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, 1967 .................... 66

Figure 21: Select Storyboard, 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, Australia, 1967 .......................................................... 87

Figure 22: Lack of Awareness of Hemline Versus Camera Placement ........ 92

Figure 23: Closer Framing for Details of Set play ................................ 96

Figure 24: Select Storyboard, New Zealand Basketball National Tournament Final, 1969 .............................................................. 97
Figure 25: Elevated Camera Position Gathering Strong Images of Goal Circle Play................................................................. 100

Figure 26: 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, Australia, 1967 .......... 102

Figure 27: *Sports Magazine*, October 1970. ................................................. 103

Figure 28: Summary of Television Coverage and Rights Income from NZNA Annual Reports 1970-1979 ................................................................. 119

Figure 29: Intro Sequence: New Zealand versus Scratch Team, *Sports Magazine*, 1970 ................................................................. 123

Figure 30: First Interview: Dallas Knuckey, Manager of New Zealand Netball team 1970/1 ................................................................. 125

Figure 31: 2nd Interview: Taini Jamison, Coach, New Zealand Team ............ 127

Figure 32: Third Interview: Captain Joan Harnett .......................................... 129

Figure 33: Outro sequence. New Zealand team Playing Scratch Team ........ 131

Figure 34: Joan Harnett .................................................................................. 132

Figure 35: Colour Piece, Joan Harnett, *World of Sport*, 2 November 1970 .... 133

Figure 36: *Sporting Life*, NZBC, August 1973 ................................................. 140

Figure 37: Intro sequence, ‘Why don’t the media support netball?’ ............... 143

Figure 38: Representative Players and Officials at 1973 National Tournament ......................................................................................... 145

Figure 39: Hawkes Bay All Blacks, Blair Furlong and Kel Tremain ............... 155

Figure 40: Kel Tremain .................................................................................... 156

Figure 41: Ian McRae ....................................................................................... 156

Figure 42: Joan Harnett – Colin Meads’ Nomination as his “most ideal woman” ......................................................................................... 157

Figure 43: Tearful Jubilation of the Victors .......................................................... 158

Figure 44: Post-Tournament Party .................................................................. 158

Figure 45: “Don’t talk rubbish, of course it is!” .............................................. 159

Figure 46: “..have you seen me on the court leapin’?” ..................................... 160

Figure 47: Leila Robinson, Jamaican Umpire and Staunch Anti-apartheid Campaigner .................................................................................. 162

Figure 48: Schedule of Televised Games, 1975 Netball World Tournament, Auckland. *NZ Listener*, 16 August 1975 ............................................. 165
Figure 49: Radio New Zealand Coverage of 1975 Netball World Tournament. *NZ Listener* 16 August 1975...

Figure 50: Tournament Spectators, 1975 Netball World Tournament, Auckland...

Figure 51: Examples of Commentary Styles

Figure 52: New Zealand versus Wales Highlights Package

Figure 53: Cams 1 and 2 Coverage New Zealand versus Australia: last five minutes

Figure 54: Close Framing Between Cam 1 and Cam 2

Figure 55: Cam 3 - Use of Mid Shots During Breaks in Play

Figure 56: Example of Three Camera Sequence

Figure 57: The Distinctively Branded New Zealand Team, Tour of England 1988

Figure 58: NZ v Australia Final, World Netball Tournament, Singapore, 1983

Figure 59: Margharet Matenga (Kamana)

Figure 60: Lois Muir Puppet, ‘Public Eye’, TV ONE, 1988

Figure 61: NZ versus Australia, World Tournament Glasgow, 1987

Figure 62: NZ versus Trinidad-Tobago, World Tournament Glasgow, 1987

Figure 63: Selected Frame Grabs From ‘Netball Gaining Recognition’, *Eyewitness News*, TV ONE, 1988 (Total duration of item: 5.19")

Figure 64: First Test NZ v Australia, Milo International Series, 26 April 1989

Figure 65: Pre-match Sequence, 1st Test Milo International Series, 26 April 1989

Figure 66: Camera Placement Milo International Series, 26 April, 1989

Figure 67: Position of Game Cameras

Figure 68: Additional Camera Positions

Figure 69: Quarter Time Game Analysis (duration 55")

Figure 70: Half-Time Information Package (duration 2.10")

Figure 71: Three-quarter Time Coverage (duration 20")

Figure 72: Snapshots from Final Minutes of Last Quarter
Figure 73: Post-match Interviews and Start of Credit Sequence (duration 3’) .... 233
Figure 74: The Losers, Netball World Championships, 1999................................. 237
Figure 75: Professor Bill Mandle, via Satellite from Canberra, *Holmes*,
TV ONE, 1990 ............................................................................................................. 244
Figure 76: Sharelle McMahon Nets Australia’s Winning Goal in the Last 4.5
Seconds of the World Netball Championships Final, 1999................................. 255
Figure 77: Camera Placement, NZ/Australia Final, Netball World
Championships 1999................................................................................................... 256
Figure 78: Camera Positions, NZ/Australia Final, Netball World
Championships 1999................................................................................................... 257
Figure 79: Steadicam Coverage of Pre-game Haka............................................. 261
Figure 80: Slow-motion Replay Sequence during Injury Time ....................... 262
Figure 81: Last 60” of NZ/Australia final............................................................. 264
Figure 82: Brandi Chastain’s Front Cover Exposure, Women’s Soccer
World Cup, 1999 ......................................................................................................... 267
Figure 83: Director’s Suite, OB1, Netball World Championships, 2007............. 270
Figure 84: EVS Suite and EVS Control Unit, On Site Broadcasting OB
Truck, 2007.................................................................................................................. 272
Figure 85: OB Production Enclosure, Trusts Stadium, Waitakere Auckland,
NWC 2007................................................................................................................... 276
Figure 86: Internet Transmission Workstation, NWC, 2007 ......................... 277
Figure 87: ABC and TVNZ Commentary Positions ........................................... 278
Figure 88: Cam 9 Location and Perspective......................................................... 279
Figure 89: Cam 4 Steadicam ............................................................................... 280
Figure 90: Post-match Media Scrum ..................................................................... 282
Figure 91: Half-time Fixed Camera Coverage, FastNet 2009 ......................... 286
Figure 92: From Single Camera Distance to High Definition, Multi-camera
Intimacy ....................................................................................................................... 290
Figure 93: ‘The Harrison Hoist’, Mystics versus Vixens, 20 May 2012............ 292
Chapter 1: Introduction

Figure 1: Weekly Review No.366, New Zealand versus Australia, 7a-side International, New Plymouth, 1948

I consider you the lucky country because my earliest memories of touring here was as a 19 year old playing in the Australian under 21 team and I couldn't believe our games were televised ... that just blew me away...we [were] just green with envy when we came over here. (Vicky Wilson, Australian Netball International 1985-1999)

Figure 2: Firebirds versus Mystics, ANZ Championship, 2011

This thesis draws on an understanding of television production practice to document the long struggle for netball to achieve a frequency and quality of media representation which matched the importance of the game in New Zealand women’s lives and within New
Zealand society as a whole. It is a journey and outcome which is certainly unique and
envied in the netball playing world beyond New Zealand and possibly unique for a
women’s sport internationally. What is also unique is that netball, as a game designed to
be played only by women, had to fight its own battles in its quest for primetime
recognition. Unlike tennis or hockey for example, netball was not assisted (or hindered)
by association or comparison with a male counterpart. It had first to define itself as
meritorious and then challenge the controlling hegemony to prove that the game was
worthy of media attention - a valuable media property that had the capacity to create a
significant and loyal audience. As this thesis will argue its current position as a high
rating major sport on New Zealand television is not one that just naturally evolved over
time with the maturation of television broadcasting and changing social attitudes
regarding gender equity, but was the product of resourceful tactics and socially astute
struggle. Although these strategies which are integral to netball’s social and cultural
history by necessity suffuse this thesis, the central concern always remains with
examination of the changing technical and production practices used to construct the
mediated image of the game.

In New Zealand, netball achieved its media status working with knowing guile behind the
scenes and not waving a very obvious flag at the barricade of gender discrimination.
Historically, the perceived ‘feminine compliance’ (Treagus 2005) which shaped the game
and characterised netball’s modus operandi, often attracted criticism for lacking in
feminist zeal and the game failing to use its central position in society to directly
challenge the status quo (Nauright and Broomhall 1994; Taylor 2001c; Treagus 2005).
But, as this thesis will argue, it may have looked as though it was playing the game on the
surface but its agenda became increasingly focused on ensuring a high quality and
consistent presence in broadcast media. Historically, the public representation of
women’s sporting endeavours had always been severely restricted or compromised.
Netball quietly challenged and eventually pushed through this barrier and in doing so
changed the way in which television personnel began to reassess and represent the game
as a desirable sports product.

The research undertaken for this thesis covers two interlinked aspects; the mediated
images of the game with the main focus on the changing representation of netball on New
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Justification for Research

Existing academic publications on any aspect of netball in New Zealand and Australia is exceedingly sparse. The majority of academic study in New Zealand has focused on representations of gender in print media (Nauright and Broomhall 1994); the early history of the game (Macdonald 1993; Coney 1986; 1993); print media content analysis (McGregor 1994; McGregor and Melville 1995; McGregor and Fountaine 1997 1999). Geoffrey Andrew’s MA thesis, ‘A Girls’ Game and a Good One Too’(1997) very usefully questions the way in which netball achieved such cultural dominance in the face of the male domination of sport and society. However, it does not present a sustained analysis of the media representation of the sport. A recent University of Waikato thesis by Amy Marfell, ‘Netball in the lives of New Zealand Women: An Intergenerational Study’ (2011) provides a long overdue scrutiny of the socio-cultural and political influence of netball in the lives of New Zealand women. Once again, this study is not focused on the relationship between the sport and broadcast media. More recently, Shona Thompson (2003), Mandy Treagus (2005) and Toni Bruce (2008) have contributed insightful journal articles and book chapters which refer to the media representation of the sport. Again these are not sustained studies of the mediated image but they provided a valuable reference source for my study.

There is no sustained study of Australian netball and the media or the historical relationship between the sport and public broadcasting. Although there are significant differences characterising the status and representation of the sport in their respective media contexts it would be an omission not to include an Australasian dimension in this study. Once again there are only limited resources and I have drawn on the doctoral study and following publications of Tracy Taylor (2000, 2001a, 2001b) although her work is mainly focused on issues of ethnicity and cultural diversity in Australian netball. Leading Australian media theorist Marion Stell (1991) and Australian sport historians, Daryl Adair and Wray Vamplew (1997) provided valuable historical background.

Somewhat surprisingly there are no major studies of the history and influence of broadcast sport in New Zealand. There are a number of publications which document general broadcasting history or individual chapters or journal papers which contribute to
this important area of institutional history but there are no dedicated studies of this hugely significant broadcast genre. The bulk of the personal interviews I undertook for this research with key sports broadcasting and technical personnel were an attempt to fill in the gaps in this significantly under-researched aspect of New Zealand broadcasting albeit linked closely to my research topic.

**Literature Review**

I have not included a comprehensive literature review in the introduction as my approach is hybridised and the body of literature I use for the early chapters for example is not relevant for the later chapters. Therefore I have chosen to embed the critical parameters for my study in each chapter and to a large extent I have signalled this in the following chapter by chapter breakdown.

As I move through the decades I have endeavoured to reference the work of theorists who analysed media and broadcasting at the time. Where relevant, I privilege the approach of British and Australian theorists rather than North American because of the closer relevance to the New Zealand experience. Despite the centrality of sport as a television genre, academic analysis of the field was slow to evolve which is also reflected in my analysis. Coming out of the 1970s, Whannel usefully identifies the emergence of “two distinct paradigms” (1992 4) shaping the theoretical approaches to the study of televised sport. One is influenced by structural analysis and semiotics which deeply interrogates the text. The other places its analytical focus on the structures and practices of television production rather than on the way in which these technical and economic processes influence the construction of the media sport text. I have utilised all these approaches but the close analysis of the structure and practices of television is central to my critical approach. To do this I have drawn on influential studies in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom through the 1980s and into the early 1990s which provide critical insights into the early years of televised sport (Rader 1984; Chandler 1988; Cantelon and Gruneau 1988; Wenner 1989; Gruneau 1989; Real 1989; Barnett 1990; Whannel 1992). Australian social theorists John Goldlust (1987) and more recently David Rowe (1994, 1996, 1999, 2004) have also influenced my theoretical approach along with the production focused understandings of Silk and Amis (2000), Silk (2001a, 2001b, 2003), Silk, Slack and Amis (2003) and Bissell and Duke (2007).

**Methodology**

Through close analysis of archival game and television news footage, this study charts the process of the sport striving to gather moving images of New Zealand women playing their national game and learning to negotiate their place in a rapidly changing broadcast media environment. As such it documents through a media lens, the hard fought
migration from the rarely mediated anonymity of the back courts to the centrality of the primetime television screen. This corresponds with the first 40 years of free-to-air television in New Zealand where sport was one of the main technological and creative drivers for innovation and excellence in television production in this country. That a women’s sport became a central player in this broadcast sport narrative is one of the interlinking central threads.

Throughout each chapter parallel narratives of the sport striving for media space decade by decade is placed alongside New Zealand’s media history from the introduction of television and the maturation, fragmentation and growing complexity of New Zealand’s broadcasting mediascape. There is by necessity a process of inclusion and omission when undertaking a thesis of this scope, weaving together the history of televised netball, alongside the history of broadcasting and outside broadcast sport in New Zealand. To a large extent, particularly in the early decades, the texts which are analysed are determined by the surviving archival images available. However, the selection of texts and supporting resource material is also based on my judgment and personal experience through which I wished to shape my chosen narrative path. In fact there are four interlinking narrative threads which structure the thesis as outlined below. In order to gain control over this material there is a continual process of selection and rejection, therefore an awareness of my personal perspective in this process must be taken into account.

The four interlinking narrative threads

A discussion based solely on the scrutiny of archival texts of televised netball over a number of decades would provide a valuable commentary on the process by which broadcasters’ increasingly added value to the representation of the game on New Zealand television. But to understand why these changes occurred and to reveal the social, cultural, political, institutional and technological subtleties which brokered these changes, a broader narrative needed to be considered. To accommodate this depth of analysis, there are four major threads developed which weave together the paradoxes, ironies and threshold moments which propelled the sport to a position of media regard not achieved in any other national context. Some of these moments are serendipitous. Some are possibly just a characteristic of media in a small society which enables such changes to happen more readily or to happen at all. This thesis attempts to identify these moments of change and link them together to provide a coherent meta-narrative of the process through which an historically marginalised and culturally contained female sport was able to push through barriers that remained closed to many other sports, both male and female.

The narrative threads:

1) The story of the progression of the sport narrative line of the game itself as it moves within a frame of ‘compliant femininity’ to gain primetime recognition.
2) The structural forces at work over the time period under scrutiny on a national and international stage which encompass the increasing commodification and commercialisation of sport and the resulting significant changes in media institutions and delivery systems.

3) The role of the key mediators in the different institutional orders, such as netball, radio and television broadcasting, government and society. These major players are the catalysts for breakthrough moments which are acted out against background layers of structural and institutional change. Some of these gatekeepers pushed the boundaries knowingly, opening up possibilities for the game. Others were high level institutional movers and shakers whose actions in response to a rapidly changing broadcasting environment had spin-off benefits for the sport.

4) Close reading of surviving archival game and television news footage and contemporary television texts which make manifest the other factors in order to understand the representation of the game in the media and particularly on television. A technical dimension to these close readings is a key element in this analysis and a glossary is provided as television industry standard terms are used throughout.

Each of the major chapters contain the four elements listed above and seek to constantly place New Zealand broadcasting and netball within an international context before close scrutiny of the local.

There are shifts in methodology according to the narrative lines being pursued. In the early chapters there is more of a focus on ideology, but a pattern of close reading increases throughout. This is different from the approach in the earlier chapters which analyse more general society and institutional attitudes towards women and sport.

The chapters are deliberately not given equal weighting and to some extent this is a reflection of the archival material that was available and I judged the most revealing for study. The core of the analysis is contained in the 1970s and 1980s decades. It was in these twenty years that the most significant changes occurred within the New Zealand broadcasting environment, New Zealand society and netball’s relationship with and representation on television. The basic blueprint for OB coverage of netball practised today was laid down during these years as the sport was developed into a primetime media product.

This thesis also accommodates my own participation in this slice of media history as a player, coach, umpire and administrator as well as my years working as a freelance producer and director in the television industry through the late 1980s and early 1990s. I add my own experience to the views of my interviewees who wished to contribute to this
study to ensure that their memories of their participation in the history of broadcast sport in New Zealand would not be lost.

**Chapter Outline**

*Chapter 2: From Vapours to Vigour: Women, exercise and netball 1891-1960*

The bulk of this chapter falls into what Maguire (1994) identifies as the third phase of sportisation when netball came to the colonies during an intense phase of British-led imperialism (Andrews and Ritzer 2007). During the late 19th/early 20th centuries increased global communication, a rise in intense forms of nationalism and heightened debate on aspects of human rights and citizenship gained stronger expression in the western world. Sport became increasingly connected with national sentiment and identity as English sport forms diffused through continental Europe and the British colonies (ibid). In New Zealand, rugby union became the chosen sport through which to express notions of national identity (Phillips 1987; Belich 2001; Hope 2002). At the same time, more quietly out of the public gaze, the game of netball was being rapidly adopted by the majority of New Zealand women.

The aim of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive account of the gender imbalance which has characterised the history of sport. Its primary objective is to survey some of the contemporary social, political, medical and cultural territory which the foundation of netball and its development in New Zealand had to negotiate. Although this historical opening falls outside the main broadcasting and technical thrust of this thesis, it proved a necessary starting point from which to underpin the central thesis question interrogating the means by which New Zealand netball came to claim such a prominent position on national television. Throughout the chapter the narrative thread of ‘compliant femininity’ (Treagus 2005, Taylor 2001c) is laid down which informs all later discussion on barriers to achieving equable media representation of netball and women’s sport in general.

The chapter opens by presenting the range of contemporary opinion controlling women’s physical activity outside the home and popular arguments which reinforced the biologically determined truths governing women’s physical inferiority (Hargreaves 1994). This is then placed within the founding narratives of the origin of men’s basketball in USA and its evolution via England into the women’s game which eventually became known as netball. The next section considers the sporting landscape for women in New Zealand settler society of the 1880s and 1890s when the new game of basketball was introduced and its gradual spread throughout the Dominion. The final section falls within Maguire’s (1994) over-lapping fourth stage of sportisation (1920s-1960s) where the slow assertion of women’s rights and increasing challenges to hegemonic masculinity
started to become more evident. The chapter concludes with consideration of how the local game achieved its position of dominance and the decision to look beyond its own domestic dictates in order to establish international competition. An era characterised by a lack of moving images of women playing sport.

Chapter 3: The scarcity of representation on radio and in moving pictures 1923-1959

This chapter foregrounds the television years with an examination of the limited representation of netball in newsreels screened in New Zealand cinemas and to a less extent the game’s exposure on radio. The evidence of netball’s presence on radio can only be constructed through anecdotal accounts and unpublished material, primarily NZBA Executive minutes. There are no game commentaries for the period in the Radio New Zealand Sound Archives and only three short radio news items have survived from this period. The situation is not much better for moving images. Little was shot and screened and even less archived. The limited understanding of film, the expense of the medium and severely limited finances prevented the sport from investing in the production of their own images in any significant way. However the publically screened images that have been preserved reveal increasing confidence in the status of the game and the way in which women played it. It reinforces the assertion by British sports historian Mike Huggins (2007a) that the study of cinema newsreels enable the “complex cultural landscape of women’s sporting life” (682) to be more visible. But just as importantly for this thesis it also provides a window on the growing technical expertise and craft skills associated with the beginnings of single camera production of outside broadcast sport.

Cinema newsreel case studies:
- Weekly Review No 246, ‘The Season Opens’, 1946
- Pictorial Parade, ‘Basketball’s 50 Years – Canterbury wins NZ Tournament’, 1955

Chapter 4: The ‘marriage’ of television, sport and netball in the 1960s

The strong focus on early BBC coverage of sport in this chapter reflects its direct influence on New Zealand television broadcasting practice. Whannel’s (1992) analysis of the early years of the BBC and ITV sport is particularly useful in the detailed discussion of early television practice and ideologies in relation to outside broadcast and major event sports coverage. The work of Australian academics: Lawrence and Rowe (1987, 1989), Goldlust (1987) and Rowe (1995, 1996, 1999, 2004a, 2004b) frequently provide valuable insights due to their closer relevance to the New Zealand situation. There is no corresponding body of academic work produced in New Zealand during the 1980s or even later, which provides sustained, detailed analysis of the development of television
sport, particularly in the first decades of operation. However, the key text referenced (Boyd-Bell 1985, Gregory 1985, Butterworth 1989, Farnsworth 1992, Day 1994, 2000, Horrocks 2004, Simmons 2004) all provide insights into a range of historically important cultural, political, technical and institutional aspects impacting on the development of New Zealand television. The largely unrecorded history of decades of outside broadcast production in New Zealand is gathered from personal interviews from broadcasters and technical crew of the era. The netball perspective is gleaned from personal interviews and unpublished NZBA Annual Reports, NZBA Council and Executive minutes, the early academic study of Nauright and Broomhall (1994), Nauright (1995, 1996), Sandra Coney (1986, 1993), Mandy Treagus (2005), Australian Tracy Taylor (2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) and the more populist publications of Romanos and Woods (1991) and Hawes and Barker (1999).

The chapter concludes with the close analysis of two early pieces of game footage. The first is the last ten minutes of the New Zealand/Australia final at the 2nd Basketball World Championships, 1967. The second is a highlights package of the 1969 National Tournament final, between Canterbury and Wellington, screened as part of the sport magazine programme, Sportsview. Multi-camera outside broadcast (OB) vans had been used for live telecasts of netball games during the 1960s but none of this footage survived. These two examples, shot on film, are all that remain in the national archive. They provide an important snapshot of the era when netball and the state broadcaster began to establish what proved to be a long-lasting relationship. However as this chapter also reveals, it was not initially Goldlust’s (1987) ‘match made in heaven’.

1960 case studies:

- 2nd World Basketball Tournament, Perth, Western Australia, 1967

Chapter 5: 1970s – Netball’s quest to be part of the new era in television sport production

For the purposes of clarity and denoting the importance of archival footage in this thesis, the 1970s is divided into two with the appendix providing analysis of two major examples of television sports magazine and game coverage from the era. The 1970s was a threshold decade which initiated a slow build towards a significant change in attitude towards television coverage of women’s sport. The chapter starts with a brief overview of significant challenges in international sports broadcasting with particular reference to Kerry Packer’s radical commodification of cricket and the growing feminist challenges to the inequitable treatment of female athletes, given public expression by Billie Jean King
in the United States. On the domestic front, there is detailed consideration of the maturation of New Zealand television sports coverage leading up the 1974 Commonwealth Games which influences the close analysis in this chapter and the next. Before turning to the specifically netball section of the chapter, there is a background discussion of the growing feminist influence in New Zealand society which did not radicalise netball or the administration but fed into the groundswell of calls for the activities of women to be more publically recognised and rewarded. The chapter concludes with detailed analysis of two sport magazine items profiling netball before the New Zealand team left for the 1971 World Tournament in Jamaica. These items neatly segue into the two major examples analysed in the chapter’s appendix: the first an extended news item addressing the lack of netball screened on television (1973); and the second, the 1975 Netball World Tournament held in Auckland, reflecting the post-Commonwealth Games era of OB sport production.

1970s case studies:
- ‘New Zealand Basketball Team’, *Sports Magazine*, NZBC, screened 29 October 1970
- Profile of Joan Harnett, *World of Sport*, NZBC, screened 2 November 1970

1970s appendix case studies:
- ‘Why doesn’t the media support netball?’, *Sporting Life*, NZBC, August 1973
- Netball World Tournament Auckland, NZBC, 1975 (live OB broadcast and tournament highlights)

*Chapter 6: The 1980s – the First Step into the ‘Big Time’*

Reflecting aspects of Maguire’s (1994) 5th phase of sportisation, public calls to recognise the value of women’s sport characterises this coming-of-age decade for televised netball. The sport, new sponsors and the broadcaster worked closely together to create a fresh television product and in doing so subtly challenged the notion that one single sport does not necessarily have to represent a nation (Maguire 1994). The chapter opens with a discussion on the rapid advance in broadcast technology and the construction of ‘good television’ (Gruneau 1989). Gruneau’s work identifies the importance of understanding the pressures and limits which structure televised sport and this understanding is a central concern of this thesis. Following a brief summary of the series of complex political and economic changes which began a radical reshaping of the New Zealand broadcasting environment the chapter then provides an overview of New Zealand televised sport, the social and broadcasting impact of the 1981 Springbok Tour and the increasing calls for social change in the early part of the decade.
The case study of the 1987 Netball World Tournament in Glasgow reveals TVNZ’s steadily growing commitment to bring the sport to the New Zealand public wherever it was being played. TVNZ’s production partnership with the inexperienced tournament host broadcaster, Scottish TV (STV) provides an insight into the growing chasm between televised netball in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. The chapter concludes with analysis of an extended news item, screened on Eyewitness News, TVNZ, examining the unprecedented level of New Zealand media interest in the game. The appendix case study clinches the significant gains made by the sport by the end of the decade as indicated by the up-graded production values and extended airtime of the 1989 Milo International series. This case study rounds off a decade of considerable gains for the televised representation of the sport and documents the growing craft pride (Silk and Amis 2000) of production crew constructing the televised text. The national sentiment evoked by these texts signify the growing willingness of the New Zealand public to accept a major women’s sport as a contributor to a sense of the national imaginary (Anderson 1991).

1980s case studies:

- New Zealand vs Australia, Netball World Tournament, Glasgow, TV ONE, TVNZ, 1987
- New Zealand vs Trinidad-Tobago, Netball World Tournament, Glasgow, TV ONE, TVNZ, 1987
- ‘Netball receives unprecedented attention’, Eyewitness News, TV ONE, TVNZ, 1988

1980s appendix case study:

- 1st test, Milo International Series, TV-2, TVNZ, 26 April 1989

Chapter 7: The 1990s – we are worth more!

This chapter in particular draws closely on my previously published work, ‘Media Sport: Our World on their Shoulders?’ (2004a) and ‘Going Mainstream: Women’s Televised Sport through a Case Study of the 1999 World Netball Championships’ (2004b). The rapid growth of pay television internationally, the professionalisation of rugby union, and the growth of SKY television within New Zealand’s heavily de-regulated market informs the broadcasting context for this chapter. As New Zealand’s top tier male sporting codes move across the paywall to SKY, netball continued to flourish as a major-rating property for free-to-air television. Based on lessons learned in the 1980s the growing expertise by both the sport and the broadcaster to create television and sponsor friendly competitions can be seen in the televised coverage of the Netball World Championships at the close of the decade. Close analysis of the final game between New Zealand and Australia which
captured one of the highest ratings on television for any genre of programming provides
the major case study. The television rights negotiations, in the aftermath of this
historically important ratings event concludes the decade focused on NNZ’s negotiations
with TVNZ for a re-evaluation of their rights contract. The demand from netball for a re-
evaluation of the value of the sport coupled with the need to increase their income from
television rights provides a strong segue into the next chapter documenting the end of
netball’s exclusive relationship with the state broadcaster, TVNZ.

1990s case study:

- New Zealand/Australia final, Netball World Championships, Christchurch, 1999

Postscript: The End of the Affair and a New Beginning

The international trend for major sport to be excluded from free-to-air television unless
protected by anti-siphoning legislation provides the rights ownership context for netball’s
negotiation with a new broadcasting partner. The first step of this journey is documented
through a study of the 2007 Netball World Championships in Auckland when IFNA
(International Federation of Netball Associations) awarded host broadcasting rights to
SKY Television. This case study is focused on the technical gains in camera and slow-
motion replay technology to provide an insight into the fresh approach brought by SKY.
This is followed by a brief discussion of FastNet, the IFNA led initiative to create a new
entertainment-orientated short form of netball to make the game more commercially
attractive and woo increased international participation. The section ends with NNZ
severing ties with the state broadcaster TVNZ after 51 years of collaboration and signing
an exclusive rights deal with SKY TV. This effectively closes netball’s chapter on its
historical broadcasting associations and places the future of the sport in the brave new
world across the pay divide.

Case Study:

- Netball World Championships, Auckland, SKY TV, November 2007

Conclusion

The current dominance of the game in New Zealand, its potential to maintain this position
and its lack of global recognition is theorised within an international context through the
Particular reference is made to Maguire’s (1994) concept of “diminishing contrasts and
increasing varieties” (398) as a characteristic of globalised sport and Rowe’s (2003) claim
that the “production of national cultural difference” (281) renders sport unsuitable for full
inclusion in the globalising process.
This final section concludes with a brief outline of further areas of study that are regretfully only briefly able to be touched on in this thesis and deserve greater research. The final comments look back over the scope and content of the thesis and end with a personal statement of my commitment to this topic.

Resources

Film and television archives: It has taken many years to gain access to the archival resources remaining in the TVNZ archive. The majority of this footage was still on fragile film stock which I paid to have transferred to DVD. In most cases I am the first researcher to view and analyse this material. The majority of this early footage had its only public screening at the time of initial transmission and has been unobtainable ever since because of the parlous state of its preservation. Throughout the nearly half century of stewardship of netball by TVNZ, very little of this early material was ever accessed for promotional purposes in contrast to the heritage building historical images habitually associated with rugby. The Weekly Review and Pictorial Parade items, produced by the National Film Unit, were more readily accessible through Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga. In the last 12 months a number of the early National Film Unit netball items have become available for online viewing which has assisted my research.

Television game footage from the 1980s onwards are from my personal collection, or loaned to me by past NNZ President, Dawn Jones, early television netball coach and television commentator Marion George (Smith) or located in the back room resources of Netball New Zealand. All news and current affairs footage from 1960-2000, if not in my personal collection, has been either viewed at or purchased from the TVNZ Archive, Avalon. The rights to this material are with TVNZ and latterly with SKY Television.

Outside Broadcast Production: Over the period of research, I have had regular access to Outside Broadcast facilities and television technical crew, added to my own industry production background. I am grateful to TVNZ, SKY television and Netball New Zealand for granting me this privilege and particularly acknowledge the free access I was afforded during the broadcasting of the 2007 Netball World Championships in Auckland. My analysis of multi-camera Outside Broadcast production is based on my observations from inside a TVNZ or SKY Television OB van, on the press bench, with the commentary team or shadowing the camera crew.

Radio: There are no game commentaries preserved in the Radio New Zealand Sound Archives, Ngā Taonga Kōrero and only a limited number of interviews with netball administrators over the decades which were mainly outside the scope of this study. Access to audio archival material became severely compromised following the 2011
Christchurch earthquakes and is still unobtainable. Somewhat ironically, a 30 minute radio documentary I researched, wrote and collated on the emergence of netball as a mainstream media sport is still unavailable for study. I was commissioned to make this documentary for the Radio New Zealand Sunday *Insight* programme in 1987 and I planned to use it for the 1980s chapter of this thesis. It remains in the archive as the only radio documentary ever made in New Zealand on netball which in itself is an indication of the critical gaps in netball’s archival legacy.

**Unpublished manuscripts, news clippings and press photographs:** I was given full access to the archival resources of Netball New Zealand. This included business correspondence, Annual Reports, NNZ Council and Executive minutes, press clippings and donated personal papers and photographs. These resources were randomly collated in a stack of file boxes reaching from floor to ceiling in the back room. I am very grateful for the trust shown to me by NNZ granting access to this material and to be able to read the confidential business correspondence between NNZ and TVNZ and NNZ and its sponsors. All commercially sensitive material contained in this thesis was used with NNZ’s consent. I accessed the early netball manuscripts from the Alexander Turnbull collection. These included Executive Minutes from 1929 – 1990, Council Minutes 1935-1968, Annual Reports and scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and press and magazine photographs from 1927-1967. It is from this material that I obtained most of the pre-television evidence of netball’s quest for media representation and their desire to obtain moving images of New Zealand women playing netball. Early photographs, contained in Chapter 1 were also obtained from the Alexander Turnbull Library Time Frames collection. It was not always possible to precisely date some of the early historical material in the Turnbull collection, particularly the print articles and photographs. However, through informed guesswork I am confident I have achieved a reasonable level of accuracy.

**Personal interviews:** I conducted over 60 interviews with netball, radio and television personnel and corporate sponsorship managers over the period of this study. Some of these were major extended interviews, others phone interviews, email exchanges or ‘on the job’ chats to fill in gaps or obtain another perspective. The bulk of the interviews were with television technical crew, television sport producers, heads of television sport and sports journalists. I also had open access to key netball administrators who were very generous with their time. In all cases, the willingness for these people to be interviewed was overwhelming with all concerned very aware of the lack of research in this area and hence their willingness to contribute to the preservation of these interweaving broadcasting and social histories.
Ethics Approval and ethical considerations: This thesis was approved and commenced before the establishment of the University of Auckland Ethics Committee. Once the committee and procedures were established, ethics approval for a course of research was not able to be granted retrospectively. Despite this exemption, I informally followed the required ethics procedures, such as providing interviewees with Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Consent Forms to sign. By far the majority of my interviewees were professional broadcasters, journalists and media professionals, and as such considered themselves fully aware of ethical and copyright issues as part of their professional practice. They were not interested in signing a consent form and politely refused. Many of them did not even want the PIS which they felt was also irrelevant. I had the same reaction from all the netball personnel interviewed who had all held public office and as such were frequently spokespeople for the sport. The PIS introduced me, my thesis topic and a short description of the publication details governing a doctoral thesis. It outlined how and by whom the interview data was gathered, transcribed and stored. For those who did not wish to receive the PIS, I sent an email providing the same information in more informal way, often attaching the PIS just in case they wished to read it at a later date. The PIS and the emails provided them with contacts for me and my supervisors, linking me to my department and the University of Auckland.

I preferred to meet personally with the interview subjects where possible and I recorded and transcribed all the interviews myself. Where I had to undertake phone interviews, I took notes by hand during the conversation, typed them up into a transcript and sent them as an email attachment to the subject for confirmation. I highlighted any material I thought I may have recorded incorrectly or inserted questions seeking clarification or amplification. This proved to be a very successful way of gathering corroborating evidence from out-of-towners or back up evidence to supplement the information from my main interviewees. Some interviewees sent follow up emails to their interview at a later date if they remembered additional details or had discussed the topic with another party. As I was asking some of the interviewees to recall incidents or technical detail back over a 30-40 year period, this often prompted a series of emails where the quality of the information improved with each correspondence. All interviewees were asked to indicate any information which they considered to be commercially sensitive or felt uncomfortable about inclusion in the thesis when linked to their name. All tapes and transcripts remain in my possession in a secure location and are not accessible to any other party.

On one level I was an insider as I was known personally by the majority of the interviewees and where I wasn’t I was provided with introductions as both the netball administrators, broadcasters and technical crew were anxious to be part of recording this aspect of broadcasting history. My access to TVNZ, SKY television and commercial
Netball sponsors was endorsed by NNZ who frequently provided emails of recommendation by way of introduction or verification of my approved research status. I was particularly careful in this regard with my approach to commercial sponsors where I was less well-known and always went via a NNZ introduction. NNZ also provided me with email and phone contacts for past administrators. I had many more contacts in television and I was fully supported by the various heads of sport in TVNZ and Kevin Cameron, Head of SKY Sport and Outside Broadcast Production. At major fixtures such as the 2007 Netball World Championships I was provided with full media endorsement and television accreditation. This allowed me free movement within the venue, the media benches, press room and media conferences and open access to the broadcasting precinct. Television crew were notified in advance of my research and requested to assist me where they could. A significant number of television crew are my ex-students so I was already very well-known to many working in outside broadcast sport.

As I had worked free-lance as a director/producer in the television industry during the late 1980s to mid 1990s and still teach television production, I have a strong understanding of technical matters. My informed, production orientated questioning enabled me to quickly establish approved status with past and present television crew as I was able to talk their language. I am particularly grateful to the support of Kevin Cameron in particular throughout the entire research period of this thesis. He was generous with his own time and provided me with access to all SKY’s broadcasting operations, placing me in a very privileged primary research position.

Netball and me

In 1960, the year that television came to New Zealand and the start of the new 7 a-side era, I played in my first official netball team. The school I attended had no netball teams for the primary age girls and I would have had to wait another two years to get into a team. It was a wait I was not prepared to tolerate as my brothers were already playing organised team sports. In the face of my insistent desperation, my ever resourceful mother contacted the local club and we were allowed to form our own junior team if we looked after ourselves. The club issued us with faded green, moth-eaten, woollen gym tunics of ancient origin, bright red cotton belts and men’s ties. We had to supply our own starched-collared men’s business shirts, black woollen stockings and black canvas ankle boots. Because of what it represented, I loved my uniform even though it was very old fashioned even for 1960. I got my own leather panelled basketball for Christmas, laced with a leather thong. I had to condition it with dubbin every few weeks to prevent it from getting too waterlogged and squashing out of shape. I played centre (even though I was a natural defence) as I had a serious need to try and play every position on the court at the same time. Many of the girls in our ragtaggle team of nine year olds didn’t know how to
catch or throw a ball properly as they didn’t grow up playing backyard sport with their brothers.

Playing against mainly adult teams, in the freezing cold of Hataitai Park Wellington, we got beaten by at least fifty goals every Saturday morning. However, we had a point of honour - we always tried to get at least one goal on the scorecard. The next year I was picked by the club to join a team of teenage girls (I was ever so proud) and by 14 years of age I was playing in adult and representative teams. My passion for the game was endless. My joy at the physical and social freedom it offered me from the cloying confines of my private school was overwhelming. It was the first major infatuation of my life and those 40 minutes each winter weekend sustained me through the vicissitudes of my teenage and early adult life. It drew me into a challenging ethnic melting pot and threw me into life situations which I had to face on my own and would never have experienced any other way. My playing and coaching days finally ended with the classic netball injury - a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament. But up until then, it was the game of my life!¹

¹In 1996 a four part television documentary, ‘The Game of our Lives’ was screened on TVNZ, charting the way in which the history of rugby shaped New Zealand society. No such documentary has ever been made about the way netball enriched the lives of generations of New Zealand women.
‘Governor-General Opens Tournament’

Lord Bledisloe said that during a long experience of public life he had been asked to attend a great variety of functions, but this one was quite unique in his experience of public functions. He was relieved to hear from Mrs Taverner [President of Otago Basketball Association] that basketball was regarded as a girls’ game – and a very good one too – because it was one of the few games that he had never played himself and no doubt many of them could beat the Governor-General at basketball (laughter).

His Excellency said that it was remarkable how the game had developed in the Dominion in the last twenty-five years since it was introduced by a certain Otago Scotsman, Mr Jamieson. Thus Otago had the honour of having initiated the game just as it had in respect to the Plunket system and many other enterprises of a progressive character. (Applause)...

Lord Bledisloe said that he had always thought lawn tennis was a fairly strenuous game, but since he had paid a visit to Trentham and witnessed the staff of the New Zealand Defence Corps getting into condition by playing basketball, he had come to the conclusion that basketball, if played with vigour, was about as exacting a game as young people could be called on to play…
His Excellency referred to the very high standard of health that was so obvious among the women generally in the dominion, which must be largely due to the fact that while at school they played basketball…

His Excellency expressed the hope that the tournament would be most successful and that they would play the game for the sake of their sides in the true British spirit. He believed it to be the finest game for girls in any part of the world and it was with great pleasure that he declared the tournament open. (Applause). (Otago Daily Times 1934).

**Seeking political endorsement**

Standing in front of a “large crowd of spectators” and the “fine sight” of the teams in “their multi-coloured blazers” (*Otago Daily Times* 1934) on what was no doubt a crisp Dunedin winter’s day, New Zealand’s English-appointed Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, opened the 8th Basketball Championship Tournament. A detailed newspaper account of Bledisloe’s crowd-pleasing speech (extract reproduced above) is a brief insight into the gender relations and ideologies of the time. Bledisloe’s presence ensured the game’s credentials were endorsed ‘on high’ at a time when the supporters of the game were desperate to be noticed and to reinforce its position as the national game for women in the Dominion. Bledisloe’s interest in sport was well-known and his donation of a cup in 1931 to foster Trans-Tasman rugby rivalry was possibly another reason why he was asked to open the tournament. It is noteworthy that the Governor-General, who reveals he knows very little about the sport, is chosen rather than Lady Bledisloe or the local Mayoress. It was about who had power and social position in the Dominion and the Otago and New Zealand Basketball Associations were learning to ‘play the game’ within the confines of the ruling hegemony.

Bledisloe starts his speech with a paternalistic quip about the worth of the game, triggers off provincial pride for progressive endeavour, provides a personal anecdote about male athletic prowess, links basketball to the robust health of young women and finishes with an entreaty to play the game in the British spirit of fair play. He is endorsing societal approval of an acceptable team game for women which had the capacity to produce healthy and vigorous young women for the Dominion. At the same time he is being a politician and saying what the assembled women wish to hear. He is couching his approval within the rules of two dominant hegemonies - the New Zealand State and the British Crown. His speech subtly underpins a series of assumptions about women’s place in society and the superiority of male sporting endeavour. However, despite this layer of sexist paternalism, his speech is not without humour or the personal touch for which he was known and admired. He does convey admiration for the vitality of the sport and the young female athletes he sees in front of him and notes with approval that these young women were “living in very different times now” (*Otago Daily Times* 1934) when compared to their grandmothers’ generation.
Why women were allowed to ‘play the [netball] game’

Williams, Lawrence and Rowe (1985) identify three broad responses through which women have historically addressed sexual inequality in sport: abstain completely; openly engage in competition with men; or develop a “separate realm” (643) of women’s sport. The development of netball in New Zealand and internationally falls clearly into the latter category. From the outset there was considerable effort to ensure that the game was favourably viewed by the wider society and to do this it embraced the status quo rather than challenge gender boundaries. Roberta Park (2007) in her article, ‘Sport, Gender and Society in a Transatlantic Victorian Perspective’, cites Kathleen McCrone’s research on the introduction of new sports for women into English schools. McCrone indicates that netball (along with hockey and lacrosse) did not carry the stigma of “overt masculinity” and gained greater acceptance as it did not require “physical contact, awkward positions, endurance and great strength” (qtd. in Park 2007 1593). Treagus (2005) concurs in her introduction to ‘Playing like Ladies: Basketball, Netball and Feminine Restraint’, that at a time when vigorous exercise for women was a “contested activity” the early games of basketball and then netball were accepted in England because they “appeared to conform to dominant understanding of femininity as a form of physical restraint” (88). Taylor (2001a) argues that the central reason why the game earned its social legitimacy and acceptability in society was because it was developed through “the ideals of compliant femininity” (1). As a ‘girls’ game’ and therefore not perceived as a “threat to male domination of sport”, netball was able to grow in “relative freedom from pressures about female suitability” (Taylor 2001b 57). Both Treagus and Taylor identify the sport as a cultural artefact of the 19th and 20th centuries which “would seem to be an ideal ideological vehicle for teaching femininity” (Treagus 2005 102) which “socialized women into sex-based, socially acceptable roles that largely reinforced the gender order in sport” (Taylor 2001b 71). Taylor identifies the paradox that at a societal level the game “has both facilitated and constrained women’s participation in sport” (2001c 127) and questions whether the game was an avenue of emancipation or one of restriction.

Despite the game’s historically conservative approach it is also an ongoing site of negotiation and resistance particularly in an Australasian context as the sport carefully but knowingly contested its societal terrain. Rather than confining the reading of netball’s historical narrative to one of compliant femininity, a broader view reveals a rich cipher for the way in which women playing sport negotiate social relations and structures of power within their particular culture. Netball, in its determination to capture and maintain its popularity did it by stealth rather than engaging the dominant hegemony in open confrontation. Marxist theorist, Raymond Williams (1977) argues that the complexities of cultural traditions are created through the dynamic interrelations of dominant, residual and emergent cultures. Residual culture although formed in the past is
still “active in the cultural process” and operates as an “effective element of the present” (122). Williams identifies this as being made up of experiences, meanings and values which cannot be expressed in the dominant culture but are still part of people’s lived experience. In this way, the dominant ideology cannot be a fixed state but a moving equilibrium which is constantly tested from within by ideas and actions that have the capacity to subtly change or openly challenge the status quo. The way in which New Zealand women found and changed their identity through the superficially culturally compliant game of netball exemplifies the interrelations of Williams’ dominant, residual and emergent cultural dynamic.

Mind those ovaries! Barriers to women engaging in ‘strenuous’ physical activity

In contrast to the significance placed on sport in the second and third waves of feminism in the 1970s and the 1990s, the women calling for emancipation in the first wave of feminism in Victorian and Edwardian England were initially more concerned with education, employment and political rights. Sport did not figure prominently in early feminist discourse although the right to engage with sport and capitalise on the health benefits can be conceptualised as a “form of women’s liberation” (Huggins 2007 696). Huggins also notes that sport was a prime target for pre First World War suffragettes who attacked race course grandstands and golf courses because they represented “bastions of male power” (ibid). The rules both on and off the sporting field “reflected a masculine world view” and the fact that the way to play and organise sport remained unquestioned for so long is indicative of the “hegemonic power of masculine culture” (Cameron and Kerr 2000 336). In the 19th century, sport became an exclusively male preserve and playing games in English public schools provided a dominant form of masculine identity and trained young men in ideals of leadership and duty. To be good at sport was to be essentially ‘masculine’ and men were characterised by society as “naturally aggressive, competitive and incisive – well suited to the rigours of the games field” (Hargreaves 1994 43). Conversely, women were deemed to be totally unsuited to strenuous exercise because they were inherently emotional, passive and cooperative (Vertinsky 1990; Hargreaves 1994). Underlying these views was a nervousness regarding attempts by women to gain greater freedoms outside their narrow domestic sphere which were not defined by their maternal role.

Deeply entrenched ideas about gender difference provided the major justifications for the controls placed on women and were used to reinforce strong social and physical constraints. These were enshrined in the Victorian doctrine of ‘separate spheres’ where men worked hard away from the family and women had a quiet life at home (Putney 2001). Strenuous activity, particularly sport, attracted a variety of arguments against
female participation. This became more acute when middle class women in particular had the time and the growing inclination to gain access to some of the educational and sporting opportunities available to young men. Working class women had always been engaged in high levels of strenuous exercise but leisure time was not a luxury they could afford. One of the strongest arguments was essentially biological reductionism with barriers to sporting participation constructed around the natural bodily functions of menstruation and procreation. Social Darwinism reinforced the idea that procreation and the raising of children was the highest function of womanhood (Hargreaves 1994). If women were allowed to step out of that role or undertake activities which could damage their reproductive ability then the healthy progress of society would be under threat.

Social theorists, politicians, medical practitioners and educationalists used scientific argument to depict women as passive victims of their own biology which was an effective way of using medicine as an instrument of social control (Vertinsky 1990). Baron de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic movement in 1896, summed up contemporary ideology determining the male ‘ownership’ of sport; believing that men should not have contact with female athletes, that women should not compete in public and that women’s sport “could well be contrary to the Laws of Nature” (qtd. in McPherson et al.1989 227).

As the impact from the first wave of feminism started to gain a foothold in both British and American society, the critics increasingly used ‘science’ to counter what were construed as biologically damaging demands. Dr Edward Clarke in America and Dr Henry Maudsley in England vigorously espoused the idea that women had only a fixed allocation of physical and mental resources which had to be protected. Strenuous activity would leach away these reserves which would plunge the spent female into a dangerous pathological state. A women only got one non-rechargeable ‘battery pack’ in her lifetime and the rigours of procreation were a major drain on that limited power source so other activities needed to be severely restricted. Some doctors felt it imperative to limit all educational and physical activities for women, to ensure their energies were conserved for the only thing that nature intended them for - the act of producing healthy babies. Child bearing expert William McKeever believed that training girls to be anything other than mothers was not only futile but immoral (Putney 2001). The belief that over-exercise should be avoided in adolescence during sexual maturation because it could damage a woman’s reproductive organs persisted late into the 20th century and is still not completely extinct.

As key feminist theorists have articulated (Vertinsky 1990; Hargreaves 1994; Cahn 1994; Hall 1996; Park 2007) the collective force of these ‘proven scientific facts’ reducing all women’s social behaviour to the level of biology was an effective way of attacking the 19th century feminist challenge to the patriarchy and strongly influenced women’s participation in sport. The tendency for ‘frail’ middle-class women to faint reinforced the
theory of female weakness. The ravages of corsetry, limited food intake and little exercise were not factored into the argument and as Hargreaves (1994) notes; women themselves were often the first to accept the socially constructed notion of their weakness. Feminist commentators such as Vertinsky see this as a process of women being socialised through the medical profession to “discern their exercise needs and the risks and benefits they might derive from physical activity through the eyes of the Victorian doctor” (1990 7). Female acceptance of this inferior position according to American commentator Mabel Donnelly (1986) was reinforced by the training of women to be compliant beings from childhood.

Most early female physicians supported their male counterparts and emphasised the importance of women’s reproductive and nurturing roles. But despite what appears to be a comprehensive opposition to women’s ability to engage in any physical development, there was a growing belief that the female body could be “linked to the idea of health and fitness through exercise” (Hargreaves 1994 48). Per Henrik Ling’s Swedish gymnastics became very popular for ‘gentle’ exercise. The history of women’s growing participation in sport in the second half of the 19th century indicates that not all women paid close attention to the weight of male medical opinion (Vertinsky 1990). Women leaders in the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) expressed doubt as to why non-traditional roles should be so destructive of womanly character and why their strength should be called ‘decadent’ (Putney 2001). Increasingly women’s activist groups challenged the corset-like mentality that restricted women’s physical activities. They believed that women should take control of their own bodies and explore wider recreational and sporting opportunities (Vertinsky 1990).

**A new game in the New World**

Sporting culture was one of the lasting legacies of the British Empire (Rowe 1995) and is well documented as the birthplace of modern team sport. The process that sociologists, Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning (1986) labelled ‘sportization’ reshaped indigenous games or pastimes, many of which were based on principles of warfare, into competitive sport organised by goal directed contest and a formalized set of rules. Sportization was an important mechanism of the civilising process through which the Victorian era sought to regulate physical aggression in society. This would keep the male population active and healthy while at the same time teaching the importance of teamwork and leadership. These ‘modern’ team games embraced the principle of “equality of conditions of competition for all participants” (Goldlust 1987 29) which more correctly should say ‘all male participants’. The development of folk games into modern team sports centred on the major male sporting codes which women started to adopt over the course of their emancipation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
Netball however did not evolve from folk games as did rugby, hockey, football and cricket for example but as an offshoot of the men’s game of basketball. Unlike the majority of major team sports, basketball had a more instant conception in 1891 in a gymnasium in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Figure 4: James Naismith

Encouraged by Luther Gulick, superintendent of Physical Education at the Springfield YMCA, physical fitness instructor James Naismith was searching for an inexpensive, indoor game to keep young men fit between the football and baseball seasons. In keeping with the YMCA Christian principles, Naismith’s intention was to create a game that avoided a high level of physicality, hence the rules which prohibited personal contact and running with the ball. Unlike other sports which experienced long, slow periods of growth the practical appeal of a gymnasium-based game spread rapidly through the YMCA network and into schools and community-based recreation programmes.

YMCA fitness instructor and inventor of Basket Ball (Wikipedia Commons)

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2 Until 1905 the game was called ‘basket ball’ in the USA, gained a hyphen, ‘basket-ball’, for a while but became ‘basketball’ by the 1920s. The term ‘basketball’ was used in New Zealand from 1927. For the early years of the American game, I have opted to use the term ‘basketball’. In the UK and Australasian setting I use the English term netball to avoid confusion except where it is more logical to use basketball in relation to print articles, early discussion of the game or the name of the New Zealand Basketball Association (NZBA). The name netball was not officially adopted in New Zealand until 1970.
quarters the game was initially considered somewhat effete for the more physical male athlete. However with the limited field of play and the low level of physical contact, it seemed a very suitable team game for girls (Cahn 1994). It is somewhat ironic that this game was so instantly attractive to women when it was deliberately devised to train young Christian men during the height of the ‘Muscular Christianity’ movement in Protestant American Colleges fostered by the YMCA. One of the aims of the ‘Muscular Christianity’ movement was to offset the increased feminisation of young boys in households (Messner 1992) and make religion and church leadership more attractive to males by linking religion with virile sporting activities (Setran 2005). Vigorous activities to help overcome the moral defects of “urbanization, cultural pluralism and white collar work” (Putney 2001 45) trained young men in the ‘Cult of the Strenuous Life’, making them healthy in mind, body and spirit (Messner 1992). Luckily, there were a number of pioneering women in the YWCA movement who did not see why adapting the principles of ‘Muscular Christianity’ and its emphasis on physical health should not benefit the lives and wellbeing of young women as well.

Naismith published an early version of his game in the YMCA magazine *The Triangle* in 1892 and laid down five basic rules for a nine-player team (qtd. in Davenport 1991):

1. There must be a ball, it should be large, light and handled with the hands.
2. There shall be no running with the ball [except via dribbling].
3. No man on either team shall be restricted from getting the ball at any time it is in play.
4. Both teams are to occupy the same area, yet there is to be no personal contact.
5. The goal shall be horizontal and elevated.

According to Naismith’s history of Basketball in 1941 (*Basketball: its Origin and Development*) the division of the court into thirds, which ended up ratified in the 1899 rules of the game arose from a misunderstanding. Clara Baer, described by American Sports historian Joan Paul (1996) as the foremost Southern pioneer in women’s physical education and sport, misunderstood a sketch of the court supplied to her by Naismith. The dotted lines divided the court into thirds and were used by Naismith to denote suggested areas of movement. However, according to Naismith 46 years later, Baer interpreted his sketch to mean the lines were absolute boundaries controlling player movement and that the players could not leave these areas without penalty. Although Baer did publish her set of rules for women’s basketball or ‘Basquette’ as she called her version, in 1895, Paul’s research (1996) casts doubt that she was responsible for creating one of defining features of the layout of a netball court which has remained central to the modern game. However, in numerous publications documenting the origin of basketball
and netball, the invention of the three zone court continues to be attributed to Baer (see Hawes and Barker 1999; Paul 1991 1996; IFNA ‘History of Netball’ webpage).

Naismith’s rules were picked up by another outstanding women’s physical educator, Senda Berenson, at Smith College in Massachusetts. She believed that team games were invaluable for women and wrote a publication in 1903 extolling the value of the game (*The Significance of Basket ball for Women*). She was particularly impressed with the way in which the flow and speed of the new game did not give women time to pose and be self conscious as they had been conditioned to behave in other sports such as golf and tennis (qtd. in O’Reilly and Cahn 2007). However, she along with women sport reformers was shocked at the “intensity and roughness” (Cahn 1994 86) with which women rapidly started to play the game. Unlike the reformers, Berenson was not against women playing sport, but coming from a gymnastics background, she was trained to contain physical activity within acceptable feminine boundaries. She adapted Naismith’s rules with the aim of depowering the game by eliminating physical contact, rough play and restricting the movement of the players through the court. With an agenda of feminine containment, her rules laid down the following stipulations (qtd. in Davenport 1991; Treagus 2005 91):

1. The court shall be divided into three equal parts.
2. Snatching and batting the ball is not allowed.
3. Holding the ball longer than three seconds constitutes a foul.
4. There shall only be a three bounce dribble.
5. There may be five to ten players on one team.

Berenson (1901) was adamant about the need to eliminate any rough element in this new game for women and save them from their baser instincts. She states with certainty that “it is a well-known fact that women abandon themselves more readily to an impulse than men” (qtd. in Treagus 2005 92) and therefore it is doubly important that rules are imposed to prevent this from happening. She reflects the inherent sexism of the time by asserting that “rough play can have no possible excuse in our young women” but that the opposite applies for young men as it helps to bring out their “manliness” (92). As Treagus rightly observes, all Berenson’s rules are designed to deliberately slow down the game with the exception of the three second rule. Rather than limit the pace of the game, this would in fact keep the ball and the player moving, as it does to an even greater extent in the modern game. However, the logic at the time was to force the quick release of the ball so that no one player could monopolise the play and draw attention to themselves as an individual.
Berenson’s belief that teamwork was an essential part of training young women was also endorsed by Luther Gulick, who contributed an article, ‘Psychological Effects of Basket Ball for Women’, to Berenson’s publication. They both reinforce the value of women learning to subordinate “one’s self for the good of the team” (Gulick 1901 qtd. in Treagus 2005 92) which would fit them for a role in the work force and within their families. It would be easy to assume from Berenson’s writing and actions that she was complicit in maintaining the controlling view of the male hegemony. But for the times, she was very progressive and deeply concerned with the health and employment opportunities for women. Jenkins (History of Women’s Basketball) argues that Berenson recognised that one of the barriers to women getting equal pay in the workforce was the belief that they were prone to constant illness. Encouraging women to play active sport she believed to be a way of challenging that argument and would help women to improve their standard of health and endurance.
For greater movement, skirts had to be shortened and women wore bloomers and stockings which was considered rather scandalous. Male spectators were barred from watching women playing at Smith (Owen 2010) (Smith College Archives)

There was no shortage of medical opinion regarding the need to limit the level of exertion for women playing basketball. Dudley A. Sargent MD wrote an article in the ‘Ladies Home Journal’ in 1912 to address the fear in society over women exerting themselves entitled ‘Are athletics making girls masculine? A practical answer to a question every girl asks’. Dr Sargent articulates the current medical anxiety that women playing sports would make girls “bold, masculine and over assertive” (qtd. in O’Reilly and Cahn 2007 56). Like Berenson, he was an advocate of exercise for women but reinforced the need for the game of basketball to be modified by confining players to limited spaces on the court. This he believed would prevent the players from exhausting themselves and he endorsed increasing the number of players on the court to prevent women from breaking down with heart trouble or nervous collapse. Collapse apparently comes about when women get carried away with the excitement of the game and not only do their best but do more than their best and they need to be protected from that potentially harmful tendency (qtd. in O’Reilly and Cahn 2007).
The new game in the Old World

The rudimentary rules were taken to England in 1895 by an American, Dr Toles (who decried the evils of corsetry) and introduced to the women who attended the Madame Bergman-Österberg Physical Training College (Martin 1977). As physical education instructors took the game into the schools, the need grew for a more consistent set of rules. There was already a different set of rules for men and women playing the game in the American inter-collegiate competition, but significant variations existed. Two years later, an American woman came to Bergman-Österberg’s college and taught the game as it was being played by women in the American inter-collegiate competition, using the Spalding set of rules for women (Jobling and Barham 1991). Bergman-Österberg believed that the modified form of the game promoted physical and mental fitness to prepare women for motherhood but also allowed them to maintain their femininity and decorum (Taylor 2001b).

The non-interference aspect of the game was the major reason why the game was accepted so readily in England and considered highly suitable for girls and young women. In the English version, the court was divided into three areas and a goal circle, similar in principle to hockey, was added which restricted the shooting area in the court (Treagus 2005). Naismith’s peach basket goals had been replaced by metal rings, the posts lowered and the size of the ball reduced to that of a soccer ball. A throw-in rule from the sideline had to be developed once the game was played outside the confines of a gymnasium where the ball bounced off the wall and there was no ‘out of court’ ruling. The addition of the net to the goal ring provided the game with the alternative name of ‘Net ball’. In 1901, as the popularity of the game increased, the Ling Institute (now the Physical Education Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) revised the first set of basketball rules. In a handbook published in 1906 (The Game of Netball and How to Play it) there was a variation in the numbers of players you could have in a team from 5, 7 or 9 a-side (Jobling and Barham 1991). This is understandable because of the game’s evolution from indoor basketball and explains the considerable variation in on-court team size as the game was introduced to the British colonies.

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3There is a spelling variation of Tolls or Toles across websites and academic publications. I have opted for Toles as used by Treagus (2005) amongst others.

4Martina Bergman Österberg, schooled in the Per Henrik Ling scientific physical education method in Sweden, was a suffragette and devoted to physical, spiritual and political emancipation for women. Under her influence the rejection of the corset and the adoption of the revolutionary gym tunic freed women up to engage in active sport (Bergman Österberg Union Archive)
Figure 7: Women Netballers, Bournville Club, England ca 1910

Associated with the Cadbury Factory, this is an example of one of the early private basketball clubs formed outside the education system (Treagus 2005) (Wikimedia Commons)

A new game for colonial women to make their own

The early history of netball in New Zealand and Australia is not well documented as noted in nearly all academic writing on the subject (Jobling and Barham 1991; Stell 1991; Jobling 1994; Nauright and Bloomhall 1994; Treagus 2005; Taylor 2001a 2001b). Taylor (2001a) provides evidence of the first recorded game of netball in Australia being played in Victoria in 1896 and notes that the game rapidly moved outdoors because of restricted access to space and the suitability of the Australian climate. According to Australian sports historian Marion Stell (1991) netball was introduced into schools as an alternative to hockey in 1904. Ruth Fry (1986) in her survey of physical education in the curriculum for New Zealand Schoolgirls 1900-1945, ‘Don’t Let Down the Side’, refers to netball first being introduced into Otago Girls’ High School in 1902. Sandra Coney (1993) refers to the game being played at Otago High School in 1900. Geoffrey Andrew (1997) in his MA thesis, ‘A Girl’s Game – and a Good One Too’, provides evidence that netball in New Zealand certainly predated the turn of the century. He cites the ‘Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1900’ which refers to there being four netball teams at Wanganui College in 1899 and that the school even had an asphalt court. In this document there is also reference to a game of ‘basketball’ being played on sports day at Otago Girls’ High School in 1900 which predates Fry’s claim by two years and indicates that the game was well established in the school.

The most popular myth about the introduction of netball to New Zealand by the Reverend JC Jamieson has been repeated so often in netball booklets, potted histories in player manuals and in more recent years websites, that it is the one most commonly quoted as
the founding narrative of the game. It has the benefit of providing a clear cut start date linked to the actions of a specific person which has more appeal than a scattered series of events which are not documented and impossible to date accurately. There is also a photographic record of Jamieson and his early netball teams which has helped to cement this version as the origin of the game in New Zealand.

Figure 8: Basketball Teams, St Lukes Presbyterian Bible Class, Remuera, 1906
(Inset left: Rev JC Jamieson)

It is claimed that Jamieson, Travelling Secretary of the Presbyterian Bible Class Union of New Zealand, introduced the game to bible classes in Auckland in 1906 after seeing it played in Australia. The formation of the first netball teams for competition in Auckland followed a demonstration game played in a paddock in 1907 between the Eden and Epsom bible classes. A year later a number of other teams had formed out of the church bible classes and YWCA, the strongest teams being St Lukes Remuera and St David’s in Khyber Pass. These teams played the 7 a-side rules where the players were allowed three bounces and could throw the length of the field. The games were played outdoors on grass and baskets had to be emptied each time a goal was scored (Basketball in New Zealand 1906-1967). The clumsiness of the basket is an indication of the small number of goals scored and the sedate pace of the game. The retrieval of the ball must have taken up a fair amount of game time. The women’s movements were hampered by their mutton leg blouses, ankle length skirts, broad brimmed hats and undoubtedly many layers of durable underwear.
Geoffrey Andrew (1997) puts forward the credible argument that if Jamieson had been largely responsible for the introduction of the game then it would have been more likely that the provincial associations would have shared common rules. He also claims that if Jamieson brought the game to New Zealand after watching it in Australia then it would have been more likely that the games played by both countries would have had a higher degree of similarity and more consistency around the rules for the 7 a-side game. Andrew clinches his argument by quoting from a letter preserved in the Netball New Zealand (NNZ) archive that Jamieson wrote to Meg Matangi, the captain of the first New Zealand netball team to tour Australia in 1938. In this letter he makes no claim to be the first to introduce the game to New Zealand but states: “I have a special interest in basketball, because I think most of the earliest teams in New Zealand were coached by me and I acted as a referee at a tournament in 1907” (qtd. in Andrew 1997 32).

Figure 9: School Basketball Competition, New Zealand ca 1910

A variation to the Jamieson founding story is a feature of a major profile on basketball in the Auckland Sun, 20 September 1929, in which the introduction of the game to New Zealand from Australia around 1909 is attributed to the Rev. A Miller from Edendale Presbyterian Church but this is not substantiated by any other source. Another important founding figure in the growth of the game was Herbert Milnes, the principal of Auckland Teachers’ Training College (1906-16). He gave the game a boost in the schools by including it into the college’s programme and encouraging all his students to play it and then take it out into the schools (Macdonald 1993). The advantages of the game as Milne saw it were that it was easy to learn and was ideally adapted to restricted playground space (Coney 1993). The latter aspect was an important consideration as girls’ schools
had considerably smaller playgrounds and poorer facilities than boys. Coney cites the comparison in 1919 made by Nellie Coad of the Wellington Women Teachers’ Association regarding the huge discrepancy between the ground area for the Wellington Boys and Girls colleges; Wellington High School having 50 acres, the Girls’ college 1¾ acres. In the late 1930s, the Auckland YWCA’s creative approach to issues of limited space resulted in night-time games being played on their roof (Coney 1986).

**Figure 10: Basketball Game on YWCA Hostel Roof, Boulcott Street, Wellington, 1943**

(Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-7688-01-03-1)

In Australia, women and girls played a varied set of rules between 7 and 9 a-side up until the 1960s (Taylor 2001a). This variety was replicated in New Zealand except that the 9 a-side game became significantly more dominant than in Australia where it was mainly confined to rural Queensland. In both countries the rules were predominantly conveyed by word of mouth. This placed the development of the New Zealand game in the hands of women all over the country who took the rudiments of the game as it was filtered through to them and adapted them to meet their own needs and resources. The New Zealand YWCA also fostered this development and it spread steadily in relatively isolated pockets as each area developed and played by its own set of rules (Nauright and Broomhall 1994). Although the 9 a-side game became dominant in New Zealand for purely practical reasons, the 7 a-side version was played in Otago before World War I. This made it difficult to have competitions or even friendly matches between provincial centres (*Basketball in New Zealand 1906-1967*). The game continued to be called basketball and the English codification documented by the Ling Institute in 1901 appears to have had
little influence on either the Australian or New Zealand development of the game at this early stage.

**Figure 11: Schoolgirl Basketball Game, Nelson Area, ca 1925**

![Image of schoolgirl basketball game](Alexander Turnbull Library, ref: G-28933-1/2)

New Zealand historian James Belich (2001) notes that the upsurge in team affiliations in the 1920s came from the introduction of formal competition and the growth of the game assisted by the endorsement of moral evangelists who saw netball as more ladylike than hockey. In a brief profile on the growth of the game, an *Auckland Sun* article, 20 September 1929, articulates the perceived roughness of the original 7 a-side game played in New Zealand as “no rule existed to prevent the ball from being thrown from one end of the court to the other”. The tone of the article indicates that this situation was to be deplored and reassures the reader that “today there are nine girls to a side and such handling of the ball is forbidden” (ibid). This observation is followed by text highlighted in bold which further reinforces the need to contain the potentially more physical aspect of the game and hence increase its acceptability as a physical pursuit for women:

> From a game for the “brawny” basketball has gradually changed into a sport for the “branny”. The ability to think and act quickly wins the day and the game where short, snappy passing is combined with open play is considered the ideal.
> *(Auckland Sun 20 September 1929)*

**Courting the media to promote a ‘national sport for women’**

As early as 1927 Mrs R. McInnes, President of the newly formed National Basketball Association (NZBA) asked the regional delegates to go back to their associations and try and force, in a ladylike way of course, their local press to take more interest in the game.
by having one of their members “write up newspaper columns on all their matches” (NZBA Minutes 1927) to submit for publication. Within a couple of years many of the regional delegates were reporting that they were getting good support in the sports pages of their local newspapers. There were photographs in local newspapers and journals such as the *Weekly News* and the *Free Lance* which often covered the national tournament with full page spreads of images of black ‘stockinged’ and gym ‘tuniced’ exuberance which were very physical in comparison to representations of women in the public sphere in the previous decade. Even at this early stage in development it was correctly assessed that in order to grow the game they needed to continually strive to gain the attention of the mainstream media. Basketball administrators were very aware that this would not happen easily within the male-centric society of the time and that it was a relationship they would have to take the initiative to encourage.

Press reports from this time through to the 1960s never passed up an opportunity to promote the game and reinforce the way in which the game was so suited to women, backing the argument with the endorsement of current medical thought. There is always a sense of crusading zeal infusing copy about the sport at this time with the thinly veiled agenda of becoming the national game for women. The following article reproduced in full, is like a litmus test for the times. It addresses some of the barriers to the game’s advancement and is an enthusiastic example of 1920s advocacy journalism:

Sport of any sort, in its encouragement of the team spirit, has value apart from the physical benefits derived by the players. Co-operation is the finest and most certain method through which progress may be had and the selfless co-operative spirits encouraged on the playing fields undoubtedly has an effect on the general life of any community. It is only in comparatively recent years that women have been sufficiently free from the bondage of old conventions to engage in sport, which was once regarded as an exclusively masculine domain. The change which has taken place is a healthy one and in spite of occasional dampening comments made, its general effect is beneficial.

What games should be played by women is a question still hotly debated at this time but golf and tennis – in both of which women excel – pass by unchallenged. Team games are not quite so easy to choose, but basketball is one which is rising in popularity and the extent of its development may be gauged from the size of the Dominion tournament which opens in Christchurch to-morrow. The New Zealand Basketball Association has now 14 associations affiliated with it and the game is well on the way to becoming national. Public interest in basketball has not been great in the past, but there are indications on every hand that the attitude is changing. Perhaps it has been thought that the game is too tame to watch; but it should be remembered that in the United States particularly it is a popular game with men and it is played extensively in the American navy. It can be made bright and interesting and it is quite as good to watch as many sports which do attract the New Zealand public.

Basketball provides splendid exercise for those engaged in it, but it has the added charm of not being too rough. Science counts it in more than strength and it is that fact which makes it so good a game for girls. Speed and general nimbleness are developed through it and it also encourages the team spirit.

Those who are not yet acquainted with the many virtues of the game can easily remedy this deficiency in knowledge by watching some of the lively matches which
will be played by girls from all quarters of New Zealand at South Hagley Park to-morrow. *(Auckland Sun 27 August 1929)*

By 1938 there were 1,163 teams affiliated to the national body and the NZBA in *The Timaru Post* 27 August 1938, claim the sport to be the “national game for all New Zealand girls”. The article goes on to extol the virtues of the game for New Zealand women which would have made Senda Berenson proud; “it demands of a player not only physical fitness, quick-thinking and speed, but also coolness in emergencies. Above all it demands that team-spirit which is ever ready to sink individual brilliance for the good of the team.” The next year in the build-up to the 13th national Tournament in Invercargill, a piece in the *Southland Times* continues the almost evangelical promotion of the game; “the splendid type of young New Zealander playing basketball has always made a favourable impression on the public whenever tournaments are held and their conduct, both on and off the field, invariably has been the subject of eulogistic comment” *(NZBA Scrapbook 1939)*. The similarity of subject and phrase in a number of press articles around this time indicates the way in which the NZBA were feeding the press with the same copy to fervently promote the game to the wider public.

Although still very much developing in isolation throughout the 1920s - 1940s, the NZBA Executive minutes reveal the intense discussion on codifying the game which became focused on the need to change to the 7 a-side game in the late 1950s. There was also an on-going discussion regarding the uniform which to a modern eye would seem to be the Henry Ford choice of colour and style, but it was deemed necessary to keep this under strict control alongside the governance of the rules of the game. Throughout the early decades of the game’s development, there was almost as much discussion devoted by the NZBA to matters of uniform change or breaches of uniform regulations as subsequently there has been to codifying the game and rule changes. There were also very strict rules on behaviour and what would seem now as extremely minor lapses in politeness or etiquette were discussed at some length at Executive and Council level. This ensured that the game was always played in the right spirit and within the codes of ladylike behaviour which was an image the administration cherished. Throughout this period the sport at Executive and regional level was helmed by very long serving officials which Nauright and Broomhall (1994) argue enabled the game to prosper despite a lack of resources.

After the financial hardship of the Depression the growth of the game in New Zealand faltered badly once again during the Second World War with the double load women carried on the domestic and manpower fronts and the restriction of movement through petrol rationing. But despite the setbacks, with the tenacious will that characterised women’s volunteer services, the game survived. During these years women had proven themselves as competent to undertake men’s tasks and they proved that they had skills which were not only useful in the domestic sphere. Joyce Brown (former Australian team
captain 1963 and Australian Netball team coach) believed that the gains Australian women were able to make after the war were because they realised themselves how competent they were operating in a man’s world and it made it easier for independent-minded women “in the work place, public life and on the sporting fields” (1984 59). However, it should be noted that the years available for women to play sport at this time were still very brief in relation to men, as marriage and their domestic duties usually signalled an end to their sporting and employment careers. As happened to the previous generation of women in the 1880s - 1920s, they were still required to service the sporting activities of their husbands and children rather than consider their own sporting needs (Thompson 1999; Huggins 2007).

**We did it our way - the 9 a-side game**

The New Zealand 9 a-side game, which would seem very slow and cluttered to a modern spectator, employed the division of the court into three areas with a shooting circle and three players allowed in each third of the court. As is obvious from the scrutiny of early footage and modern re-enactments of the old 9 a-side game, it was somewhat cramped in the goal circle with six players allowed in the area at the same time. Rules preventing active defending of shots at goal minimised movement in the circle and kept the game confined. Modern expectations should not diminish the importance and the freedom that this game represented for women playing at the time. 9 a-side veteran Rena MacKenzie believed that the preference for the 9 a-side game in New Zealand was simply to give more women the opportunity to participate (qtd. in Nauright and Broomhall 1994). Many others felt, like McKenzie that players would be left sitting on the sideline if New Zealand changed to the 7 a-side game particularly with more limited facilities when games started to be played on asphalt rather than grass.

The isolation and specific socio-cultural conditions that shaped the New Zealand 9 a-side game posed considerable problems when New Zealand had their first tour to Australia in 1938. It was agreed that 7 a-side rules were to be played which forced New Zealand to learn a totally different game for the test series. Understandably they didn’t do that well. *The Southland Times* reporting that the team “suffered some decisive defeats” but charitably put this down to their “lack of experience of the seven-a-side play” rather than “bad form” (NZBA Scrapbook 1939). With what could be seen as a hint of future Trans-Tasman competition, the article went on to note that “the Australians are inclined to play boisterously, with more body contact and it was to the New Zealanders’ credit that they were congratulated on the clean and open nature of their play.” In short, New Zealand played like ladies and lost! The New Zealand team played a demonstration match to promote their 9 a-side version, but as history has proved, the Australians were not impressed enough to want to do it our way. By this time New Zealand was the only
country uniformly playing the 9 a-side game which, according to Johannsen “held the rest
of the world up” (2011 9). However, the 1939 Australian series did add impetus to the
call for change which would open up international competition and allow the sport to
continue to flourish. New Zealand couldn’t continue to justify doggedly playing its own
game in its own backyard if it wished to participate in international competition and
prevent the game from becoming an increasingly irrelevant and doomed cultural artefact.

The 7 or 9 a-side impasse came to a head when the 1954 tour of Australia by New
Zealand was called off. The *Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune*, 24th August 1954, notes that
by this time New Zealand was the only country playing 9 a-side and that it was “unfair to
expect New Zealand players to compete when there was no uniformity of the rules”
(NZBA Scrapbook). When the Australian team toured in 1948 the All Australia Women’s
Basketball Association (AAWBBBA) made it very clear that they would “NEVER” (sic)
play 9 a-side. The NZBA Executive now considered that a refusal to change may mean
losing girls to other sports like hockey, tennis and football who all played by international
rules. It was felt by many on the Executive that “NZBA would be a voice in the
wilderness” (NZBA minutes 1957) should the isolation be allowed to continue. Despite
the logic, it was still a hard decision to make and many felt the loss of the game which so
engaged them and they played with such skill in their youth. The sadness of losing the 9
a-side game from well-known netball luminaries, Betty Steffanson, Betty Plant and Dixie
Cockerton, is recorded in personal interviews by Hawes and Barker (1999). These
women mourned the demise of the “short, darty” pass and the ‘dodge’ and felt that the
“foreign rules ‘killed’ our game” (50). However, others such as Joan Harnett and Lois
Muir who had played both codes, felt that the 7 a-side game was “more demanding of
skill and fitness” (50) and welcomed the change.

International standardisation of the game was finally achieved in England in 1957 when a
set of playing rules were drawn up and member countries asked to trial the 7 a-side game.
Some New Zealand associations changed to 7 a-side immediately and the next year New
Zealand played its last 9 a-side national tournament. 1959 marked the end of the 9 a-side
era and when New Zealand played Australia in 1960 both teams were playing their own
game for the first time which provided a much closer contest. The way was finally open
for international competition between the netball playing countries and the first world
tournament was held in Eastbourne, England in 1963, sponsored by Ovaltine. The
Australian team, captained by Joyce Brown, set a precedent that would be agonisingly
repeated many times in the future by beating the New Zealand team in the final by one
goal; 37 to 36. The public interest in this on-going close Trans-Tasman rivalry opened up
wider acceptance of the worth and entertainment value of the game across the gender
divide. It proved to be the major draw card around which to build a dedicated television
audience in the following decades and is still the quintessential element which ignites coverage of broadcast netball today and determines the valuation of rights fees.

Figure 12: New Zealand Netball Team at the First Netball World Tournament, Eastbourne, England 1963.

Team captain Lois Muir (first left)  
(NNZ)
Chapter 3: The scarcity of representation on radio and in moving pictures 1923-1959

“.but nobody had showed me so that I would remember it, the face of a New Zealander”

(John Grierson 1940)

Figure 13: Weekly Review No 246, ‘The Season Opens’, 1946

Radio – the early years

Unsurprisingly radio broadcasts of sport were extremely popular with the public and from the outset offered a testing ground for technical innovation which became a recurring characteristic of the genre. American commercial radio stations had led the way in recognizing sport as a programming and revenue staple whereas New Zealand was more strongly guided by the public service policies and practices of the BBC. However, through financial necessity, New Zealand needed to have a commercial element in the mix, as was to happen again with the advent of television. There was always tension in this hybrid model between the ‘rough and the respectable’ ends of the entertainment spectrum where desire to cater to popular demand clashed with the BBC public service
mandate to uplift and educate. The government appointed Director of Broadcasting, Professor James Shelley, was an admirer of the austere Director General of the BBC, Sir John Reith (later Lord Reith) and was firmly focused on the ‘respectable’ end of the cultural spectrum. In the Reithian mould, Shelley did much to foster a “common appreciation of finer things” (Gregory 1985 24) predominantly drama and music, which he believed would enhance social unity and raise the “emotional discipline” (24) of the community. Although sport was considered to fall within the ‘rough’ category of programming, Reith believed it was a fundamental part of everyday life. He saw the outside broadcast of key sports as able to provide entertaining and unique listening experiences but more importantly to have a unifying function in society (Huggins 2007). British media historian Mark Pegg (1983 214) reinforces Reith’s perspective and claims that the combination of radio, the press and sports coverage in cinema newsreels helped to shape Britain’s sporting culture and promoted an idea of national character associated with key sports.

There was no doubting the popular appeal of sports programming on radio in New Zealand and by 1928 sports broadcasts averaged over eleven hours a week. However, this success began to create a problem of its own as pressure mounted within broadcasting to limit its growth (Day 1994). Because of the high level of political interference and regulation in New Zealand radio broadcasting any upsurge in public response to what was deemed populist content, such as sport, could be seen as a weakening of the Reithian principles to educate and inform. At this early stage no rights were being paid for match or race coverage and as happy as the public was with the increase in radio coverage of sport, a major ‘turnstile versus the microphone’ confrontation was rapidly brewing. Rugby and the horse racing industry started to complain about lower gate takings and no royalty payments and the racing industry in particular saw radio as assisting illegal betting (Hall 1980). The latter situation was socially contextualised in a Ronald Hugh Morrieson’s novel and then repackaged with wit and national nostalgia in the classic film, Came a Hot Friday (1984). By the early 1930s both rugby union and racing started to block or limit live broadcasts and claim royalties. These initial skirmishes over the rights were to become absolutely central to the business of mediated sport. After a period of standoff and negotiation, both the racing industry and the Rugby Union began to receive regular payments for the right to broadcast their sports. At the same time, international broadcasts of rugby started on the shortwave frequency. This further increased the value of the sport to the broadcaster and the listening public and became a bargaining wedge for the NZRU to continue to push for higher rights fees from the RBC (Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand Ltd) which was renowned for its “penurious attitude toward payment” (Day 1994 118). It should be noted that these early skirmishes over rights obligations and expectations did not include any women’s sport.
By the 1950s, the country was networked with radio reaching saturation uptake with most households having had a radio for over ten years. One of the strengths of the medium was its ability to recognize and cater for a range of audiences through the YA and ZB networks and thus avoiding the need to programme for one mass audience. On-going technical developments extended the capacity of outside broadcast and gave the audience an increasingly wider national and international perspective rather than the previously “overwhelming focus on the local community” (Day 1994 319). Programming, particularly of the commercial stations had come to reflect popular taste despite constant attempts to reinforce a stricter adherence to Reithian principles of cultural elevation for the masses. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s sports’ broadcasting increasingly learned how to ‘talk’ to its audience. Media sociologist, Nick Perry (2007) cites Winston McCarthy’s skilful use of the vernacular idiom in his popular rugby commentaries. Perry references Basil Bernstein’s principle of ‘sympathetic circularity’ in the way in which McCarthy was able to induce a sense of “imagined collectivity” (5) in his audience. Huggins (2007b) believed that the increased coverage and appeal of radio sport had the effect of making sport more respectable and often increased the following of certain sports.

Despite the impact of radio on sports spectatorship and sporting culture in society, Australian sports historian Brian Stoddart argues sports organizations still fundamentally saw radio “simply as a service to those people unable to watch the action at the ground” (1986 98). The major revenue stream was still based on spectator attendance and more importantly, with relation to one of the concerns of this thesis, that sports felt no pressure to change the way in which they traditionally thought about or delivered their game. This attitude coloured many of the early negotiations between broadcasting and sport in the early years of radio which was repeated again with the advent of television.

**Netball and radio**

What broadcasting historians such as Hall (1980) and Day (1994; 2000) fail to adequately consider in their documenting of the growth of sports broadcasting is the gender bias which characterised the genre. Day acknowledges fleetingly that sports programmes were seen as “essentially a male preserve” (1994 315) but Perry (2007) clearly identifies sport as being directed towards a male audience which brought men’s sport into the home and further reinforced the dominance that it already held in society. There are no references to the coverage of women’s sport including netball in the major texts documenting the history of radio broadcasting in New Zealand. This is no real surprise given the period and the gender bias inherent in the relatively limited recording and analysis of New Zealand sports broadcasting history. Nauright and Broomhall’s article, ‘A Woman’s Game: The Development of Netball and a Female Sporting Culture in New
Zealand 1906-70’(1994), provided an important start in applying academic analysis to the significance of the sport in New Zealand society. However, they only offer a brief survey of the relationship between netball and early print media and omit consideration of radio. The New Zealand Basketball Association (NZBA) was formed in 1924 within a few years of the introduction of radio to New Zealand and the women administering the sport were well aware of the importance of the new broadcast technology. However, access to live radio coverage did not provide a major breakthrough from which to reach an existing audience and build a new following for the sport from those who had never played or seen the sport. Regional radio (the B stations), intimately involved with its local community, did include netball tournament fixtures, weekly draws and results provided for sports round-up programmes. Early attempts to gain radio coverage of full games were tried, but for the most part were not successful as the speed of the game was considered by broadcasters as too difficult for radio or not deemed worthy of full game airtime. Netball, nor any other women’s sport at the time, was ever considered a possible candidate to share important broadcasting space with Sunday afternoon rugby. Despite the inevitable unevenness of the playing field, the NZBA Executive did their best to get netball coverage on national and community radio and to encourage their provincial associations to do likewise. The first recorded reference to radio coverage of netball was in 1937 with a request to radio asking “whether it would be possible to arrange for a broadcast of the Tournament game on Saturday afternoon, September 4th”(NZBA minutes 12 July 1937). The reported reply from BCNZ makes the broadcaster’s priorities very clear; “it was impossible to undertake a broadcast” because of the “important Ranfurly Shield Rugby Match between Hawke’s Bay and Auckland on that date” (ibid). Such was the importance of that rugby match that the broadcast was taking over the “main Auckland station” (ibid) and an alternative service had to be provided from IYX. By informing NZBA about this technical difficulty to accommodate rugby, the BCNZ was effectively giving the women’s sport a lesson on keeping their expectations in perspective. It is the first recorded instance of netball’s total lack of clout in a potential head to head clash for radio airtime. Contesting airspace with the dominant male sport was not the only issue that hampered the radio broadcast of netball; there was also the lack of transmitter coverage throughout the country. In 1945, the NZBA requested radio coverage for two tournaments to be held in Tauranga. As there was no local station, the BCNZ were not able to carry the transmission. However, they were prepared to broadcast results through the YA and commercial stations. By the early 1950s there were radio link-ups for results and game reports noted in the minutes on the ZB network. NZBA learned quickly to lobby well in advance to obtain radio coverage of the annual national tournament, which they targeted
as their most likely event to gain airtime. Their efforts were sporadically rewarded such as the NZBC’s agreement in 1957 to broadcast the results of two West Coast tournaments and matches from a touring Fijian side in a “link of main national stations as part of the national Sports Summary” (NZBA minutes 23 July 1957). This was a positive gain but in comparison to the routine coverage of full rugby games and the airtime given to male sport in general, it was still a token gesture.

By 1958, despite sporadic success at gaining limited access to radio through the reporting of results and game updates, the NZBA Executive were still frustrated at their lack of traction with radio broadcasting. The only positive suggestion that NZBA president Mrs Eileen Lane was able to glean from a meeting with BCNZ was that the local associations should “contact their local stations with a view to putting information out through Women’s Hour” (NZBA minutes 4 July 1958). On one level this can be read as a patronising brush-off, ghettoising anything to do with women into a time slot which mirrors the segregated nature of the game being played on the back courts of the nation. On the other hand there had been a whole new approach to broadcasting directly to women in the post-war period. By 1948 the half hour slots of ‘Women’s World’ and ‘Home Service’ that Aunt Daisy (Basham) was a part of was expanded into the ‘Women’s Hour’ which was broadcast from 2:30 – 3:30pm each weekday. Instead of focusing on domestic and local issues as women’s programmes were pre-war, the ‘Women’s Hour’ was more outward looking and included educated discussion on a wider range of topics, sometimes with an international viewpoint (Hall 1980). There was a faithful following of the programme across the country, so pitching stories, profiles of players, or news of upcoming major tournaments within this hour to women all over the country was not a totally negative suggestion. In these early years, women who previously lived in relative isolation were able to develop a sense of Benedict Anderson’s (1994) ‘imagined communities’ through a radio programme which spoke directly to them. It was a highly controlled and limited space, but it was nevertheless a space where women could tell other women about aspects of their lives that mattered to them.

Eileen Lane’s BCNZ visit prompted a prolonged discussion by the Executive on how to obtain a higher level of publicity for the game that was not just limited to ‘Women’s Hour’. They realised that they had to think up angles which could give them a bit more leverage with the broadcaster. The quote from their discussion below considering citing a social angle as well as the health benefits is laudable but reveals considerable naïveté on the part of the assembled women trying to work out what would appeal to the broadcaster. It is also reflective of 1950s generational anxiety regarding the increasing visibility of youth culture and its supposed propensity to slide rapidly into anti-social behaviour.

It was felt that Basketball had progressed from the days when it was inaugurated in NZ in 1924 and that it now fulfilled not only the need for recreation but also provided
a kind of social service. Eg. helped to keep young people occupied and out of delinquency. No finality was reached, but it was agreed that a first step might be taken in the cause to awaken associations to the possibilities of Press and Broadcasting for publicity where little use was being made of them. (NZBA minutes 4 July 1958)

There was a very pressing social context for this anxiety, fuelled by the 1954 Hulme Parker murder in Christchurch, the 1955 stabbing in a Queen Street café by bodgie ‘Jukebox Killer’ Paddy Black and Petone Senior Sergeant Frank Le Fort’s revelations of the unsavoury milk bar culture of the Hutt Valley involving young men on motor bikes, large amounts of hair oil and underage schoolgirls. Parental panic was racked up another notch when one of the girls apprehended by Le Fort admitted to the police that she had “‘carnal information’ of twenty boys, [and] also assured them she had no idea where babies came from” (Yska 1993 68). The exhaustive public hearing on youth morality, or the lack of it, by the Mazengarb Committee set the tone of the 1950s. Sports organizations along with religious youth groups, saw themselves as on the front line attempting to stem the tide of adolescent immorality believed to be influenced by the flood of American popular culture.

**Netball's quest for moving images**

In post war New Zealand television was still hovering distantly on the new technology horizon and the cinema continued to be the only public sphere where New Zealanders could occasionally see moving images of themselves at work and play. Provincial netball associations all around the country worked hard to establish an on-going relationship with print media and radio. However, what was always missing was access to moving images of women playing the game which could be used for coaching, publicity and archive purposes. In comparison to the wealth of archive resources for rugby union which are frequently shown to reinforce its nation building mythology, netball does not have these resources to draw on. Early netball executives, with limited financial resources, did their best to gain motion picture film of women playing netball and what little they managed to procure was highly valued.

In 1932 the NZBA decided to invest twenty pounds in the production of a “moving picture of teams in play for Publicity Purposes” (NZBA minutes 30 September 1932) at the National Tournament. This was a considerable investment for the NZBA at the time, well beyond the reach of the regional associations. The 16 mm film was then loaned free of charge for viewing, provided transportation costs were met. This precious piece of film, repeatedly mended, was still making the rounds of the grateful minor associations twenty years later. The worth of this film lay not just in the novelty of seeing women playing the game but its value as a coaching aid. This was a time when travel was limited and financial resources meagre as New Zealand headed into the Depression. Women in
regional areas rarely got to see how the game was played at representative level in the main centres. This historically important film was not archived which represents a considerable loss of netball and New Zealand women’s sporting history. Netball had been included in the physical education curriculum for girls since the early 1930s (Nauright and Broomhall 1994) and in 1944 a series of three film strips were made in conjunction with the Education Department to use at training colleges and schools to assist with coaching. However, these were a series of still photographs, not moving images of the game and once again no evidence of these remains in archives or in Teachers Training College libraries.

It wasn’t until 1955 that NZBA could shoulder the cost of making another film which they felt they needed for record and publicity purposes as the 1932 tournament film had more than done its duty. Roger Mirams at the National Film Unit was approached but the quoted cost of £500 for a 15 minute black and white film was seen to be beyond reach, considering that the entire budget for NZBA at this time was only £1,700 per annum. That same year an amateur filmmaker made a ten minute, silent, colour film as a record of the National Tournament in Christchurch for a cost of £25 (NZBA minutes 6 September 1955). When the recurring discussion regarding the need for moving images of the game was raised at the 1958 NZBA meeting, the Canterbury delegate extolled the worth of this film as “the colours were good...most teams were represented...the goal area was often shown and scenes of the crowd were included containing many familiar faces”. The offer to buy this film at cost was readily accepted. It was agreed that moving images of the game needed to be recorded on a more regular basis and that “every effort be made to have a film taken as soon as possible of the proposed International Rules” (NZBA minutes 19 April 1958). Up to this time, New Zealand was relatively isolated from the netball playing world, not just because of distance and lack of funds but primarily because of the dogged adherence to the 9 a-side game. By 1957, NZBA’s increasingly separatist stance finally weakened and the process of standardizing the 7 a-side game internationally began. Therefore the mid to late 50s was a time of transition and it was felt that any film made could only be ‘for the record’ and that the making of a ‘publicity film’ should be deferred until an occasion when New Zealand was playing the international game (NZBA minutes 19 April 1958).

Influenced by the success of the Christchurch film, the NZBA Executive decided that they should seek a quote from another private film maker, Mr Appleyard of Craft Film Enterprises, Hamilton. His initial quote was £1,500 for 1,000 feet of sound film, £124 for

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5There is a rumour that a copy of this film is still in existence in the dim recesses of Lois Muir’s garage in Dunedin but despite a number of efforts, this rumour is yet to be confirmed.
a silent colour film or £104 for 1,000 feet of silent black and white film (approximately 45 minutes per thousand feet). It was initially felt that a 20 minute film would be of sufficient length and would help to contain the considerable cost. However, this film was never made. It was a decision made with considerable regret but realistic in terms of the sports severely constrained financial resources. There was even a discussion about contacting the National Film Unit to see if they could make a film but the contact was never made. However in 1958 there was potentially a larger crisis looming which took up the attention of the Executive. Despite living in a country full of sheep during the boom years for international wool exports, no black woollen stockings were available for the upcoming season. A special submission to the Minister of Customs, the Hon Mr JR Boord, saved the day and special provision at government level was made to ensure that “adequate supplies of Wizard Zealon Gym hose were ready for the 1959 season” (NZBA minutes 1 October 1958). It was a close call!

The Film Industry – the impact of the ‘talkies’ and the development of the sound newsreel in New Zealand

The talkies arrived in New Zealand cinemas in 1929 and were embraced by audiences with enthusiasm. However, the advent of sound presented silent film pioneers and cinema owners with huge technical and financial hurdles. Extensive modifications were required to theatres to screen the ‘talkies’ and the expense of purchasing heavily patented sound recording equipment was beyond the resources of film producers. A number of the filmmakers and cinema owners who borrowed heavily to invest in the new sound equipment were ruined by the Wall Street crash and the flourishing silent film industry virtually ceased in New Zealand during the Depression years. But, in the ‘DIY’ spirit of the time, when Government tourist films were being made in a ‘Tin Shed’ behind Parliament Buildings, Edwin Coubray provided another early example of the kiwi number eight fencing wire approach. Coubray gleaned enough sketchy information from magazines and newsreels to build his own sound equipment and produced the first talking newsreels, Coubray-Tone News in 1930 (Price 1996). Further technical adaptation was produced by Jack Welsh and James Gault in Dunedin with Welsh producing a weekly talkie newsreel, New Zealand ‘Soundscenes’ in 1933 (Sowry 1984; Price 1996).

Pre-sound, Walsh covered sports events for his silent newsreel, The Empire News, such as cricket at Carisbrook, the ‘Alhambra Footballer’s Club Day’ (1929, 12 mins) and ‘Whippet & Motorcycle Dirt Track Racing at Forbury Park’ (1929, 12 mins), which were shot, processed and screened the next day in the local cinema (Price 1996). The Government Publicity Office, forerunner of NFU, was established in 1922 with studio and laboratory processing facilities in the Miramar Film Studios. Within four years they were producing one newsreel a week for M.G.M distribution (Sowry 1984). Alongside
the quick turnaround local content newsreels, documentary newsreels from overseas such as Fox Movietone, Cinesound and Hearst Metrotone increased in production during the war years. Overseas, cine-sound newsreel segments of recent sporting events proved to be extremely popular with cinema audiences (Goldlust 1987) and it was no different in New Zealand.

**National Film Unit and the *Weekly Review* and *Pictorial Parade* newsreels**

John Grierson, founder of the British documentary movement and head of the award winning British GPO Film Unit, was brought to New Zealand in 1940 to advise the Government on the creation of an equivalent unit in New Zealand. Grierson’s visit to New Zealand according to film critic and later government film censor, Gordon Mirams was “probably the biggest thing that has ever happened to our native film industry” (1945 203). Produced by the NFU, the *Weekly Review* newsreels started in 1941 with its familiar “marching men” (Sowry 1984 7) title sequence and its rousing soundtrack that became so well-known to the New Zealand cinema-going public. During the 1940s and 1950s, New Zealanders were amongst the most frequent cinema goers in the world, reaching a peak in 1944-45 with twenty-one attendances per head of population per year (Horrocks 1985). This meant that over a third of the New Zealand population every week saw the local content newsreels. Local exhibitors, according to Gordon Mirams came to regard these newsreels as “equal in merit to imported reels” (1945 205).

The type of week-by-week cinema journalism which shaped the *Weekly Reviews* produced over 400 newsreels over an eight year period until 1949. Pioneering New Zealand filmmaker John O’Shea regarded these newsreels as “a model of its kind - politically safe [and] socially well-meaning” which helped New Zealanders to “fix an image of themselves as war-winning, hydro power-winning, health-winning and responsible citizens” (1999 63). Although these short topics were very much in the Griersonian mould of civic education, it was the first time that New Zealanders saw themselves regularly on film and the response was overwhelming, “there were frequent reports of stamping, whistling and applause amongst the cinema audiences” (Goldson 2000 55). Despite the quality of the work, the government did not always approve of the views of key personnel in the NFU which resulted in a number of controversies. By the end of the decade the incoming National government stopped the production of the *Weekly Review* because of its “supposed left-wing bias” (Horrocks 2010 1).

In the same year that John O’Shea produced the ground breaking New Zealand feature film, ‘Broken Barrier’, the first *Pictorial Parade*, a ten minute, monthly magazine-reel, began to screen in the cinemas and continued until 1971. The *Pictorial Parades* became more promotional in nature often reverting back to the scenic subject matter of the early
Weekly Reviews but without the social engineering agenda of the latter. By 1951 there were 547 picture theatres throughout the country and although the annual admission rate per head of population had fallen to seventeen (Dennis 1992) New Zealanders were nevertheless still attending the cinema in high numbers. This was the only public space where there was an occasional opportunity to glimpse New Zealand women playing sport. You had to be lucky enough to be at the cinema on one of the nights that a newsreel containing netball content was screened and they were not available for purchase. Throughout all Executive minutes of the Basketball Association from the mid-1920s through to the 1960s there are no references to coverage of the game in cinema newsreels. This does not mean that they were not aware of these rare images of women playing the game but possibly signalled a pragmatic recognition of image production over which they had absolutely no control. There is also no record in the minutes of the NZBA actually lobbying the National Film Unit to be considered for inclusion in a Weekly Review or Pictorial Parade newsreel.

**Grierson’s legacy**

Although the recommendations in Grierson’s 1940 report were never fully acted upon, his documentary ideals did reach receptive ears. In a talk Grierson gave to politicians and filmmakers, he exhorted them to not focus on a superficial representation of the country based on its scenic beauty but to “put in something about the real things you do.” (qtd. in Dennis 1981 22). He wanted films that were about people, “so we can see their faces and remember that New Zealand is not just a couple of spots on a distant map but a real place with a flash of the future in its eyes and a beat in its heart” (ibid). This focus on people, the “flash of the future” and the “beat in its heart” can be clearly seen on screen in many of the NFU newsreel documentaries which created a vital pulse which often breaks through the cultural and political bias of the times.

**Cinema newsreel images of women playing netball**

Despite the preservation of a wide range of NFU newsreels, very little early netball footage from these cinema newsreels remains in the TVNZ and National Archives. Although it is impossible to know how much footage has been lost, in all likelihood very little was filmed. To put it in perspective, less than five minutes of newsreel images of women playing their national sport is now preserved in the National Film Archive for the years 1941 - 1971. Naturally they are an important historical resource, but their value does not just lie in revealing images of the past. These ‘women’s stories’ are shaped by their genre, audience, technological capacity and Government influenced policies of the NFU at this time but they also speak beyond these narrow contexts. They are produced and directed by industry creatives in the Film Unit but who were first and foremost highly
skilled cinematographers and storytellers. Working beneath the layer of the NFU’s politically imposed social agenda, the netball newsreel stories are still able to capture the vitality of the game and provide a visual snapshot of the athletic ability of ordinary women. The following case studies are evidence of this double coding at work and also provide strong examples of the technical and creative craft skills from the era.

**Case study: No 1: Weekly Review No 246: ‘The Season Opens’, 1946**

- National Film Unit
- Location Mt Cook School, Wellington
- Single camera: 35mm silent film (for cinematic release)
- 6 camera setups
- Black and white nitrate stock
- No location sound

Coupled with the opening of the rugby season at Mt Eden in Auckland this snapshot of young women playing netball observes the official start of the winter sporting season – at a time when all sports started their winter season on the same Saturday each year. The netball season always started with a round robin tournament on the first day. This was a challenge for the volunteer administrators but a great way to launch the season and for teams to try out new combinations. The courts were always heaving with players at these tournaments because of the shortened format and the quick turnaround between games. The item is an accurate visual record of the excited clutter of young netballers on their first day of competition although the missing element is the actuality soundtrack of young women in overdrive robustly exercising their socialisation skills.

There is not an accurate record of the number of players and affiliated teams playing at this time. However, based on the figures for 1945 there would have been in the region of 1,400 teams playing netball every Saturday which does not include the extensive schoolgirl competition. This item is representative of what would have been happening in all rural and urban centres around the country on that day. School and local courts would have been very busy dealing with the steady increase of player numbers and the wide shots in this item indicate the popularity of the sport and the pressure on limited court space available.

The duration of ‘The Season Opens’ segment (including netball and rugby) is 1.56”: the netball section 44” and the rugby 1.12”. There are four separate items in the complete newsreel with a total running time of 8.25” (which is a little shorter than the conventional newsreel length of ten minutes). The other items in the newsreel are the opening of the new massage school in Dunedin, the export of primary produce to Britain described as “the Haves giving to the Have-nots”. The item following the netball piece is aimed at
recruiting “modern girls” for the newly opened Hutt Hospital with the draw card of free overalls. This pitch to ‘modern’ or ‘working’ girls is a deliberate linkage between these two news items. The term ‘working girl’ in the 1940s referred to girls working in shops, offices, factories as unskilled school leavers and were a relatively new and growing section of the New Zealand workforce.

The customary male received BBC style narrator’s voice is patronising but enthusiastic, noting that over 1000 “girls” are gathered for competition that day. A particular mention is made of the necessity for the Saturday competition to accommodate the growing numbers of players. As this was the era when New Zealand was shut down for the whole weekend, ‘working girls’ had more time for recreation. This information is visually reinforced with a posed shot of three attractive ‘working girls’ in their gym tunics, holding a basketball and smiling at the camera.

The somewhat sexualised image of the young women is the centre piece of the item and very much in the context of the times. There is no similar set up with the male rugby players in the next segment. However, there is a sense of energy and independence conveyed in the piece which is deeply appealing and radiates the good health and vitality of young New Zealander’s at play. The Mt Cook netball courts are teeming with activity and vitality. The female participants are seen to be organized, athletic and gaining considerable enjoyment from their sport which undercuts the patronisation implied in the choice of shots, framing and narration. There are a notable number of males umpiring the game which became less common in following decades. It is a rare glimpse of the back courts, the place where all over the country thousands of young New Zealand women played their sport. In comparison, the rugby game between two well-known Auckland Clubs, Marist and Grammar is filmed at Mount Eden, a specialised sports ground for male sport (not repainted school tennis courts). No explanation is required to explain who plays rugby and why they have the time to do so. The implication is that this is ‘business as usual’ for rugby and not a novelty as with netball.

**Figure 14: Analytical shot list, *Weekly Review* No: 246, 1946**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visuals</th>
<th>Narration Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sport The Season Opens" /></td>
<td><strong>Music Track:</strong> Energetic brass band music theme introduces item under the title graphic. Throughout the music drives the item at a rapid pace, matching the racy tone of the narrator. Music bed dips down and fades up around the narration segments. Overall, it sets a very hectic pace for the item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals</td>
<td>Narration Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ![Image 1](image1.jpg) | **VO Narration:** On the courts at Mt Cook School Wellington, 1000 girls meet for the basketball season’s opening day tournament. Today, throughout New Zealand..  
**Camera:** HA revealing a large number of players and spectators crammed into the relatively small area available. |
| ![Image 2](image2.jpg) | **VO Narration cont:** the winter sports open their competitions and they are coming out in force..  
**Camera:** HA of girls’ heads jostling together capturing the popularity of the game and the camaraderie of the girls meeting up at the courts on competition day. |
| ![Image 3](image3.jpg) | **VO Narration cont:** and there’s new life in the sporting world..  
**Camera:** courtside, game action. |
| ![Image 4](image4.jpg) | **VO Narration cont:** younger players are coming on and there are many new entries.  
**Camera:** courtside, game action |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visuals</th>
<th>Narration Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Visual 1](image1.png) | **VO Narration cont:** *This year basketball is going to be more popular than ever and some of the games will have to be played on Saturday mornings.*  
**Camera:** HA behind goal circle as players, unable to defend the goal, stand politely waiting for the shot to be put up, as were the rules of the day. |
| ![Visual 2](image2.png) | **VO Narration cont:** *with more shops and offices closed, working girls now have more time for recreation.*  
**Camera:** MS, slightly low angle. Three ‘working girls’ posing for the camera to confirm the story angle of the increased interest in the game. A fourth young woman just slips in the right side of the frame at the outpoint. Although posed it conveys a rare but iconic glimpse of the relaxed, easy-going New Zealand sporting women. |
| ![Visual 3](image3.png) | **VO Narration cont:** *Young New Zealanders are on the courts and fields again playing with all their familiar enthusiasm.*  
**Camera:** HA end-on of play in action, back courts.  
**Music:** fades up and provides sound bridge into second half of item focused on rugby as the other sport, ‘opening the season’. |

Two main aspects determine the overall content and pitch of this item. The first is to signal the start of winter sport by linking rugby and netball as representing the largest participation sports for males and females in New Zealand. However, the second aspect is of more interest in the way the item is pitched at the working girl by focusing on her availability for and growing interest in playing netball. In conjunction with the hospital labour shortage item, the young female demographic is represented as having economic significance in the growth of the country and assumes that her recreational life may be of interest to viewers. The overall impact of the images rises above the shaping ideologies of the time and counters the patronising sexism reflected in the narration and the posed setup. The lasting impression is one of a confident community of women actively
pursuing sport undiminished by the framing imposed by the contemporary cultural context. This could have been done knowingly by the director to portray the activities of women in a positive light that would convey their own meaning despite the patronising ‘house-style’ of the edited package. On the other hand, it could be a reflection of the cinematographer’s art, responding to the vitality of the event and capturing a not often represented visual narrative belonging to the separate sphere of women.

Case Study No 2: Pictorial Parade, ‘Basketball’s 50 Years – Canterbury wins NZ Tournament’, 1955

- National Film Unit
- Location: Hagley Park Netball Courts, Christchurch
- Total duration: 2’38”
- Single camera: 35mm silent film (for cinematic release)
- 30 separate camera setups
- Black and white nitrate stock
- No location sound

This carefully crafted short film celebrates a netball milestone and is a rarely captured slice of women’s sporting life from the Basketball Dominion tournament at the Hagley Park courts, Christchurch 1955. With the benefit of a longer segment than was usual in the Weekly Reviews, this well-constructed item of 2.26” is an excellent example of the competent visual storytelling that characterised the NFU documentary style in this era. The newsreel is made up of three stories: the first celebrating 50 years of Christchurch netball and an overview of the annual Dominion Tournament; the second (1.16”) an insight into the Otaki Health Camp funded by the public through paying an extra penny for every health stamp; the final and longest item profiling the duties of the Auckland waterfront police (4.55”).

The Canterbury netball item opens with a reconstruction of netball fifty years before and notes the rapid increase in the numbers playing the game. The final segment provides an overview and outcome of the tournament. The distinctive male narrator, who voiced nearly all NFU newsreels, uses Received Pronunciation, which even then was very distinct from an average kiwi accent. It starts off a little racy in pace and tone to match the slightly risqué reference to the change in players uniforms and immediately draws the viewers’ attention to the clothing and legs of the players. However, once the item moves into the tournament section, the tone of the narration changes to indicate the high level of competition in the sport and from this point is never undercut by the content or delivery of the narrator’s script. It creates the impression after the light-hearted setup that the sport and the women playing this sport, should be taken seriously.
In typical NFU style, there is a little vignette in the centre of the piece focusing on three little girls playing at being netballers. This widens the appeal of the story but also carries a message about the vitality of New Zealand children who are the raw resource for a prosperous future. The 1950s were permeated with the post-war resolve to create a better future for all New Zealanders and build the ‘Half-gallon, Quarter-acre, Pavlova paradise’ (Mitchell 1972) in which to bring up healthy, active children. In many guises, the stories in the *Pictorial Parades* frequently reinforced these beliefs.

**Figure 15: Analytical Shot list, Pictorial Parade 1955**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title Sequence (15” duration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Title Sequence" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Music**

*Pictorial Parade* theme: a rousing brass band marching tune

**Visuals**

The same title sequence is used for all *Pictorial Parade* newsreels. Moving images of typical NZ scenes are superimposed into each of the film frames, cut to the marching beat of the *Pictorial Parade* theme tune.

**Graphics**

‘NZ National Film Unit Presents

*Pictorial Parade*

Graphics wiped onto and off screen in vertical crawl.
**Figure 16: Introductory section (40” duration)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Music</strong></th>
<th><strong>VO Narration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Visuals</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme tune changes in pace and tone to a slightly ‘ladylike’ orchestral theme with strings predominating over the brass during the 1905 section.</td>
<td><em>This is basketball and women’s 1905 version when the game first came to New Zealand. A pleasant ladylike game for gentlewomen.</em></td>
<td>Visuals under the opening graphic: LS of upraised hands at base of frame playing for the ball to shoot at a cut-out washing basket goal slung between two posts. Camera, tilts down reveals a group of young women dressed in 1905 neck to ankle clothing, enthusiastically engaged in a re-enactment of the 9 a-side game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graphics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Basketball’s 50 years – Canterbury wins NZ tournament’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>..but that was fifty years ago. Since then it has changed considerably and that hemline has been making a beeline for the waistline.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visuals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matched action to the 1905 sequence with the ‘modern’ netballers jostling around under the hoop.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Music:**
Brass marching music continues under narration for whole of sequence.

**Narration:**
*The sport is highly organized and popular now from less than 40 teams thirty years ago, the New Zealand Basketball Association has grown to a membership of more than two thousand three hundred teams.*

*The cream of these gather in Christchurch for the 25th Dominion Tournament.*

**Visuals:**
Parade through the city and the opening of the tournament as the teams march in the street parade then line up at the courts, dressed in their netball uniforms and blazers, holding their provincial association banners. Handheld WS taken from behind the seated female dignitaries who are dressed in their best formal wear; sensible suits or heavy coats and their ‘Sunday best’ felt hats. The assembled teams and the umpires (both male and female) are lined up facing the official party.

*End of intro sequence*
**Figure 17: Main Story: variety of game coverage (1.30” duration)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music:</th>
<th>Narration:</th>
<th>Visuals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brass marching music continues under narration.</td>
<td><em>A little bit of practice to warm up and it isn’t long before the first games are underway. One of the hardest fought is that between Rotorua in dark gyms and Tauranga in grey. Rotorua goes through Tauranga’s defences to goal. Good positioning and speedy passing enable Tauranga to score successfully, but it’s Rotorua’s game.</em></td>
<td>LA CU of goal ring cuts to short WS of women practicing at goal. Cuts to courtside camera covering one end of the Tauranga/Rotorua game. As the game moves into the goal circle, the relative clutter of players of the 9 a-side game is revealed along with the lack of defensive work allowed in the circle. Cutaways of the crowd are used to cover edits. CU of scoreboard marks the end of this game sequence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main story: ii) Canterbury/Hawkes Bay pool game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music:</th>
<th>Narration:</th>
<th>Visuals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brass marching</td>
<td><em>The courts at Hagley Park were kept busy during tournament week. Prominent</em></td>
<td>Two camera setups are used to cover this short sequence: the first a slightly elevated long shot down the court from behind the goal circle and the other courtside near the top of the circle. The first set up works as an establishing shot to reveal the crowd, tents and scope of the tournament, the second to capture the action advancing the ball into the goal circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music continues</td>
<td><em>early was the Canterbury team, here defeating Hawkes Bay.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under narration.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Main Story:** Cutaway action iii) Women checking score & small girls’ vignette

**Music:**
Brass marching music continues under narration.

**Narration:**
Spectator’s keep up on results as the tourney moves toward the finals.

*The champions of tomorrow get in a little practice while the contenders for the championship of today file out on the court.*

**Visuals:**
LA 2 shot of pakeha women noting down the results pinned on the outside of the pavilion. Cuts to a LA CU 2 shot of the women then cut with a CU of a Maori woman doing the same thing—provides a quick visual shorthand to indicate the racial mix of women engaged in the sport.

The ‘little girls’ vignette is covered by one shot, slightly LA. This is a pre-arranged set up for the camera. The three little girls, around 8 years of age, are dressed in 1950s regulation homemade skirts and knitwear. The girls are practicing a throw-up. The centre child, armed with a whistle is the umpire and knows exactly what she is doing. The girls break out into laughter as they snatch at the ball.
Main Story: iv) Final game Auckland/Canterbury

Music:
Brass marching music continues under narration.

Narration
Auckland on the near side and Canterbury contest the final. Auckland’s early to the attack and carries play through to Canterbury’s goal to score.
Canterbury begins to fight back.
By halftime Canterbury takes the narrow lead with the score at 12/11.
The second half sees Canterbury’s centres and forwards combining well to build-up their score.
Accurate shooting and for Canterbury the game is in the basket.

Visuals:
Rapid cut to HA LS of the team line-up in the centre of the court for the formalities before the start of the final match. Each player with a number (1 – 9) on their backs to denote their playing positions.
The game footage is taken from two positions during the game with the camera position being changed at half-time. The first position is elevated, near one goal circle, shooting down the court to the far goal and providing good high angle coverage of the near goal. The set up in the second half is closer to mid court and not quite so elevated but once again giving good coverage of the flow of the ball down the court. There are a number of cutaways taken courtside of the seated and standing crowd and of the scoreboard. The latter used once again to visually reinforce the final score and round off the game sequence.

End of main story sequence
Music:
Background theme rises to a triumphant crescendo at the handing over of the trophy and finishes the item with a musical flourish.

Narration:
*For the victors, the New Zealand Cup presented by Mayoress McFarlane.*
*Canterbury takes it for the second year in success and for the eighth time in eleven years.*
*Team captain Murray has every reason to smile.*

Visuals:
Brief outro opens with CU on the trophy table displaying four pieces of rather humble silverware, one wooden with a carved kiwi top.
LA, MS, 3 shot of Mayoress presenting the trophy to Murray, the Canterbury Team Captain. NZBA official stands behind Mayoress. Cuts to LA, MS 2 shot of Mayoress and Murray as she receives the trophy. There is an awkward cut with a continuity overlap between the wider 3 shot and the closer 2 shot. With the non-repeatable nature of the action, the camera position was not able to be moved more than 30 degrees in the time available. However, the eye is drawn by the action of handing over the cup which lessens the impact of the shot disjunction. One assumes that the producer decided to go with this slight glitch in edit flow rather than use a cutaway right at the end of such a tight outro sequence.

End of item

Summary

Overall, the piece is shot and edited with craftsman-like care. A section of the cinema audience would have seen for the first time women playing provincial level netball with competency and this may have challenged current public perception. As with the previous example, sound-on-film stock was not used to provide actuality sound to texture the storytelling. Therefore it is a strongly visual piece with the picture edit driven by the
narration. The continuous music bed delivers a fast paced rhythm which increasingly gallops the item to its conclusion. A noteworthy aspect of the narration is how it accommodates the visual deficiencies of black and white film by deftly signposting basic information for the audience. Variations in the grey scale are used to help the audience identify the different teams through their uniforms and screen direction is noted where these colour tone variations are not able to be used.

The director would have had to carefully allocate the footage in order to cover each aspect of the story and gather sufficient cutaways to enable the editor to shape each sequence with the limited footage available. Considerable care has been taken with the set-ups used to gather the non-repeatable action such as the game footage, street march and opening and closing ceremonies. The repeatable action that is the sequences where the filmmaker has control over the action, are likewise well planned and provide richness to what would otherwise have been a formulaic overview of a sporting fixture. It takes forethought, time and planning to gather the range of shots such as those used to structure the introduction where a series of tilts are used as visual reveals. This has enabled the editor to create an opening that is eye-catching and informative and kick-starts the item with a little bit of humour, albeit 1950s style.

In many ways, this newsreel item is a fine example of a well-trained filmmaker who totally understood the genre and the medium. The ‘rules’ governing shot coverage with a single camera and limited film stock are on display here and are characteristic of the first years of television sport production. The old fashioned dictum of making sure your cutaways ‘earn their own living’ is strongly evidenced in this work. The director has an eye for the small detail and the cutaways in particular add cultural and narrative richness to the storytelling. These shots, more than the game footage, reveal the emotion, enjoyment and dedication New Zealand women had for the game at this time in our history. The director is putting into practice the advice from John Grierson the previous decade when he encouraged documentary makers to show the “real things” (qtd. in Dennis 1981 22) that we do and tell stories that reveal New Zealanders’ cultural heartbeat.

**Knowingly crafting subtext**

Australian sports historian, Marion Stell (1991) argues that women to a large extent could control what was said about them in print and on radio but not in cinema newsreels. She judged the newsreel as a powerful tool for trivialising women’s achievements for several decades as it was under the jurisdiction of men and became a receptacle for “derogatory remarks on sportswomen” (231). She particularly singles out the voice-over commentary, rather than the visual footage, as demeaning to women. She saw this trivialisation as a function of women being “put back in their ‘proper’ place” to counter the way in which
they were seen to ‘invade’ male territory in all realms of life (231). Huggins reinforces Stell’s argument with the view that newsreels “existed in a context of gendered power relationships” in that they were filmed, edited and voiced by men and therefore women’s “voices and images were transmitted almost entirely through the male gaze” (2007a 686).

The male voice-overs in the 1947 and 1955 newsreels analysed above do have strong sexist elements but these do not totally overwhelm other messages that can be read in these texts. A consideration of both items reveals a strong sense of double coding at work which seems to be deliberate on the part of the producers. Both pieces rise above rather than sink beneath their shaping formula, genre and sexist attitude of the era. That time was taken to craft each piece indicates a level of respect for the women and the game and both items still hold strong audience appeal. Despite the necessarily formulaic approach used to gather game and colour footage with limited film stock, the subtleties of the filmmaker’s art rises to the fore. What emerges is a lasting impression of young women enthusiastically engaged in the pursuit of sporting excellence in front of a knowledgeable and appreciative mixed-gender crowd. In the 1955 item, the annual showcase of the sport is revealed as well organised and competently helmed by the older women whose voluntary labour nurtured the game. In the midst of it all are the little girls, aping their elders and desperate to get out on the court as soon as they can.

**Which medium gave the sport more exposure?**

Huggins (2007b) argues that, in pre-television Britain, there was higher coverage of women’s sports in the newsreels than on radio. It would be a daunting task to gather the data, or even anecdotal evidence to be able to make that comparison for New Zealand but it is nevertheless an interesting point. Even if one extrapolates out from the five minutes of netball footage I have discovered in the archives to other women’s sport such as hockey, tennis, marching and individual female athletes competing at Empire and Olympic games, it is still minimal coverage. In all likelihood, the relationship netball associations fostered with local radio would have reached a wider range of audiences. However, this was basic information such as score and game summaries, not the full game commentaries more common in the 1960s and 70s. Any full or part-game commentaries which may have been broadcast would have gone out live to air and would never be recorded for archival purposes. The three remaining news items in the New Zealand sound archive from this era are somewhat dry and formal and are not capable of conveying the textual richness of the newsreel items. However, it is a quality not a quantity argument here and these cinema images are a lode mine of women’s socio-cultural history. As Huggins argues, newsreels “rarely in themselves changed attitudes to sport” (2007a 696) but they may have helped to construct a possible sporting identity for women, which in these examples are mainly positive. From a technical point of view
these examples also provide a glimpse of the growing expertise of single camera film production from the sideline which formed the basis of television sport coverage in the next decade.
Chapter 4: The ‘Marriage’ of Television, Sport and Netball in the 1960s

Television created visual memories for people. Prior to television people read about sports events and they went and saw sports events but that was the only memory that they could retain for the rest of their lives. Television provided another dimension to these memories. (Ron Palenski 2010)

Figure 19: 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, 1967

New Zealand versus Australia - always a dramatic clash! (TVNZ Archive)

Sport and television - a ‘Match Made in Heaven’

By the early 1960s a significant proportion of income for major sporting codes worldwide was coming from royalties and sponsorship based on their capacity to draw huge television audiences. However not all sports were able to negotiate this fiscal bounty. The sports which were deemed to be more televisual obtained inestimable advantage over those that were not. As Clarke and Clarke (1982) observe, this process of selection is not natural or inevitable and is based on certain media assumptions as to what makes “good television” (Whannel 1992 69). The selection reveals the way in which the media highlight and reinforce current ideological values about sport and about individual sports at the time. The first decade following the introduction of television in New Zealand is a good illustration of this selection process in action.
Australian sociologist, John Goldlust’s reference to television and sport as a “match made in heaven” (1987 78) has been used many times (see Rowe 1996, 1999; Boyle and Haynes 2009) to capture the importance of the symbiotic relationship between the growth of sport and television broadcasting. Following the exposure of sport in newspapers and radio, television was seen as “an attractive and potentially effective means of arousing interest and support within the general populace and thereby assisting in such proselytising endeavours” (Goldlust 1987 79). Despite the potential of the new broadcasting medium to promote individual sporting codes, there was also considerable apprehension about opening up sport to television coverage (ibid). The same turnstile-versus-the-microphone economic anxiety from the radio years persisted into the new era of television. For many sports administrators, watching sport on television represented the “very antithesis of the out-going, collectivist activity of stadium attendance” which denied top tier sport their “prime source of income” (Rowe 1996 596). The difficult terrain of negotiating rights and establishing levels of royalty payments became even more intense for major sports as television broadcasters increasingly saw the televising of live sport as an attractive option (Goldlust 1987).

**Northern hemisphere televised sport and the influence of the BBC**

The United Kingdom and the United States achieved limited television coverage of sport as early as 1939. Despite early experimentation with television at Otago University in the early 1920s however, the introduction of the new broadcasting medium in New Zealand lagged decades behind the Northern Hemisphere. During the 1930s and 1940s, radio by necessity was the main broadcast medium for sport in New Zealand. This was also true in the Northern Hemisphere where, despite the rapid growth of television coverage, radio continued to provide the major coverage of sport to a wider audience (Whannel 1992). In Britain, the BBC maintained a monopoly over sport from 1922-1955, which Whannel identifies as a “crucial factor” (1992 13) in the development of television sport before the challenge of the independent commercial broadcaster ITV. Outside broadcast of sport had been pioneered and refined by radio in Britain and the BBC provided listeners with sports results, eyewitness accounts, running commentaries and expert analysis of sports events and issues (Boyle and Haynes 2009). The immediacy of the radio outside broadcasts provided listeners with “unparalleled access to sport” (31). The lessons learned from cultivating this dedicated fan base and the power of the ‘being there’ factor of outside broadcast provided a successful production model through which to extend the scope and value of the genre on British and North American television.

Early television coverage of sport was limited by technology and inexperience. It was single-camera coverage with poor picture resolution. A ‘New York Times’ report on the NBC’s first telecast of baseball in 1939 commented on the necessity of the commentator
who “saved the day” as there was no way in which the viewer could “follow the play or tell where the ball went” (Goldlust 1987 83). At the end of the 1930s, BBC technicians were grappling with the technical challenges of covering football (soccer) and were experimenting with three camera coverage at Twickenham which they regarded as a technical coup. However the immobility of the camera gear and the time-consuming and labour intensive production processes (in comparison to radio which cost-effectively reached over 90% of the population) meant mass consumption of television was still some way off (Boyle and Haynes 2009). During the war years the BBC continued to develop its expertise in OB coverage so that when television resumed in 1946, there was a considerable level of expertise in covering events outside the studio. By the 1950s television had become the dominant broadcast medium in the Northern Hemisphere and from 1950-1965 television ownership in the US grew to 93% and 89% in the United Kingdom (Chandler 1988).

The BBC understood the power of using OB events to increase the popularity of the new broadcast medium, as the success of the 1948 coverage of the London Olympic Games revealed. The BBC selected a yearly calendar of sports events and through this developed a close association with the major sports codes. By covering major sporting events which were also major national events such as the Henley Regatta, Grand National, the (football) Cup Final and Wimbledon tennis, the BBC was able to reach into “everyday life in a new, more intimate way” (Whannel 1992 16) and cement its association with quality sport. The BBC’s traditional sporting calendar increased as some sports gained higher popularity through television coverage such as darts, snooker and show jumping. Whannel maintains that through this calendar of OB events which focused predominantly on royalty and sport, the BBC had become a “primary definer of national identity, a forger of national unity” (1992 20). This provided the broadcaster with a “patina of authoritativeness” (21) which enabled them to play a decisive role in the way in which sport was represented to the nation (ibid). The monopolistic position held by the BBC pre 1955 ITV competition meant that it was the only selector and purchaser of sporting properties. This held true initially for the state broadcaster in New Zealand. The influence of the BBC OB coverage of sport and sport’s magazine style programming provided the aspirational benchmark for television administrators and production personnel in the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC).

In contrast to the BBC public service model of broadcasting, the commercial system in the US operated on the market driven need to sell more television receivers and deliver guaranteed audiences to advertisers (Goldlust 1987 81). The televising of major league baseball, boxing and college football during the 1940s helped to launch the television industry (Harmond 1979) and by 1956 there were television sets in more than three-quarters of American homes as television became a basic domestic appliance (Goldlust
In contrast to the public service broadcasting ethics governing British television, American broadcasting was “founded on a very different set of operating principles” (Barnett 1990 73-4). The free market principles which governed the nature and the growth of the medium made it relatively risk averse and “firmly entertainment-based” using formats which were “assiduously researched and designed to appeal to mass audiences” (74). Regulating to reach diverse and minority audiences and encourage innovation did not sit well within this commercial framework.

By the 1960s, television was the most significant economic factor in American sport (McChesney 1989 63). Competition between the major broadcast networks for the ownership of football and the establishment of ‘Monday Night Football’ consolidated the sport as a “national passion” (Nicholson 2007 22) in the 1960s. This commercially competitive television model increasingly brokered a significant part of its core business around the ownership of key sports paralleled by a growth in associated commercial sponsors. The rights negotiations transacted in an almost wholly commercial market alongside the growth of professional sport were in contrast to the early reluctance of the BBC to pay rights fees. It was in the face of upcoming competition with ITV that the BBC reluctantly changed from paying a nominal facilities fee, which compensated for inconvenience such as event disruption and lost seats for camera positions. Growing tension between sports bodies and the broadcaster resulted in less major sport appearing on screen. However unlike the US commercial model, the rights fee issue was not decided by market forces but by state intervention and as television began to dominate the broadcasting market, there was more money available to secure long term contracts to the benefit of the broadcaster and the individual sport (Whannel 1992 24). Many of the tensions surrounding rights fees between individual sports and the BBC were evident, albeit to a lesser extent, in the first two decades of televised sport in New Zealand – predominantly with rugby and the horse racing industry.

**Television arrives in New Zealand at last - but can we afford it?**

Fourteen years after Britain’s post-war resumption of television services and four years after Australia, New Zealand finally entered the television era in 1960 when regional channels were phased into the four main urban areas in a one channel system. Auckland was the first to receive the new service, followed by Wellington and Christchurch in 1961 then Dunedin in 1962. The four regional channels were not networked until the end of the decade which resulted in local variation in sports coverage, as well as other programming. The sale of radio receivers had reached saturation level during the 1950s and commercial interests as well as the public were increasingly demanding the introduction of the new broadcast technology. The huge capital outlay required meant that the introduction of the new broadcasting medium could only be undertaken by the
Government. Despite the populist demand for the new visual medium, Gregory (1985) saw the government’s role of introducing television to New Zealand as much more pragmatic, based on a “general party philosophy towards the role of the state in the economy”, rather than a need to consider “the function of public service broadcasting in an open society” (40). Political media commentator, Ruth Butterworth concurs with this view and describes it as the act of a “reluctant Government” (1989 181). This echoes the 1920s when radio was also reluctantly adopted and then rigorously controlled. Both radio and television were funded by a licence fee which was set by the Government. In contrast to the Reithian model of public service broadcasting a hybrid funding system was implemented from the start as politicians saw the need to supplement the licence fee to include commercial revenue (Farnsworth 1992 190).

New Zealand television history has been shaped, according to Horrocks (2004) by “a number of interacting forces, with social needs and cultural ambitions often in conflict with economic pressure, technological changes and political priorities” (38). Although politicians decided that the country could not afford the non-commercial model of the BBC, New Zealand fared a little better in the other important Reithian principle of public service broadcasting which insisted on the importance of keeping government “at a distance” (26). The initial structure, the NZBS, ensured that the same level of state control which characterised radio was imposed on television. The formation of the NZBC in 1961 provided television with a little more independence (ibid) although Butterworth describes this as becoming “an accepted part of the political patronage system”, reinforced by “continuing ministerial control over capital expenditure” (1989 182). There would be on-going tension over calls for a true public service channel but the split between radio’s commercial ZB and non-commercial YA and YC networks was not seen by politicians as being economically feasible for television. Although the New Zealand system retained many links with the Reithian tradition, Horrocks identifies an inevitable “dilution and muddying of its philosophy” (2004 27) which resulted in the ideals of the British Public Service model morphing into New Zealand’s compromised version of public broadcasting.

Farnsworth (1992) characterises the first decade of television as having a transition-driven focus and like radio, the bulk of investment initially went into building the network and wrestling with the technical difficulties posed by New Zealand’s geographically challenging terrain. This period of technical pioneering created an environment where broadcasting engineers were elevated to the status of ‘broadcasting heroes’ giving them a dominance in decision making in the early days of the NZBC (Gregory 1985). The high cost of establishing a television network was sometimes used, when convenient, to avoid or limit rights payments to sports bodies. Rather than dismiss this self-promotion by television of its pioneering technical past, the establishment of the
national network Butterworth sees as a prime example of “specifically Kiwi ingenuity which transformed the ‘fencing wire and sticking plaster and a hunk of four-by-two’ into symbols of national achievement and identity” (1989 183). The pattern of technological ingenuity, already in evidence in the days of radio, flourished in television which Butterworth saw as representing the “triumph of the governed over their governors” (ibid). Technical experimentation and innovation became a hallmark of New Zealand television and in a medium forever constrained by inadequate budgets it came to play a big part in the development of televised sport over the next fifty years.

**Sport on New Zealand television**

The first day of television broadcasting, Wednesday 1 June 1960, screened a mixed programme of overseas drama and documentary, local interviews and a live performance by the Howard Morrison Quartet – but no sport. However this was rectified eight days later with highlights of the All Blacks’ game against Northern Universities at Potchefstroom. The match had actually taken place during the All Black’s tour of South Africa the previous month. In anticipation of the opening of the new television service, silent film footage of the game arrived in New Zealand on 7 June, still requiring a picture edit and the addition of sound. By 7 pm on the night of the scheduled screening, the commentary and soundtrack still needed to be done but it made it to air just after 9 pm that night (Boyd-Bell 1987 76). The national sport, for males, thus claimed its place on the new broadcast medium within days of the first transmission.

Robert Boyd-Bell opens his chapter on sport in his 1987 history of television in New Zealand stating that it is a “truism to many New Zealanders that television is sport – sport is television” (135). However, he rapidly undercuts the perception of the ‘glamour’ of television and its associated technical wizardry. Sport on New Zealand television began in “string and scissors” style, constructed by “vast inexperience, very limited resources, lots of abject apologies” (135). The stand-off banning live coverage of rugby (established with radio) continued with the new broadcast medium. Horse racing also continued its ban on live race coverage. Although these were still the major sports in New Zealand this created an opportunity for a wide range of other codes to fill the gap in the television sporting schedule. As one of the founding AK TV-2 sports broadcasters, Doc (David) Williams recalls, “We covered all sport. If we did rugby one week, we didn’t do it the next. We covered everything and talked to everyone” (2007).

Butterworth argues that this early coverage of a variety of sports had the potential to erode “rugby’s primacy” but concludes that at a structural level, the way in which television framed sports, “remained solidly within the dominant equation of sport=life=male and competitive” and women’s sports were “largely ignored” (1989 184-5).
Lance Cross, already Head of Sports Broadcasting in radio (NZBS), headed the first team of television sports broadcasters, all of whom came from a radio background with no overseas television production experience. This is in contrast to the first Director of Television in the BBC, Gerald Cock, who had considerable practical experience in the field as the former head of the BBC’s outside broadcast unit for radio (Whannel 1992). The NZBS lumped radio and television sport together under the same umbrella which created friction between the producers of television sport and their radio orientated superiors in what was an intensely bureaucratic and hierarchical system (Farnsworth 1992; Day 2000). These tensions did not ease until the end of the decade when television and radio sport were restructured under separate hierarchies and a television orientated producer, Des Monaghan, was appointed in 1969 (Day 2000). The early television career of Doc Williams exemplifies the integration between television sport and radio during the 1960s. Williams started as a radio cadet in the NZBS in 1957 and moved from his role as a general radio announcer on the 2YA and 2YC networks into television sports production. His first job was to produce a 30-minute sports magazine programme, *Sportsroom*, on AK TV-2, which went live to air at 8pm every Monday night. Like many others, he was required to work two days in radio and three days in television every week. For Williams, television was a welcome change from what he saw as the cloying bureaucracy of radio:

> What television sport did that radio hadn't done – radio [was] always controlled by ‘suits’. State broadcasting had lots of ‘suits’, supervisors, they ran the show but there were never really hands on. Television was different, it has a much more creative side than radio and the whole thing had to be more hands on. There were no suits and ties but shorts, sandals, long hair. It was more creative - thespian. So you had directors, producers, so if you were in charge of a programme and you had a production to do - much more creative. The ‘suits’ guided the policy but didn’t make the programmes. Lance Cross had nothing to do with television, never made or participated in programmes and another [creative] side grew in TV which was not how radio was (Williams 2007).

**Technical challenge and tight budgets**

In the first year of television, NZBC did not have the money to purchase the highly expensive broadcast equipment required to film on multi-cameras outside the studio. Prior to the delivery of the first OB van, all footage was gathered on silent film. The film magazines were changed during a lull in play and then edited into a highlights package to represent an overall impression of a full game. Keith Quinn remembers the pressure of working under such strict budget and time limitations; “sometimes a whole rugby match would be 4 minutes highlights of film cut together hastily on a Sunday after a Saturday game and played on a Monday night” (Quinn in Bates 2010). It was directed by one of the four ‘sports officers’ whom Cross had appointed in each regional centre and they also did the commentary. Within an environment of lack, in both expertise and equipment, coverage of actual sports events began in a “very hesitant way” (Boyd-Bell 1987 136).
The early sports broadcasters in New Zealand such as Bill McCarthy and Doc Williams were influenced by overseas televised sport, particularly the BBC’s main sports programmes: the mid-week *Sportsview* (1954); Saturday evening highlight package, *Sports Special* (1956); and the most well-known, the Saturday afternoon sports magazine, *Grandstand* (1958). In New Zealand most of the early filming outside the studio was done by cameramen from the NFU (Day 2000) and Doc Williams remembers with gratitude the lessons learned from practitioners who came into television from the film industry and from live theatre:

Our radio experience allowed us to be able to interview and with that background we were able to learn fast. They taught us very quickly the basic grammar of film making. The basic rules were the three camera coverage, the same rules with one or with three cameras. Everything live, the three camera principle: wide shot, mid shot, close-up…To get each shot [we] had a hand wound bolex with fixed lenses, had to rack the lens over. Everything on film in this period. There was no VT (videotape machine) to record for television that was a very elaborate telecine6 process where the image had to be recorded off the TV screen. Everything [was] shot on 16mm film. Then sound effects added. Until 1963 when we got the first arriflex, [we] had 400 foot magazine which had to be changed. We had magnetic sound stripe sound-on-film. It was called a ‘hot process’, it was soft film that was able to go through processing quickly (Williams 2007).

The film expenses were very tightly controlled, as is made clear by Day’s (2000) example of the Kennards, one of the few stringer teams working for the NZBC at this time, who were expected to shoot not less than three items on every 100 feet of film. This pattern of austerity is echoed in the recollections of early sports broadcaster Bill McCarthy, who had begun his career in radio in 1961 and moved into television in 1962 when it started in Dunedin. He remembers the ‘make-do’ discipline required to cover sports games with one silent, monochrome camera:

Going out to a rugby game, or any sport on a Saturday would entail two reels of film and a roll of film was, ohh two and a half minutes. So we would shoot two rolls of film so that was the coverage of a rugby game..then]we just dubbed in some old [sound]effects and did a Voice Over commentary and showed the odd try..the equipment wasn’t there, the airtime wasn’t there (McCarthy 2007).

In the late sixties and into the early seventies, some sport was still being covered by film, but by this time the equipment had been updated to sound-on-film cameras. However the fundamental law was that “rugby would take precedence over everything” (McCarthy 2007). In 1968, McCarthy remembers going to the Hawkes Bay every weekend to cover Ranfurly Shield games with a sound-on-film camera, even though there had been mobile OB technology in the country since 1961. The rigid budgets still remained and only two

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6 All sport that wasn’t televised live from the OB van was still shot on film in the early 1960s in New Zealand. Delayed transmission of sport shot on film had to first go through the telecine process which transferred the film footage to a television signal. Telecine accommodated the frames per second difference between film (24 frames per second) and television (30/25 frames per second) which prevented flickering. Telecine also had to be used to accommodate the different television delivery systems used internationally such as the American NTSC format.
440 foot rolls (10 minutes each) were allocated for an 80 minute rugby match. The
director/reporter had to guess the flow of play and stop/start the camera to preserve film
and cut down on the editing time. Back at the studio, after the film was processed, it was
edited and the commentary was usually delivered live as the film went to air. As
McCarthy remembers, this was “...always a bit risky...I’d write my script and they’d run
the film and I’d be sitting in the booth watching it with my stopwatch reading the script”
(McCarthy 2007).

Williams also covered Ranfurly Shield matches at this time and recalls the discipline of
trying to cover the game with a hand cranked film camera and limited film stock. He and
his cameraman always had an additional crew member with them whose sole job was to
change the film magazines. The early hand cranked, ‘clockwork’ Bolex had only a 100
foot magazine capacity and the lenses could not be changed during filming. The Arriflex
had a little more flexibility with 440 foot magazines. In order to give the impression of
covering a full 80-minute game with limited footage, filming stopped the second the ball
went out of play and shots of general play helped to cover the edits. But beside the sheer
physical challenges of gathering live footage, Williams also recalls the levels of
antipathy, particularly from Rugby Union and from other media, towards the new
broadcast medium of television:

You have to remember that in the early 60s rugby, apart from being on film,
basically rugby was banned on TV. None of it was live, it was all recorded. The
first live telecast was not until commercialisation really forced it on them [New
Zealand Rugby Union]. The big thing in those days, the real fear, was that TV
would take audiences away. Through the 1960s and 70s there was an anti-
newspaper slant from the scribes themselves towards television. There was a line
drawn in the sand and newspapers detested TV because we took away advertising.
They also felt that they covered sport, week in week out and we came along once
every 6 or 7 weeks and took everything and it was much more recognised. There
was a considerable degree of animosity towards us which got quite personal at
times. But in television you became so much more recognisable compared to print
and radio (Williams 2007).

The first OB Van arrives

In 1960, Ken Law, Supervising Technician NZBC OB (1961-1988), completed the
technical acceptance tests on the newly delivered PYE OB van from the UK which was
housed in a Post Office warehouse on the Wellington Wharf. In October, just before the
van was transported to Auckland a fire started by a chip heater destroyed the warehouse,
the van and the early promise of multi-camera outside production of sport in the country.
Luckily, Marconi, who supplied the OB vans in Australia, jumped at the opportunity to
get their product established in New Zealand and thus bypassed their delivery of a van to
ABC Australia. About ten months after the fire, in late 1961, a new Marconi van was
delivered from England with the ABC letters on its side, hastily painted out and replaced
with NZBC’s logo, although in certain lights the old ABC logo still showed through the
paintwork. Following acceptance tests in Wellington, the van arrived safely in Auckland and was housed in the OB Garage in Boston Road. It had a four-camera capacity but arrived with only two cameras. The other two cameras were badly needed but such equipment was expensive and in very short supply overseas so it was hard to get delivery (Law 2007). The early cameras, although “reasonably reliable” (Law 2007), were extremely heavy, weighing 90 lbs each without lenses attached. Using them off the tripod was out of the question. Cameras from the studio could be configured into the OB set up, but the size and weight of both the cameras and tripods made them enormously cumbersome and rarely worth the scheduling and the rigging effort required.

Up until 1963 all sports and in fact all OB events had to be telecast during daylight as there was no artificial lighting available. Once the lighting equipment arrived, all power cables and distribution equipment had to be manufactured by the technical department. It wasn’t until 1965 that there was the capacity to supply sufficient voltage to the OB vans for telecasts that required interior artificial lighting (Law 2007). Exterior night filming of sport using sports ground floodlights would always be difficult and only certain grounds provided a high enough luminance level for the old tube cameras to produce an acceptable picture resolution. There was also a total ban on using the vans in Rotorua because of the perceived danger to electronic equipment from the sulphur laden atmosphere.

**Recording and slow-motion replays**

Initially all outside broadcasts had to be live and couldn’t be recorded until approximately 1968/9 with the arrival of VCR (Video Cassette Recording) technology and videotape. Before New Zealand could acquire the new slow-motion replay technology an enterprising technician created the 19 second time lag required for a replay loop by ripping a hole in the Shortland Street studio wall, fed the tape around fixtures in the room then back into the VCR machine (Cameron 2008). This was not a highly reliable system but “confused the shit out of the BBC” (Cameron in Kilgallon 2012) who couldn’t work out how New Zealand had so rapidly introduced replay into their sports coverage. The first VCR machines were sizable, heavy and not transportable which meant all recording had to be done off-site in the studio. Once the VCR machines were part of the OB mix, there was the capacity for a 30-second replay which had to be manually paced to produce a slow-motion effect. There were many drawbacks to using the primitive replay slow-motion function, not the least being the notorious unreliability of the machinery which was very temperamental and regularly broke down at the wrong moment. The replay had to be controlled by the director back at the studio. As the OB director and the commentator were unable to see the replay image the studio director had to call the action through the ‘comms’. If there was an over-run of the 30 seconds capacity, the VCR
started recording over the top of existing game coverage. Unsurprisingly, it was not used a great deal and usually reserved for games that had natural pauses in play, like cricket and rugby. It was almost never used during netball coverage in the early years as the movement of the ball through the limited court area and the goal scoring pattern of the game was too fast to risk inserting a replay with no certainty that this would happen at the right time or happen at all.

Videotape became available in the late 1960s, but was very expensive so tapes were usually not archived but routinely wiped and used again to contain costs. If the OB van was not available or not allocated, all other sports coverage was still being gathered and processed on film. This meant the usual processing delays associated with film although the improved capacity of sound-on-film technology enabled interviews to be gathered which had been previously difficult to achieve. Some of the live transmissions of OB sport were preserved by recording back onto film stock. Unfortunately, there was no official archiving policy or procedure and recordings were randomly discarded on the whim of staff influenced by their personal preference. Rugby footage was nearly always saved but the lesser sports and particularly women’s sport did not survive this regular random cull (Crabtree 2011).

The First Rugby OB

In 1965 experimental coverage of rugby at Eden Park took place in a difficult environment which set the tone for contact between the national sport and the national broadcaster for the next couple of decades. The Rugby Union (NZRFU) would not allow seat space to be taken up in the terraces for the cameras. The only option allowed was on the wrong side looking into the sun. Therefore a scaffold tower had to be erected on private property outside the grounds. The Rugby Union, jealously guarding any threat to their turnstile revenue, demanded that the television crew had to police the scaffold to make sure no one used it to gain free entry to the park, but that was the least of their worries. The crew had to climb the fence on a ladder to get onto the scaffold and the weighty production equipment had to be hauled up and de-rigged the same way. To protect their gate takings, the Rugby Union opted for delayed coverage after 7 pm. This was later brought forward to after 5pm (Boyd-Bell 1987). Although the broadcasters argued that overseas experience in both the US and UK demonstrated that gate takings would not be affected and would be offset with rights payments, the Rugby Union remained unconvinced. It was not cost effective to have the only OB van in the area tied up with deferred coverage which hogged the technology at the expense of other sports. The other argument was that the NZBC and the NZRFU had a “duty to the public to present the sport on television” (137) but this also failed to move the Rugby Union. Slowly, the NZRFU allowed a mix of deferred and live games, but the latter had to be on
a “no pre-announcement’ agreement so people in the local area did not know if the match would be televised live. This was a nonsense, as locals could see when the camera scaffolds were being erected at Eden or Lancaster Park or Carisbrook for example and the media made educated guesses as to the live coverage. The irony was that New Zealand audiences saw live rugby on New Zealand television via satellite in 1971 from Cardiff Arms Park before they were able to watch games televised live in their own country (138).

**OB Coverage of Netball**

The coverage of netball games during the sixties was basic, often because of technical necessity rather than a lack of regard for women’s sport. If the OB van was not allocated for live transmission, footage was gathered on a silent film camera initially and then sound-on-film from the late sixties. These cameras allowed pre or post-game interviews to be shot for news bulletins or sports roundup magazine-style programmes. All netball games were still being played outdoors in all extremes of weather when all other outdoor sport was cancelled. This created considerable technical challenges for OB crews and their equipment. Rather than be set up in an elevated midway position which became the master shot location for later netball OBs, the often used option was to set up the camera down one end of the court in an elevated position. Sometimes the tripod and camera were set up on the roof of a van or in a temporary stand if this was constructed for a tournament (very few netball venues had permanent spectator stands around their main court). This long shot through the court was only possible because of the zoom lens on the camera. With a minimum of panning, this camera position gave good coverage through the court to reveal the positional play on and off the ball and also provided a strong visual representation of the speed of the ball through the court. Interestingly, this camera position, shot high from the corner of the court, did not start to be used again regularly until SKY television gained the rights to cover the 2007 Netball World Championship in Auckland.

When the OB van was allocated to cover netball in the early 1960s it was usually backed up to the netball court and two cameras set up on the roof. The commentator was also located on the top of the van at a table with a monitor or set up in the back of the gear utility truck. In the latter part of the decade, scaffold towers were constructed. The conventional configuration of the scaffold was two cameras on the top level and the commentary team underneath them on the next level. When the OB van was used for the infrequent tests and representative matches there was the capacity to use three to four cameras once the vans were fully commissioned. In this circumstance, netball was usually covered with three cameras at the most: two high gathering the master wide and master mid shots and one near the centre at court level. This camera, on a tripod with castor base,
was very heavy and could only move a few metres either way on a flat surface but certainly couldn’t be moved quickly (Law 2007). This conventional OB three-camera configuration was known in the business as the ‘belt and braces – safety first’ rule of game coverage. This ensured the two elevated cameras could both cover the master shot if required, early electronics not being as reliable as they are now (although this configuration still remains for coverage purposes). The courtside camera gathered mid shots and tighter detail of the players and could be turned to gather crowd shots to contribute to the storytelling element of the game event.

The layout of netball courts, with narrow sidelines and high fencing posed considerable difficulties for OB requirements which meant “there was hardly enough room for spectators as well as the cameras and scaffold” (Law 2007). This was not a problem when games were not being played on the next court but coverage of club games when all courts were in use posed considerable problems. Sometimes the scaffold had to be built outside the fence, but as netball rarely had ownership of the courts they played on, it could not control the layout. Law (2007) remembers Auckland’s Windmill Road courts as being particularly difficult in this regard.

Doc Williams recalls that when television first started covering netball, it was a “learning experience for everyone” (2007). Sports bodies were only used to having the press at the venues so found it hard to accept television’s space and access requirements in order to cover just one match. Williams remembers the shock of the officials when the television crew arrived in the OB van to cover the first telecast of club netball at Windmill Road, Auckland in 1962:

The first telecast I did of women’s netball was a club game, winter of 1962, Windmill Road. It was amazing. We arrived with the huge van, asked where the game was to be played. It was to be on Court 1, but no one understood about what was required for television in those days. They said, “You can’t park your van on Court 2, we have games scheduled there”. It was a whole learning experience for everyone. A lot of the old sporting bodies couldn’t accept what we needed for television they were only used to press reporters being there. I did the commentary with Marion Smith. It was a club match and it was really difficult to learn the ladies’ names and learn what they looked like before they went on the court because the bibs only had their playing positions on them, no names. We asked them to change and have numbers instead of positions but that was sacrosanct - couldn’t do that! This was the first netball match I ever did. We sat there in terrible facilities. Had a monitor, usually the sun was shining on it so you couldn't see the players. That was a great frustration. We began to cover regular netball games, this was before networking. When we went to cover a game we had to educate people, it was a learning process with the sports bodies (Williams 2007).

Rob Crabtree, who like Doc Williams started in radio and moved to television in 1965, got his first sports commentary covering netball at Hataitai Park in Wellington circa 1967/68. Young sports reporters had to do their apprenticeship producing stories for magazine and sports news items before being allowed to move into game commentary. As a relatively junior member of the NZBC sports team, he got his break to cover a live
game due to a decision that was indicative of the lack of regard for women’s sport in television at the time: “Crabtree, you can do the netball; we are not going near women’s sport” (Crabtree 2011). Crabtree was happy to take up the challenge as he wanted to do a television game commentary and he felt he knew a little about netball as his sister was a Hutt Valley netball representative. He remembers the attitude in the sports room at the time towards netball as “a lack of interest as none of the guys knew the game very well” and that up until then the game was considered “too fast to follow with cameras so it took a long time for [television] to go with it”. His first experience at a netball OB turned out to be a bit of a challenge, “the OB was a major. [We] had to build a tower to get above the court. It was a horrible day in Wellington. I can remember sitting there, trying to do the game and thinking, we are going to get blown off here” (Crabtree 2011).

The southern netball OB – not for the faint hearted!

Wellington was not the only challenging venue for OB crews. Covering netball at the Hagley Park courts in Christchurch is still a vivid memory for technicians who worked in OB during the sixties. Cameraman Geoff Clements (2007) remembers well the “egregious southerly” that blew through the Hagley Park courts, possibly only offset on the days when Canterbury representative Joan Harnett was playing, “lovely, wonderful looks and a great player”. Graham Veitch also has his first time on a netball OB in Christchurch indelibly etched on his memory:

Picture the day; 4 degrees at the Hagley courts, sleetng, appalling. God it was awful...we were frozen in the truck. The poor cameramen - you had to chip the ice off them, it was so bloody cold, it was terrible (Veitch 2007).

There were a lot of relieved OB camera operators and technicians in Chch TV-3 when netball made the welcome move into indoor stadia in the 1980s.

Netball’s first negotiations with television

At this early stage there was limited understanding of how this new broadcasting medium could have strong relevance to sport and to women’s sport in particular, habitually sidelined in print and radio by the national preoccupation with rugby union and horse racing. Despite this, netball not only wanted to be a part of this new broadcast medium, they felt they had a right to be included as a major New Zealand sport, even if it was played only by women. Anticipating this new avenue of possible exposure for their game, New Zealand netball officials had canvassed colleagues in Australia and England about their experiences dealing with television. English netball found their contact with television placed considerable demands on their volunteer workforce and they had to appoint a paid liaison officer to work with the television officials. They also advised that checks should be in place to ensure that all games televised were of the highest quality possible, that all control should be from national level and that no game should be
televised without the prior approval of the national body (NZBA minutes 6 March 1961). Their final piece of advice was that the “financial aspect should be watched” (ibid) referring to the possibility of an income stream from sports rights in the future. As it turned out, this was to be a long watch.

The NZBA adopted most of this advice and appointed a member of their Executive, Miss Doreen Brown, as their Publicity Officer. Early in 1961 NZBS approached netball to inquire if they wished to meet to discuss the possibility of their sport providing access to the Broadcasting Service to gather game footage for inclusion in television news. Brown met with Gilbert Stringer and Tahu Shankland in what she found to be a “most friendly” meeting in which the television executives “stated the position fairly” (NZBA minutes 7 June 1961). The NZBS wanted free access to gather news footage, the same as that granted to the Press. They agreed to pay for the seat the stringer cameraman would occupy during a game if a gate fee was being charged. They also indicated that once they had more camera equipment they intended to make a sports magazine programme which would possibly appear two or three times a week. There was the possibility that netball stories of 4-6 minutes duration may get included once a week or possibly only once a month. This proposal was not overly generous in terms of screen time but it was indicative of a more democratic approach which typified this early phase of sports programming.

Up until this time all news and sports footage had been shot and processed on film so the concept of ‘live’ coverage in a non-film medium often needed some explanation to sports administrators. Shankland and Stringer assured Miss Brown that there would be no difference in the quality if a game was telecast direct or delayed (NZBA minutes 7 June 1961). Then they laid down the financial ground rules. Netball could not expect financial remuneration from this early association between sport and television. They emphasized that at present there was only one mobile television van in New Zealand which had cost £35,000 to purchase and required between 11-13 people to operate. They still required further equipment in order to expand the current system and because of these huge expenses they could not possibly talk about any rights being paid to the sport. Netball didn’t have a great deal to lose as it had never received a rights income from radio so the Executive decided that television would be granted free access “in the meantime on the same basis as that accorded to the Press” (NZBA Annual Report 31 March 1962).

By 1962, buoyed by the fact that there was now an OB van operating in Auckland, netball negotiated with Lance Cross, Supervisor of Sports Broadcast NZBC, to obtain interviews or have parts of games televised during the annual Dominion Tournament. Lance Cross was the first television executive to negotiate sports events in the country. He had a personal interest in rugby league, rowing, rugby and athletics with contacts in other sports
such as men’s indoor basketball. Cross’ main interest, according to Law (2007), was Radio NZ sports coverage with only a “passing thought for TV coverage”. However, Cross did seem inclined to assist netball to improve their television exposure, albeit in a very limited way and his patronage of the sport was greatly appreciated by the netball administration at the time (McCann 2003).

Once the two OB vans came into operation in Christchurch and Wellington in 1963, a tentative discussion on rights began with a starting bid of £20 per game payable to the national body not the regional associations. Coverage of games would depend on their location and the availability of the OB vans. The national tournament in Rotorua that year, for example, could not be telecast live as a signal could not be relayed to Auckland but would be shot on film for broadcast at a later date. No copies of any film footage could be supplied to NZBA for their own archival or training purposes. NZBC also agreed to try and obtain footage of the English tour that year for showing in New Zealand but once again could not supply copies. Moving images were still a scarce commodity.

By the beginning of 1963, the four main television centres were servicing the one channel and about fifty percent of the population was believed to have access to a reasonable signal (Boyd-Bell 1985). With an injection of development capital following the 1963 general election, the NZBC embarked on a period of expansion, building four new transmitters, increased studio facilities and made a start on the Avalon Centre site. In a more financially secure environment and in a period of rapid growth, Lance Cross met with the NZBA to further refine organisational, technical and financial details in NZBC’s relationship with the sport. Provision needed to be made to provide a camera position about 30 feet from the court for major games. He also requested that the local associations should liaise with their local TV station if good games were coming up so they could advertise it as a coming attraction for Saturday television. He also suggested following the practice in other sports to ‘stack’ teams with a selection of players to make sure that the standard of play was as high as possible and put the sport in a good light (NZBA minutes 23 April 1964). But the main topic at this time was initiating discussion of a rights fee.

**Television rights versus the turnstile**

Dominant male sporting codes had gradually commercialised through the growth of spectatorship at the live event which provided their economic base. It was therefore understandable that sports which charged spectators for entry regarded television with some nervousness (Rowe 1995). Television rights fees were primarily assessed on purchasing the right of access to a venue and a calculation of audience size based on the revenue returns from paid spectatorship. This is an economic model which had never been relevant for netball where the game was played at venues owned by local bodies or
schools. These venues were unsuitable for or devoid of grandstand seating and there was often a local Council ban on charging an admission fee which NZBA President at the time Joyce McCann still remembers with frustration:

We couldn't get 'gates', we were always on public, well Council grounds. They [local Councils] would only let us charge for national tournament, once a year...In those early days we had the biggest number of players, we had more players playing than rugby and we kept pushing this, that we had the numbers, but we couldn't get the gates because we didn't have the facilities [ie. turnstiles] to get people in (McCann 2003).

The initial rights deal offered to netball was a facilities fee flat rate of £20 covering the right to telexcast and the right to take equipment for this purpose into the venue. The second was a programme fee calculated to compensate for any loss in gate money. As there was no other formula for assessing the ‘worth’ of a sport other than the gate takings, television decided to pay netball a nominal programme fee of £10 per match when no gate was charged. If there was a gate charge, the programme fee was calculated on a sliding scale throughout the country based on an arbitrary assessment of the crowd size: £30 in Auckland; £20 for Wellington and Christchurch and eventually a £10 fee was negotiated for Dunedin (NZBA minutes 5 June 1964). Netball spectators at this time rarely paid to watch their own sport being played at club or representative level and the size of the player base was not regarded by broadcasting as an indicator of the potential viewing audience.

In 1963, initiated by BCNZ, the NZBA had a number of meetings with Lance Cross to establish some guiding principles regarding television coverage of netball and establish a long term working relationship. It was decided that all monies were to be payable to the NZBA and that these were to be used for educational purposes, a travelling fund and for helping minor associations in “temporary need of assistance” (NZBA minutes 1 April 1963). It was also decided that no match of an inferior quality be telexcast and that the BCNZ would have to obtain permission from the NZBA prior to telexcast. This could not be done through the local associations. An optimistic hope was expressed that one netball match a month would be telexcast throughout the winter playing season (NZBA minutes 1 April 1963). As the records reveal, this was misplaced optimism as there were still considerable limits on what television was able to technically achieve at this time. The 1963 Dominion Tournament that year in Rotorua was not able to be relayed live via the OB van back to Auckland for transmission. The BCNZ made a counter offer to record the popular North versus South game which would receive delayed coverage around the country over a number of weeks. Also at this time BCNZ made the offer to approach the BBC to inquire if they would be covering the 1963 1st World Netball Tournament and if so, the NZBC would try to obtain the films for screening. There is no record of such footage being screened on New Zealand television or preserved in the archive.
While these negotiations were taking place at the top level of the organisation, trying to politely demand to be taken into serious consideration as a major New Zealand sport, the local associations got on with the job of getting used to the needs of this new world of television. Discussions over the colour of tunics were held which would provide the best contrast for black and white television, at a time when the majority of netball uniforms were still the old fashioned dark gym tunics, accessorised with black woollen stockings, black knickers and black canvas ankle boots. Not all negotiations were that positive however. Canterbury netball, which received more coverage from their regional station, Chch TV-3, than any other regional centre in the country, were still “considerably annoyed” (NZBA minutes 5 June 1964) by the disruption to their competitions. The placement of the OB van meant that one court was out of action for the whole afternoon. They informed the NZBA that were not prepared to have television if it was going to cause such huge disruption to their playing schedule for the sake of one televised game.

Previously, Canterbury had also made a bid to claim all the rights fees for games televised from Hagley Park. They felt that co-operating with television meant “extra duties involved for already overworked officials” and felt justified in their claim not to split the fee with the NZBA. They were not completely accepting of the NZBA approach that television was a very “new thing” and there needed to be “co-operation on both sides” so that all parties could learn from the experience. The NZBA stressed that everyone had to accept the “benefits and the limitations” of working with the new broadcast medium and it appeared that so far “any basketball on television had been excellent publicity for the sport” (NZBA minutes 1 April 1963). Two years later Canterbury informed the Executive that they were not prepared to have a telecast on Saturday unless a mid-week game was also televised which would in part compensate for the disruption caused by television (NZBA minutes 11 June 1965). There appeared to be a general feeling at the time, no doubt partially influenced by regional rivalry, that Canterbury were always a bit ‘stroppy’ and parochial and could not always see the greater good for the sport by helping to promote the game through television coverage.

By 1966, the Auckland Association had reported to the NZBA Executive that despite their best efforts to work with television, they were “most concerned at their inability to get TV coverage for the match v. A.A.W.B.B.A. [All Australia Women’s Basketball Association]” (NZBA minutes 7 June 1966). They had been assured of a direct telecast but then were told that no approval for extended hours of transmission was given if the match was on a weekday afternoon. In the same year the fees were increased to Auckland £60, Wellington £50, Christchurch £40 and Dunedin £30, but this also caused concern as it had come to the notice of the Executive that “the Hockey Association received more for the same time of telecast” despite netball having considerably more registered players (NZBA minutes 7 June 1966).
The frequency of OB game coverage

During the 1960s, the number of games or parts of netball games screened on television ranged between one to five matches per year despite the continued lobbying by the NZBA to the television authorities. In 1962 there was a live telecast of Auckland versus Rotorua at the National Tournament. This was then recorded onto videotape, edited and shown the following week in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The next year, there were two more OB vans operating in Christchurch and Wellington which gave the NZBA hope that they would be able to access more game coverage in the main provincial areas. Unfortunately this did not exponentially increase the number of games covered with only one game being telecast live from Hagley Park courts in 1963. However, there was a significant increase in 1964 with five games covered, bringing in an almost impressive total of £130 in rights fees. What was less impressive was the £10 programme fee per game as no gates were able to be charged. This provided the broadcaster with an excuse to pay the most minimal fee possible. To counter this, in 1965 the NZBA instructed the local associations to try to organise a gate charge when a game was to be televised to try to at least double the £10 programme fee. Scenting a possible new income stream, the Christchurch City Council proposed to levy television a flat fee of £5 for being on their property. BCNZ’s response was to deduct this cost from the fees payable to NZBA and pay it to the Christchurch City Council. The NZBA were never going to improve their revenue stream through broadcasting rights when continually caught in the middle of such financially reductive negotiations.

By 1965 the NZBA were still stoutly battling to increase the amount of game time on television and they particularly wanted full games to be screened, rather than the last ten or twenty minutes of a match. They also made a direct request to NZBC Director of Sport, Lance Cross to have full radio commentaries of games to compensate for the lack of full games on television. Cross informed the NZBA that this was not a feasible option as “it had been proved that Basketball and Indoor Basketball were too fast for direct commentary” (NZBA minutes 6 September 1965). In 1968, only one game was screened in the whole year, netting a total income from sports rights of $80, half of which went back to the Canterbury Association and the other $40 to pay the court usage fee charged by the Christchurch City Council. This provided the NZBA with no income from television revenue that year for the Education Fund to support coaching and the national team. The issue of local Councils charging sports bodies and/or television a fee for using their grounds when televising matches created a slight furore. The Government Auditor instructed the NZBC not to pay these fees and advised sports bodies to also consider withholding payment (NZBA minutes 1 May1967).
The Executive were pinning their hopes on the upcoming tour of the Australian team in 1969 to secure better television coverage and lobbied all associations to start a letter writing campaign to the NZBC. For the first time there was live radio coverage of both test matches and both games in Auckland and Wellington were telecast live. However NZBA’s negotiations to have these two games replayed throughout New Zealand (as there was no microwave link yet uniting the signal for the whole country) failed and only highlight packages were to be replayed in other parts of New Zealand. The Executive asked their members to write to the NZBC as though unaware of this arrangement and to “bring to the notice of NZBC the wide interest which is taken in Basketball on a National basis and that we have many, many followers and supporters of the sport throughout New Zealand” (NZBA minutes 7 July 1969). The Executive felt that if NZBC were inundated with requests at this time, even though the present negotiation had failed, it could provide “some ground on which to barter with them for future filming of any Test which may be held” (ibid).

Although the Australian Test series had been a popular success this appeared to be at the expense of coverage at the National Tournament and the popular North versus South game which always concluded the tournament. The total income from rights for the two Australian Tests amounted to $400. The programme fee component of this payment was a total of $240 ($140 for Wellington and $100 Dunedin) which was discovered to be less than was currently paid to other sporting bodies, including minor sports. Otago received $50 of this as their share of the proceeds and made 83 cents profit on hosting the Australian test in Dunedin - not exactly a strong revenue source! Unable to obtain copies of the Australian Tour coverage from NZBC, the Executive attempted to purchase copies of the videotapes supplied to the ABC for broadcasting in Australia. The transfer of both games to ‘ordinary film’ would have cost $352.82, which was prohibitive and more than the NZBA’s share of the television rights income for the whole tour, so once again a record of these games was lost. All that remains in the archive from 1969 is a highlights package of the national tournament final, analysed at the end of this chapter.

In the spirit of the times, the decade ended with a rallying cry of protest. The 1969 NZBA Annual Report recorded an uncharacteristically strongly worded statement critical of the lack of regard the national broadcaster seemed to have for netball:

> It seems we must all do everything in our power to bring to the notice of NZBC the very large following our game has...[the]Association must continue to make every endeavour to make full use of these mediums to gain the widest publicity they can – after all we can't allow rugby to “hog” too much of the limelight (NZBA Annual Report 1969).

The change in tone came from a newly energised and slightly less conservative new guard on the Executive, elected in 1968 and at the helm through the next decade. Although nervous about ever being associated with the ‘women’s lib’ movement (McCann 2003)
which was just reaching New Zealand these normally conservative but farsighted women, were nevertheless making a stand on an issue of equality. They “correctly assessed that if the sport didn’t fight for a greater share from the broadcaster and demand greater respect for the value of the game that it would be forever locked within a paternalistic relationship…and the sport would not flourish in the future.” (Henley 2006 106).

Marjorie Jenden, NZBA secretary during these years still remembers this era with a glint of pride:

We came into it at that time…and we’ve got to remember TV was struggling then coming into being, all that sort of thing and the big association that we were always presented with was rugby - a real man’s world a really, really man’s world. Everything was second or twenty-second behind rugby… we realised that we needed to be up to date with the world but no way were we prepared to be put down because we could make a cup of tea and bake a few scones, it was an excuse not to give us funding. So we had an attitude, we really did have an attitude (Jenden 2003).

Bill McCarthy, looking back on the first decade of television felt that the relative absence of female sport on screen was not considered within television circles as an “anti-woman thing”:

It was simply a matter of the resources available, we had to struggle to get a camera on the Saturday to do anything and I am sure that the philosophy was that we didn’t want to waste it on some second rate women's sport. There was no discussion that we were not going to do it, it just didn’t rank (McCarthy 2007).

1960s Case Studies

The two games analysed in this section are the only examples from the 1960s preserved in the TVNZ archive. They survived because they were shot on film and not telecast live from an OB van. The first, of the 1967 2nd World Tournament was shot in Perth, Australia, but was transferred to videotape and screened at a later date on New Zealand television in a sports magazine programme. The second is the final match between Canterbury and Wellington at the 1969 National Tournament held that year in Wanganui. This was edited into a highlights package of just under five minute’s duration and was screened in the sports magazine programme, Sportsview (No. 35). The actual transmission dates for both are unknown.

Case Study No 1: 2nd World Basketball Tournament, 1967

- Location: Matthews Centre, Perth, Western Australia.
- Last 10 minutes of final between Australia and New Zealand.
- Continuous game coverage shot on single, fixed position, film camera.
- No post production edit within the game extract (but only last quarter of game screened).
### Figure 20: Select Storyboard, 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, Australia, 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Frame 1](image1.png) | **Location**: Perth, Australia, 1967  
**Event**: Final, 2<sup>nd</sup> Netball World Tournament  
**Teams**: NZ (black tunics) Australia (light tunics)  
**Layout**: temporary tiered seating one end and one side of court, spectators standing and seated on ground on other sidelines  
**Cams**: single, fixed position, film camera  
**Cam framing**: HA WS. Court centre (high in temporary stand)  
**Cam movement**: panning, tilting, zooming, following passage of ball continuously throughout game  
**Audio**: crowd atmos throughout, referee whistle |
| ![Frame 2](image2.png) | **Framing**: HA, WS. NZ goal circle. Framed to capture action inside and around the edge of the circle.  
**Cam movement**: tilt, zoom. Very fluid zoom and tilt to follow play into NZ circle right of cam. position.  
**Commentators**: Continuity: Peter Carter (Australian sports broadcaster)  
Comments: Audrey Franks (Australia Netball representative) |
Carter: Chris Burton falls heavily after clashing with the New Zealand captain there, Judy Blair and I think she’s been winded temporarily and there will doubtless be a delay here. We will stop the watches and its 38/32 to NZ in the 10th minute of play in the last quarter. There’ll be a delay for injury. They may take 5 minutes...

Franks: I think that these two girls were so intent on watching the ball they did not notice they were bumping into one another.

Note: The spectator filming the match with handheld film camera in centre foreground (presumably Super 8 film format).

Carter: Leila Robinson, the Jamaican referee will throw it up between them

Franks: The only good decision I think.

Carter: The only one I think at this time.

Carter: A snatch from O’Shaunngnessy and a quick pass to Carol White

Audio: crowd cheering turns to “Ohhwaa” as NZ intercept the pass in the circle.
| **Framing:** HA, LS. Australian goal end |
| **Cam movement:** pan and tilt following play into circle |
| **Action:** Australia shoot for goal |
| **Audio:** enthusiastic clapping and cheering from Australian crowd. |
| **Note:** Van in top right of frame. Film camera set up on tripod, filming the game from the left corner of the court, independently of central film camera covering the game in real time. This footage cannot be edited into the main game coverage as it crosses the line of action. This crew is gathering footage for the evening sports news bulletin. |

| **Framing:** HA, LS |
| **Cam Movement:** tilt, zoom to frame on fallen players |
| **Action:** NZ WA Judy Blair and Australian WD Lyn Davey fall after yet another collision. |
| **Commentary:** |
| **Carter:** The same two clash again, I think this has been indicative of the tension and the pressure that this game has been played under at the moment...No thought of anything untoward at all I can assure you. Both players intent on following the ball and they didn’t see each other. |
| **Audio:** as above |
**Framing:** HA, LS

**Cam. Movement:** continual subtle frame adjustments through pan, tilt and zoom to focus more closely on injury. Zoom used sparingly.

**Action:** Players getting ready to resume play.
Jamaican umpire Leila Robertson pats Davey on the back as she gets to her feet.

In the foreground, the spectator filming match with handheld film camera is in a somewhat unfortunate position to capture the higher hemlines of 1960s gym tunics.

**Audio:** sporting round of applause from crowd when players get to feet to resume play.

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**Framing:** HA. MS scoreboard cam left behind Australian goal

**Cam Movement:** Cam starts to pan right after goal scored to move back for centre pass, but makes a late decision to rapidly pan and zoom to scoreboard. Then rapidly zooms out, pans back to centre position for restart of play. Zooms to readjust framing before centre pass off. Camera op is responding to the mounting excitement of the crowd as Australians try to claw back in last minutes.

**Carter:** And Carol White has scored the goal and scored it very well, it is 39/34 and this is what the crowd likes.
Framing: HA. LS

Action: As team officials, press and photographers and the independent cameraman rush to surround the teams in a huddle, NZ break out to one side, top of frame, to perform a haka led by Mirth Solomon. Most team members appear to know the words, some a little hesitant about the actions and keep a close eye on Solomon, standing slightly in front of team, top right with the GS bib.

Carter: It looks like a haka forming up in the background and I think it’s a very elated lot of New Zealanders. The crowd will love this.

Audio: PA announcement running under commentary, excited crowd atmos continues, no microphone picking up haka audio. Crowd cheers at end of haka.

Mise-en-scène7

The scaffold seating forming the temporary stands are a typical finals configuration which the television crew had to utilise to create suitable camera positions. The master cameras are high in the main temporary stand as there were no television towers to provide a high angle shot. A temporary (manual) scoreboard is set up behind the eight deep ranks of spectator seating to camera left. The rest of the crowd are in chairs, standing or sitting on the ground close to the court, creating an intensity of crowd involvement. A television news production van with a single film camera on the roof is parked on the left far corner of the court, opposite from the master shot.

This was the last time that international teams wore the old fashioned gym tunics before changing to the modern skirt and top (much to the relief of thousands of netballers on both sides of the Tasman). The New Zealand team also played in white socks instead of their traditional black stockings. In tune with the rapid hiking up of hemlines that characterised the mini skirt revolution of the 1960s, the NZBA allowed basketballers to raise their skirts by two inches so they were 10 inches above the ground when kneeling, “provided they wore black tights” (Hawes and Barker 1999 66). The shortness of the gym tunics of both teams indicates how the conservative control of netball administrators

7Indication of direction is taken from the central camera position ie. camera left or camera right
buckled under the fashion pressure from young women influenced by ‘The Shrimp’ and Twiggy\(^8\). It was a hemline that both high angle and courtside camera placement struggled to discretely contain. Players, new to their image being mediated, were not yet fully aware of all the visual implications of their representation on a small screen. However, women involved in broadcasting at the time were painfully aware of the eagerness of some technical crew to gather these inappropriate images and keep up their own running commentary of sexist comments through the ‘comms’ link (McKelvey 2011).

Figure 21: Lack of Awareness of Hemline Versus Camera Placement

![Lack of Awareness of Hemline Versus Camera Placement](TVNZ Archive)

**Cinematography**

It takes considerable skill to cover a live game on a single film camera with no post production edit to eliminate on-screen reframing or insert cutaways to add detail. Netball does have the advantage of being played on a relatively confined area and in a controlled and largely predictable set pattern of play. On the other hand the game can move very rapidly and it does pose a problem for a single camera operator who is independently making all the framing decisions. What is noteworthy about this coverage is the very structured way in which the game is framed with very controlled use of the zoom function. The framing starts wide from the centre pass and the very slow zoom, then frame up the circle area without drawing attention to the change in focal range. Subtle

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\(^8\)Jean Shrimpton (the Shrimp) and Lesley Hornby (Twiggy) were the ‘it’ models of London’s ‘Swinging 60s’. Shrimpton is accredited with helping to launch the mini skirt and she caused a sensation in Australia in 1966, when she appeared at the Victoria Derby wearing a sheath dress 10cms above the knee. It could be noted that Twiggy’s and Shrimpton’s legs were perhaps a little thinner than those of the average netballer and action on the catwalk did not involve regularly bending down to ground level.
tilting up or down keeps the frame well composed and is barely perceptible in most instances. The use of the pan to cover the flight of the ball is the most noticeable movement and is necessary when covering a game with only one camera. Where a fast or whip pan is used, the focus is always on the on-ball play so once again it adds impact to the visual storytelling and conveys the pace of the game. The only example of slightly hurried camerawork is where a late decision is made to grab a quick shot of the scoreboard following the commentator’s call (see Figure 20, 9th frame). The smooth panning, tilting and zooming technique becomes more of a lurch-and-find as the camera operator feels pressured into grabbing the scoreboard shot before the next centre pass.

Two other cameramen are shooting the game but are both independent from each other and the central camera providing the televised version. The television sports news cameraman on the roof of the van at the left corner of the court is shooting an oblique angle through the court which is not ideal when covering the far goal circle but does capture the pace of the game. Below the main camera courtside, there is what one supposes to be an enthusiastic amateur shooting the game with a super 8 camera. He is not continuously filming, just gathering highlights of the game and freedom of movement afforded by his handheld camera allows him to join the media at the end of the game to film the huddle and the haka. He appears to often find himself in a prime position to gather shots of what must have been an excessive display of underwear during the injury breaks.

**Commentary**

Australian professional broadcaster Peter Carter is an able and confident game commentator who provides well-paced and informative continuity commentary. He is faultless in his rapid recognition of the players and reveals enough knowledge of the game for his comments to add to the viewer’s enjoyment. Unlike radio commentators, who have to describe all the visual information to the listeners as well as provide informed comment, Carter’s mode of delivery indicates a familiarity with the visual medium. His commentary observes a balance between conveying the excitement of the game and letting the pictures speak for themselves. He does not describe every action taking place, such as a shot on goal or a tied ball throw-up but lets the audience gather the visual information for themselves and then adds to it. He carefully follows de Lotbinière’s⁹ systemised guide to television commentary used by the BBC (Whannel 1992 28). This provided commentators with a professional technique through which to frame a game and provide the viewer with points of interest and identification. This

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⁹ Seymour Joly de Lotbinière pioneered outside broadcast in the BBC in both radio and television and was Director of Outside Broadcast 1935-1940. He is regarded as the architect of commentary technique and his systematised approach was laid down in the BBC Handbook (Whannel 1992 27).
included providing the score regularly, allowing moments of silence to let the pictures do
the storytelling, repeating essential information, explaining technique and building
suspense. Carter’s professional mode of address and ability to call the game in a
knowledgeable way to engage audience response is noteworthy. He regularly supplies
the names of the players, offers some concise background to them if time allows and
provides regular updates of the score. He builds the game narrative towards the climax
and links the home viewer with the experience of the live audience:

Carter: New Zealand defending brilliantly and not conceding an inch. New Zealand
ball and the crowd don’t like the decision but New Zealand go on unperturbed and
in command at the moment and deservedly so.

During an injury time, when the camera remains fixed on the injured players on the court,
he provides insight into the play leading up to the injury or uses the downtime as an
opportunity to give the viewer more background information and a running game
summary:

Carter: This has been the clash we would have expected it to be at the end of the
final week of the 2nd World tournament of the International Federation of Women’s
Basketball and Netball Associations. The first one in England in 1963, defeating
New Zealand in the dying minutes by the one goal and New Zealand who have
shown great form throughout this tournament at the moment leading 38/32 in the
last quarter.

de Lotbiniere believed that the best person to broadcast a game was not necessarily an
expert (Whannel 1992) as they may know the minutiae of game detail and tactics but may
not understand how to interpret a game for the audience. Western Australian netball
stalwart Audrey Franks knows her netball, but understandably does not fully grasp the
concept of expert commentator and her extreme inexperience shows. She often starts to
say something but doesn’t finish and Carter increasingly has to take over to keep the
commentary flowing. Netball is too fast to allow time for a slow or imprecise
observation. Franks tends to state the visually obvious without doing what she is there to
do – provide expert analysis of the game:

Franks: No, no it was disallowed (a shot at goal disallowed but no explanation of the
ruling which only viewers who had played the game would understand)

Franks: Out of bounds (stating the visually obvious when the ball goes over the backline
and is retrieved by an Australian player)

Franks: Against the (pause) Gaye Switch (an explanation of a penalty against the
Australian WA when she couldn’t remember the player’s position and gives no indication
of why the penalty had been awarded)

The following exchange between Carter and Franks exemplifies the difference between a
trained broadcaster working with a totally inexperienced game expert:

Franks: Very hard to get it in again
Carter: They can’t can they?

Franks: The crowd doesn’t accept the ruling of the umpire

Carter: I think they don’t understand it quite frankly. I think the umpires are doing a good job under extreme pressure.

Carter’s final comment is very much in the mode of the professional broadcaster of a time when it was not acceptable for a commentator to criticise umpiring decisions. The control and expertise lies firmly with the male broadcaster. This situation remained unchanged for another twenty years with the lack of opportunity for female sports journalists and reluctance of the broadcasters to help foster the skills of knowledgeable female commentators.

The significance of this archive footage

New Zealand netball historians refer to the 1967 team as the “unheralded achievers” (Woods 1992 50) because of their campaign to win back the world championship title after losing by one goal to Australia in the dying moments of the 1963 1st World Tournament. On their return to New Zealand the team were critical of the lack of media coverage for their win back home (Barker and Hawes 1999) and the preservation of only ten minutes of coverage does indicate that it is likely that the full game was not given airtime on New Zealand television.

Although this game was not actually shot in New Zealand and Australian television broadcasting had a number of years of experience ahead of New Zealand, this piece of game coverage is still useful to illustrate sound-on-tape, single camera game coverage used in both countries in the late 1960s. The knowledge that the footage would not be edited was a rigorous training ground for a camera operator and the fluidity of the coverage reveals someone behind the camera with considerable match coverage experience. Admittedly the camera has to be framed wide to provide master shot coverage of all the action on the court, but the subtle tilting, panning and zooming allows for closer contact with key moments of action in the game. Therefore, the camera frames more tightly around each goal circle and during injury breaks. The subtlety of this constant reframing draws the viewer into the game and rarely draws attention to technique. The one instance of rough camerawork adds a sense of ‘vérité’ to the coverage as it builds to the climax seconds before the final whistle.

The coverage also exemplifies standard realist conventions where continuity of screen direction is maintained through observing the 180 degree axis of action. This became more critical once additional cameras were added to the live television OB mix. The 30 degree rule was added to avoid a sense of jump cutting between visual perspectives when the camera positions were too closely aligned. Early stadium design did not factor in
camera placement and there was considerable discussion initially as to the ideal placement of the master shot camera. After trial and error, the high angle centre position rapidly became the norm although it does involve a great deal of panning (Whannel 1992) as the coverage of this game indicates. Initially this was not thought to be ideal as it intruded on the fluid realism which captured continuity of game action. The conflict between the use of wide shots and close-ups, central to multi-camera OBs, was not an issue in single camera production. However, the skilled technique of the camera operator manipulating framing changes maintains continuity while letting shots to breathe by wrapping around the action. This draws the viewer into a closer visual contact with the game, as demonstrated in the two successive frame grabs below. A continuous, wide master shot would not have provided the same level of visual engagement.

Figure 22: Closer Framing for Details of Set play

(TVNZ Archive)

Case Study No 2: New Zealand National Basketball Tournament, 1969

- Laird Park, Wanganui
- Final between Canterbury and Wellington
- Single, fixed position, film camera
- Post production editing
- Duration 4.42 minutes
- Screened in sport magazine programme, Sportsview No:35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Framing:** HA, loose MCU  
**Location:** Courtside, Laird Park, Wanganui.  
**Cam position:** Elevated. Back from left corner sideline of court  
**PTC Rob Crabtree:** This is Laird Park in Wanganui where after a week of matches the first grade title for 1969 has yet to be decided. The outcome rests on this match between Canterbury and Wellington. Canterbury, last year’s winners, are the favourites. Wellington, last year’s runners up, could cause the upset. The time will tell.  
**Audio:** Background atmos of netball crowd. |
| **Framing:** HA, VLS, shooting diagonally down court  
**Cam movement:** zoom in to frame centre pass  
**Audio:** No game commentary recorded on soundtrack. Game and crowd atmos only. Microphone likely to be close to the camera and therefore only at one end of the court.  
**Uniforms:** Wellington black gym tunics, Canterbury in modern wrap around skirts and polo shirts. Both teams wearing socks. Numbers on bibs rather than positions. |
| **Framing:** more acute HA, LS as players come closer to cam position. Good visual contact with players and clear detail of the game.  
**Audio:** crowd atmos, umpire whistle, individual voices calling “Come on Canterbury” |
**Framing:** HA, LS Canterbury goal circle

**Cam. movement:** pan left and slight zoom out to cover goal circle once ball received inside the shooting zone. This also allows the referee to be visually included in the game coverage as whistle and hand signals help to interpret rulings.

**Audio:** crowd atmos, umpire whistle and individuals calling close to microphone range.

---

**Framing:** HA, WS crowd cutaway

**Action:** crowd on temporary tiered seating, close to side of court.

**Audio:** Crowd atmos and referee whistle but referee calls unable to be picked up by court microphone.

---

**Framing:** HA, WS, shooting right through court.

**Cam/lens movement:** zoom out to cover length of court.

Acts as master shot: reveals player positions but poor visual contact of far goal circle.

**Audio:** as above

---

**Framing:** HA, VLS

**Cam/lens movement:** pan and subtle zoom to frame far goal circle. Good focus resolution but not close contact with action.

**Audio:** same as above, crowd atmos rising closer to the end of the game. There appears to be more Canterbury than Wellington supporters even if one accounts for mic placement. Occasionally there is booing when Wellington wins a penalty and loud cheers when Canterbury get one back.
Framing: HA, LS, cutaway of scoreboard.

Cam/lens movement: tilt down and zoom to end of lens range.

Action: two young boys responsible for changing the score cards on the board. There are a number of other young children clustered around this area. It seems to be the place to be and a number of cutaways to the scoreboard during the game capture the miniature sideline narrative of these children.

Audio: as above

Framing: HA, MLS Cutaway of Wellington coaching staff.

Cam/lens movement: Pan, tilt and zoom to frame cutaway.

Action: Wellington coach Dale O’Neil and team manager Pat Cullen, anxiously standing on the sideline and watching the last few minutes of the game as Wellington try to make up the goal deficit.

Audio: crowd atmos drops to almost nothing as tension mounts as Wellington try to make up goal deficit in last few minutes. Even though it must be serendipitous, the drop in crowd atmos is well matched with this cutaway to build narrative tension.

Framing: HA, VLS end of game congratulations.

Cam/lens movement: slightly clumsy zoom from the scoreboard to show the final score to refocus on teams after final whistle.

Action: both teams gather in the centre of the court, shake hands and are joined by coaches.

Audio: crowd clapping and cheering at end of game, quietens quickly once players go into huddle.

Mise-en-scène

As with the 1967 World Tournament in Perth, the creation of a centre court and grandstand seating for the tournament final is a temporary affair. As with the previous
example, the packed temporary stands and the crowd seated or standing around the edge of the court conveys the intensity of occasion. The seated officials and the trophy table at the side of the court add to the importance of the competition. A temporary scoreboard against a wooden fence at the far end of the court backs onto a suburban road. It is tended by young boys who seem to be enjoying the responsibility and they attract a small crowd of other children who come and go during the game and provide the camera operator with appealing cutaway opportunities. The elevated wide shot reveals netball games in progress on other courts in the complex and indicates the low budget production of what was a major annual occasion for the sport.

Figure 24: Elevated Camera Position Gathering Strong Images of Goal Circle Play

More up with the times, the Canterbury team is wearing the new wrap-around skirts and polo shirts. Wellington, in the traditional black gym tunic secured with a wide (gold) belt is still wearing the traditional white shirt and thin tie. Both teams are wearing white socks which gradually replaced the black stockings\textsuperscript{10} after the change to the 7 a-side game. (TVNZ Archive)

Cinematography

The camera location may have been Hobson’s Choice for the camera operator because of the way the temporary seating was constructed around the courtside. Rob Crabtree, who

\textsuperscript{10}The long black stockings, officially known as “black tights” were unique to New Zealand and Australian basketball. The last Australian team to tour England who wore tights earned the nickname “Liquorice Legs” (‘Dominion Post’ 12 July 1963)
provided the location PTC\textsuperscript{11}, recalls turning up and having to park the van, “wherever you could get a space” (2011). There was not the budget or the time to rig and de-rig a more suitable camera position. It appears that this was relatively cursory coverage of the National Tournament as resources had been put into the Australian tour earlier in the season. The shot coverage is adequate for one camera but the end-on placement visually privileges the play in the foreground closest to the camera. The range of the zoom lens records the action in the far goal circle but does not provide the same detail of the play as would a mid-placement camera. The range of cutaways, which assisted the edit, also adds variety to the game coverage and offer points of engagement for the viewer. No footage is gathered from any other position before, during, or after the game, which also suggests a very economical and pragmatic approach.

**Commentary/Audio**

Television sports reporter Rob Crabtree does a brief intro piece to camera (PTC) at the opening of the match, using a handheld microphone linked directly into the camera. Rather than shoot his PTC at court level with perhaps the teams warming up in the background, it is shot at quite an acute angle from the elevated camera position. The angle makes the asphalt court the visual context of the PTC, with a few spectators wandering past behind Crabtree. The convention of building meaningful visual context into the back of every shot, particularly when framing a PTC, is certainly not observed here. The decision not to have a visually stronger PTC fits in with the pragmatic approach to covering the game. It will do the job – just! There is no live game commentary, as this would have been scripted and delivered by the sports anchor as the edited highlights package of the game went to air. This voice over was not recorded and only the ‘A’ roll footage with the PTC and the crowd atmos was archived.

**Post production editing**

Nine edits are used to construct this highlights package for the evening news bulletin. The first edit point is after Crabtree’s PTC, which then cuts directly into the game in progress. Five edits shorten the first half of the game and a cutaway of the crowd provides a segue into the latter stages of the game. A range of cutaways such as close-ups of the scoreboard, the crowd in the stand and the Wellington coaching team help to shorten the forty minute game into the tight highlights package. A voice-over generated at the time of broadcast by the news anchor would have provided a game summary and explained details such as the teams swapping ends of the court.

\textsuperscript{11}A reporter’s ‘piece to camera’ or ‘standup’ delivered directly to the camera to introduce or wrap an item.
Summary

The 1967 highlights package, more than the 1967 World Tournament footage, is a strong visual signpost of the tenuous foothold netball claimed in television at the end of the 1960s. It would be misleading to take this to represent all OB coverage from the decade, as no multi-camera footage has survived from the era. However, the visual images of this game, shot on one camera from the corner of the court, are an indication of how much ground the sport had to make up if it was to compete with the major male codes for airtime. These really are the back courts and they are not visually appealing. The sport as well as the broadcaster needed to pay attention to their mutual need to educate and entertain their viewers if netball was to make gains in the next decade.

Figure 25: 2nd Basketball World Tournament, Perth, Australia, 1967

Teledvised netball can only improve from here!
(TVNZ Archive)
Chapter 5: 1970s – Netball’s Quest to be Part of the New Era in Television Sport Production

We set out to sharpen up our sporting look. There would have been the view then that women had to play better if they wanted to be on television.

(Doc Williams, NZBC Sports Officer)

In the early days the real hardest thing for me was the crew not really focused on understanding or learning the rules so they understood the game of netball. It was more the sort of crude comments and one-off comments that they used to make down the feed.

(Trish McKelvey, netball commentator 1967-1990)

Figure 26: *Sports Magazine*, October 1970.

NZBC sports news crew filming the New Zealand basketball team’s training run prior to departure for the 1971 World Tournament, Jamaica

(TVNZ Archive)

New technology and a new attitude

At a very practical level, Cashman believes that women’s sport suffered at the dawn of television sport because they were not well enough established to make them attractive to the new medium (1995). He sees this as a catch-22 situation where a sport cannot build its spectator support base without regular television exposure and that television
authorities were unwilling to provide them with media exposure as they were not convinced about the “drawing power of women’s sport” (185). He makes the obvious but nevertheless significant observation that almost everyone who was involved in the production of sport texts was male. Shaped by the socio-cultural conditions of the time, they had their own assumptions about the merits of male and female sport and generally felt more comfortable with the sports that they knew or played. Although nearly every male in New Zealand would have had a very close relative who played netball, this was not enough to provide evidence to television sports producers, reporters, directors and camera operators that this game had considerable audience appeal if presented in the right way. The 1970s was a decade of rapid advances in the television industry and in televised sport both locally and internationally. The 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch provided a technical and creative coming-of-age milestone in television and became a watershed in OB coverage of major sporting events. Within a period of a few months, New Zealand television started to grow in confidence and deliberately unshackle itself from insecure comparisons to international sports broadcasters, the BBC in particular. The lessons learned rapidly improved production and broadcasting of sport, which in turn attracted and engaged New Zealand viewers.

Cashman described Australian televised sport in the 1960s as being in the “honeymoon period” (1995 178) as audiences embraced the new broadcast medium but the quality was constrained by technical production and distribution issues. This situation was replicated in New Zealand but the next decade offered considerable advances on both sides of the Tasman. Four major technical developments accelerated the rapidly expanding television sports spectatorship during the 1970s: the increased capacity for satellite broadcast; the introduction of colour television; video editing; and the rapid uptake of the slow-motion replay facility. Unsurprisingly, sport was used to introduce colour television in both countries. Australia trialled colour at the Pakenham Racing Club, Victoria in 1967 but did not get full colour coverage until 1975. New Zealand used the upcoming Commonwealth Games to introduce colour in 1973. The arrival of colour television increased the level of television rights payments (Cashman 1995) as viewership increased. In New Zealand television hire companies experienced a boom period as viewers sampled the new technology without buying expensive new colour receivers.

The introduction of reliable technology, pioneered through ice hockey coverage in the Northern Hemisphere, has arguably had the most significant impact on viewer engagement with the televised text. In contrast to a live game experience, technology enabled the television spectator to view action which was too fast for the naked eye (Cashman 1995). This technique rapidly became popular and provided the commentators, as well as the viewers, with a strategically slowed point of analysis. It also influenced the way in which highlights and magazine style packages were edited and
presented, opening up the text to more detailed discussion of skills, technique and game strategy. The visual impact of this new technology increased the understanding of sport and advanced the cultural sporting capital of a broader range of viewers. It also increased the understanding of the ability of star athletes, which in turn promoted their recognition and commercial value beyond the confines of the sports arena (Andrews and Jackson 2001; Smart 2005). As part of wider social and economic changes which promoted focus on the individual rather than the collective, sport in the 1970s became a recognised “road to success and self-improvement” for the individual (Whannel 1995 182). New visual technologies such as the combination of the slow-motion and the slow-motion replay increased the intense focus on the individual and suited the entertainment focus of the rapidly broadening sports viewership.

Show us the money!

The boom in high profile sport and its rapidly maturing association with television during the 1970s increasingly drew in big business interests. This changed the nature of sport as it adjusted to the demands of commercial sponsorship and television rights. Early sponsorships were “somewhat arbitrary” (Whannel 1992 71) and often dependent on the sporting interests of top business executives. This did not assist the cause for women’s sport. In the early 1970s one third of sponsorships came from tobacco companies (71) such as Rothmans and Benson and Hedges and Rothmans were one of the first commercial sponsors of netball in New Zealand. In America the “immense profitability that sports programming offered” (McChesney 1989 63) was exploited by NBC and CBS. The huge growth of sport on American television during the decade rapidly drew advertisers who were “increasingly delirious with the sports market” (63). By the end of the 1970s, networks were desperately inventing sports programming to fill in the mid-week daytime hours and concocted “trashsports” (64) events such as celebrity playoffs and battles of network superstars. These did not always gain the ratings they were after. In the Southern Hemisphere, the most dramatic milestone in the relationship between sport, television and the new sports audience was Kerry Packer’s reinvention of cricket for his commercial Nine network. This signalled a profound change in the way in which cricket was played, watched and mediated (Cashman 1995) and the influence of this radical revamp continues to this day.

Although cricket was already hugely popular with Australian television viewers, the traditional four to five day, no-guarantee-of-a-result test format was difficult for television to accommodate. Packer’s World Series Cricket (WSC) restyled the one-day test into a product that was shamelessly market-driven and aimed at providing “excitement, tight finishes, big hitting and aggressive play” (Goldlust 1987 163). Equally aggressive was the way in which Packer went about creating this new product and there
was considerable ire from many quarters. His version of televised cricket was attacked as a blatant act of the commercial commodification of the sport by gathering audiences for the benefit of the advertisers (Lawrence and Rowe 1986). Cashman argues that Packer came to be seen as a “catalyst rather than the cause” (1995 199). WSC was only a reflection of broader media, economic and cultural changes in the rapidly burgeoning media sport marketplace at the end of the decade. That aside, Packer’s style of cricket was an audacious act of commercial and sporting piracy that was embraced by the general public and rewarded the key stake holders in the media/sport nexus.

Packer’s success in signing up players to his new league was based on the growing irritation by athletes that sport was increasingly not providing them with adequate financial reward. The issue of limited financial recompense was significantly more acute in women’s sport. To draw attention to the huge chasm between the earning potential of male and female athletes, high profile athletes such as Billie Jean King stepped up to the net. King directly challenged gender discrimination in tennis by leading the 1970 boycott on the pro tennis tour (Cahn 1994). King then highlighted women’s athletic abilities in an event which became a feminist rallying point for the decade. The enormous media attention attracted by King’s infamous match against self-styled ‘male chauvinist pig’ Bobby Riggs in 1973 proved that a female athlete at the top of her career could beat an ageing male “tennis hustler” (Cahn 1994 252). King’s systematic demolition of Riggs was watched by a television audience of 48 million and a live audience of 30,000 (251). Despite the extreme show-biz hype of the occasion, the call to fight gender inequity in sport was not lost.

**Academic response to issues of sport and gender in the 1970s**

The upheaval created by Packer’s WSC challenge and calls by activists such as Billie Jean King, characterised an era which sought not only to change traditional ways of playing and mediating sport but also questioned issues of access and equality. North American civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s did not really impact New Zealand society until the 1970s when it became more closely tied to issues within the local context. Internationally, serious feminist critiques of sport gained more prominence in the 1970s when challenges to the “hegemonic dominance of men’s sporting structure and cultural practices” (Boyle and Haynes 2009 123) gained momentum. Initially, this was given voice in the work of academics such as M. Ann Hall (1985) questioning Marxist notions of sport within the capitalist patriarchy, cultural theorist John Hargreaves (1986) and Pamela Creedon’s (1994) analysis of disproportionate levels of media treatment of men’s sport in comparison to women’s. In America, sport became increasingly politicised as a direct result of the wider social movement and was no longer protected by the altruistic hope that sport was a place of “simple, untainted entertainment
and release, a place where the rules and rituals remained constant” (Festle 1996 106). Sport had traditionally been feted as upholding notions of social justice based on the ideology of ‘fair play’ and the ‘level playing field’. The 1970s became the era where this was questioned and gender bias became the hot topic and throughout the decade women in sports “focused on a new goal: equality” (107). A significant step on the road to equal participation for women and girls in sport was achieved with the US Congress passing the Title IX of the Educational Amendments in 1972 (Coakley 2001).

Gaye Tuchman’s editorial for Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media (1978), thematically unites a series of essays around George Gerbner’s essay, ‘The Dynamics of Cultural Resistance’ (1972). Gerbner identifies the representation and marginalisation of women on American television as a form of “symbolic annihilation” and argues that scrutiny must be brought to bear on the way in which television builds a “resistance to change” (47), in this instance the resistance to the changing status of women within western society. Rather than mediating the social change that is taking place, Gerbner believed that 1970s media appeared to be “cultivating resistance and preparing for a last ditch defense” (50). He identifies three main tactics of this defence as: discrediting; isolating; and undercutting.

The process of ‘discrediting’ operates by picking “bizarre or provocative manifestations of the threatening movement” which effectively mobilises “conventional sentiment against it” (48). Gerbner provides the example of “women’s libbers” who appear on television as “hostile, aggressive, unappreciative of men and won’t listen to reason” (ibid). The adjective ‘strident’ was very overworked at this time as a descriptor of feminists. ‘Isolation’ is achieved by picking out a safe element of a movement and engineering it into its own limited place. This has the effect of marginalising women’s issues as being separate from public affairs. Although Gerbner’s primary focus was on news and television drama, the same tactic of isolation can be seen to be equally applicable to the women’s sport. For example, male sport is ‘sport’ but women’s sport implies a women-only activity which is not comparable to or as valued as male sport.

The tactic of ‘undercutting’, although in this instance more specifically focused on rape and victimisation of women in television drama, questions how the media systematically degraded women and placed them in positions of powerlessness. This early feminist criticism of television had yet to turn its attention to issues of gender equity in mediated sport. Gerbner’s identification of how the media obstructed the changing status of women in society does provide a useful touchstone against which to apply New Zealand

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12Title IX reinforced equal rights for males and females and clarified that gender could not be a basis for exclusion from or discrimination in any educational programme. This had considerable impact on female participation in college sport (Coakley 2001).
examples from the same era. The 1970s case studies in this thesis are mindful of Gerbner’s (1972) theoretical position which also influenced sport and gender analysis in American feminist literature. The tactics observed by Gerbner are identified in these case studies. However, there is a lesser degree of ‘symbolic annihilation’ for New Zealand athletes and specifically within television coverage of netball, compared to the American experience.

The expansion of television in New Zealand during the 1970s

Plans for NZBC to build a centralised purpose-built television production complex at Avalon, Lower Hutt, began in 1969 (Boyd-Bell 1987) and the country became linked into one television network. This was to have an almost instant effect on the quality and delivery of news and current affairs content which included sports news and game coverage. According to Boyd-Bell, a “new expectation of immediacy was embedded into the consciousness of television viewers” (128) which they had previously only associated with radio. For netball and indeed all sport, it became technically possible by 1971 for the whole country to see a live game at the same time, without the delay of air freighting footage from one regional centre to another. The opening of the P & T (Post and Telegraph) Warkworth Satellite receiving station in 1971 for telephone and television also had a rapid impact on the delivery of live sport, although exceptionally expensive at the time in comparison to today’s standards. By 1972 the capacity of satellite to deliver an international rugby test live eventually broke down the Rugby Union’s opposition to live telecasts within New Zealand (Day 2000). There was now the technical capability for all New Zealand teams competing internationally to be relayed live to the domestic audience. However, it was to be many years before netball would be judged to have a large enough audience to justify such a level of expense. There was also a lack of international coverage of netball on offer as many netball playing countries did not have the technical capacity or the broadcasting will to televise their own domestic games. This made purchasing footage from major international tournaments impossible or too expensive.

A new era in television sport and the ‘Des Monaghan factor’

The networking capacity established by the new microwave facility was a “major development for television and for sports television in particular” (Boyd-Bell 1987 138). With OB vans in all major centres and the microwave link, major sporting events could be filmed and screened live, delayed or mixed into a magazine format programme based on the BBC’s Sports Roundup concept (ibid). However, there was increasing tension between programme producers and senior members of the Sports Section and there was no familiarity with the “internationally understood role of the television producer as the
conceiver and arbiter of a programme and its content” (139). This meant such decisions were being made higher up the management chain by a conservative, strongly radio-orientated hierarchy. This bottleneck was only resolved in 1969, when radio and television production were finally separated and Des Monaghan, a former current affairs producer, was appointed Sports Producer. According to Bill McCarthy (2007), Monaghan challenged this situation, “he just bulldozed his way through”. Monaghan appointed three ‘Sports Officers’: Doc Williams, Keith McEwen and Bill McCarthy and set about changing the way in which sport was reported:

In 1973 there was a big breakthrough in sports broadcasting. Des Monaghan was the first head of TV sport. He was fantastic, there was this whole feeling of loosening up about TV. TV had been ‘sat on’ for nearly seven years. Hugo Maguire came from the BBC and set up the news services. Suddenly we had people come in from newspapers, so there was an exploding, an expansion in the news services. He [Monaghan] felt that the same had to be done with sport and gave it a great kick in the pants. Instead of just covering sport, it gave it a much sharper focus. He was not steeped so much in OB, he was more of a current affairs, dealing with the issues. And before he came on the scene the ‘suits’ always held us back. He was a great networker. He had a black book...he would get into that next layer up. He could ring the chairman of something and talk to them directly. Before this we would have to go through Lance Cross and he would have to write a letter first. He broke down all these barriers. We were state owned and had to mind our P’s and Q’s but Des was a bit of a pugilist. He was a shooting star for us. I thought he was great for us. We needed someone from outside to break through. He was the ‘Barrow Boy’ who saw the door ajar and took off (Williams 2007).

Bill McCarthy also felt that the winds of change in television sport production were well overdue and that Monaghan was definitely the man for the job:

Des was probably reflecting what the BBC [did]. The BBC were ten years ahead of us in everything, technical, the way they did things, you know. But Des was thinking BBC-wise and he was trying to close that gap down to one year or no years behind. He just challenged all that and said this is what we’re going to do: we are going to send a producer, a director and cameraman and a front person – four people away and a camera? Four people away the accountants said? Yes! That’s the way it works, that’s how it’s done. In Britain there’s what is called the long crew and the short crew: the long crew is 13 and the short crew is 7. That’s a union thing and they [NZBC] never got their head around that - that you had to send a producer and a director. But Monaghan just changed all that - the psyche of the management - he changed it. He tried to put current affairs into sport...he changed the sports reporting forever (McCarthy 2007).

McCarthy, although very much an admirer of Monaghan’s direct approach, did have some reservations about putting current affairs style reporting into sport at that time:

Politicians live or die on exposure, but sportspeople do not need to be grilled...it was confrontation - “you are not performing - why not?” I don’t think by and large it worked as we had to go back next week. Politicians you can go back to next week as they are paid by the taxpayer and we demand that they give an answer, but you can’t do that with sports people. But he got us out of our very shallow thinking...[from] ‘tell us about what you think’ questions to some more solid, rigorous questioning (McCarthy 2007).
Television producer Graham Veitch (2007) also saw Monaghan as an “extraordinary talent” at this time and valued the way in which Monaghan “believed sport [was] like current affairs…that sport was a story in itself, more than just a game, about stuff...going on outside the white lines. He was always looking for the story”.

**Under-resourcing of television sports production**

If the rigour that Monaghan brought to the sports section improved the content of sports programming and initiated a move away from a bland line of questioning, production was still hampered by the position of the sports department within the NZBC hierarchy - “news was first, current affairs were second and we were third…we were well down the pecking order of equipment” (McCarthy 2007). Production equipment at this time was comparatively expensive with virtually no private ownership or free-lance operators except for those still shooting on film, which made competition for in-house camera equipment highly competitive. McCarthy saw these technical and administrative obstacles as the major agenda setting influence on programme content rather than a preferential treatment for certain sports:

> A lot of what looked like the philosophy of television was really dictated by the lack of equipment, or the lack of access to equipment and that was terribly frustrating, we would almost have fist fights in the office not being able to get what we wanted to do (McCarthy 2007).

Another limitation on the amount of sport able to be screened was the policy of NZBC at this time that made a clear delineation between sport, news and entertainment. Narrowly categorised, sport was allocated two slots a week for game coverage on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. If, for example, a game of rugby was screened live during one of these slots, little time was left for any other sport. Despite the initial policy of screening a wide representation of different sports, there was still a dearth of coverage of women’s sport. This situation was exacerbated by the attitude of television ‘gate keepers’ like Des Monaghan who did not rate women’s sport highly based on what he saw as common sense rather than gender bias:

> He was not terribly impressed with it [women’s sport] but he judged everything on quality. That was one of the things that happened to women’s sport - we went out of our way to cover it. There was the feeling that you had to have something to offer to be on telly. Women’s sport was more recreational then, not like it is now. It was deemed as something you would do on your off day. In the 60s we could have gone to the bowls at Mt Eden but not in the 70s. Networking had come in and there was growing commercialism. The people in charge were starting to editorialise and have a bigger say in what we were doing. In the 60s it was how many sports have you covered in the last six months as a state broadcaster. In the 70s sports was starting to feel its teeth editorially and there were big attitude changes in the next ten years (Williams 2007).
New Zealand sport and television – learning to work together

During this time as netball was constantly jockeying for media attention, other male sports were continuing to build their relationship with television. The standoff established in the 1960s over rights and compensation for loss of gates meant that rugby and racing continued to permit only deferred coverage. Within this strained environment between the major male sporting code and the public broadcaster, netball worked hard to present itself as available and amenable to work with the new medium. Keith McEwen, a NZBC Sports Officer at this time, believed that “one of the things that helped netball to get established on television was this draconian arrangement that television had to have with the rugby union not being able to do things live” (2003). This did not mean that netball got more television time as there were still caveats in place limiting the coverage of any women’s sport, but it did give the sport a good reputation amongst the sport production teams and technical crew which provided a positive foundation for the next decade. John Knowles, like many television personnel from the time, recalled that it was a breath of fresh air to work with a sport where the players and officials were not obstructionist or at best deeply suspicious of the media. They remember with unashamed pleasure timing production updates with netball officials around morning or afternoon tea as they were always guaranteed a “good spread” (Knowles 2011).

Sporting Life: Sports magazine programmes in the Monaghan era

In 1973, sports reporters like McCarthy finally ceased to be split between the two broadcast media and became “full time TV people...and we never did radio again” (2007). The new sports team generated at least three major stories per week on a wide range of sports in a format described as ‘extended news items’. The extended news item analysed in the following appendix, is an example of this new current affairs approach to sports reporting championed by Monaghan. As part of the promotion of the upcoming Sporting Life programme created by the newly restructured NZBC sports section, a double spread article appeared in the NZ Listener (The Sporting Life 27 August 1973). Alongside the new programme, to be screened on Wednesdays, the article lists the range of the other weekly sports programmes: Billboard (Fridays), Grandstand (Saturdays) and Sunday Grandstand. The activities of the new sports section and reporters Doc Williams, Bill McCarthy and Keith McEwen are profiled under the leadership of producer Des Monaghan. Using examples from rugby and horse racing, it provided viewers with a behind-the-scenes glimpse into television production. This was in the pre-computer graphics days when the racing results and dividends had to be painted onto pieces of black card and filmed off a caption stand and action replay signs had to be cut on screen to ensure viewers were not confused by breaks in temporal continuity created in post-production editing.
There is a blokey tone to the *Listener* article, which cultivates a media profile for these men as early television celebrities and engages the reader within the circle of male sporting mateship. A sense of familiarity and accessibility is evoked by a sports fan in the street, recognising Williams and engaging him in the cultural capital of men talking sport. There is no mention of any women’s sport. The article reinforces the dedication of the sports team to bring the viewer precious pictures of male sport: “One of the harder things about this job is climbing scaffolding” Williams notes in relation to covering the All Blacks versus Juniors match from a temporary tower outside the grounds “but it is nothing to the things we had to climb in South Africa when we were covering the All Blacks in 1970...we had to climb up the back of the stand shin up guttering and hang on to bloody poles to get the material” (*NZ Listener*, 27 August, 1973). Although there were some challenging moments in early netball OBs, these never feature in the recounting of the heroic sports broadcasting narrative.

**The Commonwealth Games 1974 – a turning point for sports television**

The successful bid for the 1974 Commonwealth Games was the catalyst for NZBC to secure government funding and move into colour technology and in preparation a new Marconi colour truck was delivered in 1973.

> When the colour truck arrived it was fantastic, there were these light weight cameras. You could use them for boat anchors now because they were so heavy, but compared to the old ones they were great...all zoom lenses, no fixed lenses, they had 2 x- extenders and we thought we were in heaven (Veitch 2007).

Bill McCarthy believed that it was not just the arrival of colour that was significant but the scope of production required and the intense output of product over those ten days, “It changed everything... it forced us to do multi-camera things at a lot of venues so the skill level went up and we realised that we could do quite a lot” (2007). Graham Veitch was one of the Young Turks who was always trying to push the production boundaries in sport. He believed that the Commonwealth Games were an important catalyst for more than just the rapid adoption of new technology to keep up with the rest of the world: “it knocked a lot of the old stuffiness out of the system, because people didn’t have time to have five hundred committee meetings and technicians didn’t have time to rule the roost” (Veitch 2007).

A key player in the success of the Commonwealth Games production team was New Zealander Harold Anderson who returned home in 1972 after working as an assistant producer at the BBC on the Saturday sport programme *Grandstand*. Appointed OB producer Anderson had the experience to run a major event, mixing live and deferred coverage from the colour and monochrome vans linked to six OB locations, as well as on-site and studio interviews (Boyd-Bell 1987). As the video replay technology was off-site,
it was difficult to coordinate between the studio and OB director, and the VCRs were “about as transportable as a house” (Veitch 2007). Anderson brought video disc technology out from the UK for the duration of the Games. This was cumbersome technology which could only be used in the studio but had the capacity for 30 minutes of storage with a replay and slow-motion facility. This technology did not appear again in New Zealand until the 1990s. The fledgling BCNZ OB production team flourished under Anderson’s leadership. Graham Veitch considered Anderson:

Brought another dimension to what we did, or what had been done previously in the country...he knew what was required to put big events together...We knew how to do test matches and rugby and one off stuff but not ten days in a row (Veitch 2007).

As well as setting a legendary standard for obscene language never before heard in a BCNZ control room, ‘Harold the Fat’, as he was known because of his slender physique, was a hard task master. “He was quite rough on people in many ways [and] demanded perfection out of people. I think we all grew because of his gruffness and his demand that people perform” (Veitch 2007). Doc Williams endorsed Veitch’s evaluation of Anderson:

Harold was an interesting personality in broadcasting. Broadcasting is usually an extrovert kind of place to work, but he was an introverted type of chap but had come through the BBC school and had acquired vast knowledge of the area. Up until then it had been the usual multi-cam live telecasts with the same grammar of the three cameras – very manageable. Suddenly there were six cameras and two OBs. It was a jigsaw getting it all fitting together. So we had to have more people involved in it. He [Anderson] would terrify everyone like the Sergeant Major on the parade ground. He kept the pressure on all the time by this presence learned from the BBC. [The] big OB principles were the same but logistics much bigger. In the 70s, still in the philosophy of the three camera coverage, but it needed someone in sport to make it happen. Operations said that we were only allowed one VCR and Harold wouldn’t accept that and demanded more. Every replay machine had to have a function. Someone needed to be able to implement this. He used to infuriate a lot of people. He used to write Bill’s [McCarthy] scripts as they did in the BBC. Everything was scripted; nothing allowed to be ad-libbed. What he did was to ensure that everyone was playing the same tune as you were and everyone knew what they were doing (Williams 2007).

Despite the highly structured approach, some of the rigid formality of covering a live sporting event was broken down under Anderson’s leadership. Instead of just covering the individual events Anderson also wanted to have interviews so that the audience could have more engagement with the athletes. Despite reservations from the top about direct contact with the athletes during competition, “Ash Lewis, who was the boss said we couldn’t do this” (Veitch 2007), an ecstatic Dick Tayler was invited straight back to the studio to do an interview after winning the 10,000 metres. The country was able to prolong the pleasure of Tayler’s win and the immediacy and intimacy of such a moment provided television gold on the first day of competition.

Boyd-Bell believed that the quality and scope of the games coverage converted a new audience for televised sport as, “for the first time a New Zealand perspective and taste in
the television coverage – prediction, discussions, direction and camera work, commentaries, interviews, all had a local flavour” (1987 140). This established a pattern of television coverage through into the next decade which according to Boyd-Bell, “introduced thoroughly professional attitudes and expertise into sports television” (40). Graham Veitch (never one to under-sell a television triumph) believed the success of the Games coverage was a “marvellous time of exploration and inspiration, an extraordinary time where the television in our country grew huge” (2007). The Commonwealth Games became a dividing line between the new and the old way of covering OB sport. The production lessons learned earned New Zealand international respect and filtered through into all future OB coverage of sport in the country. The result of this influence can be glimpsed in the surviving 1970s netball footage, the most significant being the 1975 Netball World Tournament analysed in the following appendix.

The impact of the two channel system on sports production

1975 was a year of considerable confusion in broadcasting. The third Labour Government forged ahead with its intention to have a two channel system in place before the election that year, having achieved its other goal of introducing colour. The NZBC was broken down into three entities: Radio NZ, Television One and TV-2. TV-2 began broadcasting in June 1975, under-resourced and with a transmission area initially limited to Auckland and Christchurch. The bulk of the technical equipment and the gains in sports broadcasting made under Harold Anderson and Ash Lewis during the 1974 Commonwealth Games were absorbed under the mantle of Television One which took ownership of most of the major sporting properties. Foreshadowing the advent of TV3 fifteen years later, Television One had a period of monopoly during which it was able to create a strong identification with sport linked to well-established personalities such as Bill McCarthy who had fronted the Commonwealth Games coverage. This left TV-2, which renamed itself South Pacific Television (SPTV) to find its audience within a limited transmission area, with no clear identity and “very little other than staff” (Boyd-Bell 1987 140).

Television One’s proprietorial grip on mainstream sport was based in part on the rationale that they had 100% audience coverage in contrast to SPTV and that the coverage of major sporting events was in the public interest. From its position of strength, Television One was increasingly able to access international sport via satellite telecasts, usually out of the reach of SPTV. Competition between the two channels and the challenges to the old order in sports broadcasting made by private entrepreneurs such as Kerry Packer in Australia, began to be influential in New Zealand. Television One by design and SPTV out of necessity, developed a more entrepreneurial approach to give viewers wider variety in their media sport diet. This had the effect of providing many sporting codes with a
higher level of exposure on television and the opportunity to learn to work more consistently with the broadcaster. Both networks broke new ground televising challenging OB events. Television One’s eleven-camera coverage of the 1976 World Rowing Championships at Karapiro is an example of the lessons learned from the 1974 Games and the willingness to push the boundaries not considered possible at the start of the decade. Sports administrators who had sporadic contact with television in the 1960s began to get more familiar with the concept of the partnership between sport and television and increasingly saw it as a “medium to be courted and husbanded” (Boyd-Bell 1987 142). For Doc Williams, this was an exciting time to be working in sports production:

Because TV One took most of the sporting rights with it, TV-2 had to manufacture sports as it didn’t have anything to put on. This is how the International Track series was born. It ran for three years. It was not sport inspired, it was commercially inspired. It was the first time that sales and marketing worked closely with sport. It was the most exciting thing, money was no object,[and we] could have as many cameras as we needed. It was because it was commercial – ‘just do it’ (Williams 2007).

This period of energetic rivalry was short lived and the decade closed with Ian Cross, BCNZ Chairman, ending the competitive dual corporation structure between Television One and SPTV. Cross saw the duplication of equipment, plant and staff as “highly wasteful of resources” (Day 2000 245) and amalgamated the two channels within the new entity, Television New Zealand (TVNZ). This, according to Boyd-Bell, was “probably a good thing - especially for sports viewers” (1987 142). The personnel and production equipment of the two channels were combined under the leadership of Keith McEwen as Head of Sport and energy was put into achieving a higher level of recognition at national and international level.

Netball in the 1970s -a new name to match a new attitude

Despite a televised compilation of the sporting highlights from 1969 omitting netball, the new decade started on a highly optimistic note for the game. A change of executive in 1968, under the leadership of President Joyce McCann, brought with it a determination to politely refuse to accept ‘no’ for an answer, in the quest to secure higher representation on television. This was the beginning of the sport starting to move cautiously from its marginalised, volunteer base and to start competing for more media attention in a new economically-based, globally-focused sports environment (Taylor 2000).

Through the 1960s netball (still known as basketball) had been increasingly misreported or criticised in the media because of confusion with the Indoor Basketball code. Some of this confusion was based on poor journalistic practice. Some was a sexist desire to differentiate the predominantly male sport of basketball with an all-female sport. Lance Cross, Head of BCNZ Sport, had assisted netball along with other women’s sports to gain
some access to television in the sixties. However, he was also the chairman of the New Zealand Indoor Basketball Association and did not mince words in a national daily on the problem of confusion between the two codes:

‘Basketball’ had an image of girls in short skirts and black stockings which did not appeal to red blooded men. We had to call the game ‘indoor basketball’ to avoid confusion (qtd. in Hawes and Barker 1999 70).

Despite the anxiety the name confusion may have caused for ‘red blooded men’ who played Indoor Basketball, it was time for the women’s game of basketball to more clearly brand itself. This long overdue change to the English name of netball finally clarified the distinct identity of the game nationally and aligned the code with the international game. The 1960s had shown that grabbing media attention and enticing sponsorship investment in the game were dependent on creating a distinct sports product. Australia also recognised the need to become more competitive for public resources and responded by also rebranding itself with a name change from All Australia Women’s Basket Ball Association (AAWBBBA) to All Australia Netball Association (AANA) in the same year. As in New Zealand this did more than end confusion with another code. It marked the start of more dramatic changes to netball’s amateur structure and focus (Taylor 2000).

The impact of feminist debate on New Zealand netball

Netball was never a hot bed of feminist protest. The traditionally conservative organisation often had close social, administrative and personal ties with the regional rugby club management. The main influence of the second wave of feminism reached New Zealand in the early seventies and by 1973 there were dozens of ‘Women’s Lib’ groups throughout the country (Dann 1985). Following overseas precedent, these groups initially concerned themselves with crucial women’s issues such as abortion, contraception, child care, equal pay and the rights of working women. The more publicly visible protests, which regularly grabbed the attention of the New Zealand media, were the challenges to women’s exclusion from public bars, sexist advertising and women’s beauty pageants: a male won the ‘Miss Victoria’ (University) contest in 1970 and a nanny goat the Miss Otago contest the next year (Dann 1985).

The most outstanding media event staged by the Women’s Liberation Movement was the New Zealand tour of Germaine Greer in 1972. The impact of Greer’s visit had a profound effect on a small country with a single channel television network and “the enormous publicity surrounding her visit alerted many women to women’s liberation ideas for the first time” (Dann 1985 12). The Germaine Greer tour, the WLO (Women’s Liberation Organisation) and the intense media frenzy around the ‘bullshit trial’ were headline

13 During her 1972 New Zealand tour, Greer was arrested for indecency under the Police Offences Act for inciting the crowds to chant ‘fuck’ and ‘bullshit’. She was convicted and fined for using ‘fuck’ in a public
television, radio and print news. Her association with the International Women’s Liberation movement and the NZ Women’s Liberation organisation received heavy publicity alongside her views on issues on gender equity and challenges to the status quo. The term ‘Women’s Lib’ was already a familiar phrase in New Zealand in the late sixties but the 1972 Greer tour rocket launched it into wider public discourse. When it wasn’t being used as an epithet of derision or anxiety, it was placed in a context which criticised the barriers in society which limited the aspirations of women. ‘Women’s Lib’ provided women right across the ideological spectrum with a term through which they could articulate their frustrations over the rigid and confining values of New Zealand society at the time. Seemingly conservative women, whose volunteer labour had long held women’s organisations together, started to use the term guardedly in their calls for a fairer slice of the public cake.

The ‘Media Women’ pressure group, mainly made up of women journalists, came together in the early 1970s and became more focused and active at the end of the decade. This group of professionals was “the first group to apply concerted pressure to the broadcasting authorities” (Day 2000 274). They not only challenged discriminatory practice they encountered within their own careers they increasingly questioned the habitually negative representations of women by the media. With their insider knowledge of the media, this group became more outspoken and effective in the next decade (273).

At the same time women were becoming more politically active in the ranks of the Labour Party and in 1975 the Women’s Electoral Lobby (WEL) was formed. Like its Australian counterpart, WEL’s targets were to pressure for more women in politics and force politicians and government to give greater priority to women’s issues (Dann 1985).

The rejuvenation of the feminist movement in the ten years between 1965 and 1975 changed more than the lives of women directly involved in the feminist movement. The halo effect of the increasingly public nature of feminist debate provided more conservative women with a rationale for looking outside their traditional avenues of support and considering mainstream options to gain financial and public recognition for their aspirations. In netball circles the women leading the sport carefully but knowingly jammed a foot in the door which the concept of ‘Women’s Lib’ had opened for them. They would never have described themselves as feminist but they politely articulated through words and action a desire for themselves and their sport to be taken more seriously.

Buoyed by this groundswell of demand for more public recognition of the achievements of women, the NZNA successfully lobbied for support to hold a Netball World place but acquitted on the use of ‘bullshit’. Her appeal to the Supreme Court to overturn her conviction failed (McGregor 2012).
Tournament in New Zealand for the first time. The newly formed Ministry of Recreation and Sport granted an unprecedented $10,000 towards the cost. Rothmans sponsored a low level of financial support and the NZBC took a punt and televised the tournament live on national television. The televising of this event was the tentative beginnings of a more consistent, long term association between the national broadcaster and netball.

**NZBC recognises netball as a major New Zealand sport**

At the start of the decade, NZNA learned, in a very roundabout way that they been elevated in the estimates of the broadcaster to the status of a ‘major New Zealand sport’ (NZNA minutes 12 October 1970). This entitled them to more extensive radio coverage, up to four minutes a day, during the 1971 World Tournament in Jamaica. Despite almost non-existent audience research at the time, this change must have been founded on NZBC’s perceived level of public interest in the sport. Understandably the significance of this recognition was extolled in the NZNA 1970 Annual Report as a breakthrough, “At last we have been recognized not only as the major women’s sport, but as a major sport in New Zealand”. Indicative of the secondary position women’s sport held in society at the time, the Annual Report takes pains to note that netball was “very appreciative of this recognition” and sent out the rallying call to “give our full co-operation to the new media” (ibid) in order to maintain this position. Unfortunately, it was not until the next decade that this status was accorded to the sport by television but it was a necessary step on the way.

**Television coverage throughout the decade**

At the start of the 1970s the broadcaster and various sporting bodies were still thrashing out a working relationship regarding long term scheduling of televised sports fixtures. Part of the learning process for netball was to adjust their own forward planning so it was more suited to the needs of the broadcaster. Television did not cope with flexible timetabling and needed to start planning coverage of elite fixtures a season in advance. All competition schedules and representative fixtures needed to be drawn up and confirmed early so television could select from the major codes it routinely covered. However, this was not always as straightforward as it sounded and certainly didn’t guarantee game time on-air.

As the summary in Figure 27 below indicates, there was no consistency of televised coverage of games from year to year and the income from the rights was still insufficient to become a major revenue stream for the sport. However there was increased willingness from the broadcaster to cover games which they felt would be of high public interest. Obtaining television coverage from international tournaments was always a challenge. The highly anticipated footage from the 1971 World Tournament in Jamaica
was unable to be broadcast when it reached New Zealand because of the poor technical quality. The footage was so badly over exposed that the players were unrecognisable (NZNA minutes 5 April 1971). This was a deep disappointment to the NZNA and no doubt for the NZBC also as they had invested more screen time than usual to a women’s sport in the build-up to the tournament on television and during the tournament via radio.

Figure 27: Summary of Television Coverage and Rights Income from NZNA Annual Reports 1970-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$995</td>
<td>Wellington, Canterbury and Otago had television broadcasts during the past season and the Fijian game against Franklin was televised direct from Pukekohe. We were delighted to have the North/South game played at Dunedin televised on a complete South Island hook-up for this always exciting game. Snippets of netball were also featured on sports programmes and interviews with various members of the NZ Touring Party prior to their departure overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>$710</td>
<td>We thank NZBC for the arrangements they made to have television coverage of the most important games played by the NZ team and it was unfortunate that the television of these games at Jamaica was not up to standard. On the local scene Canterbury, Otago and Wellington had direct television coverage during the season and some highlights of netball were shown on most stations, but we were very disappointed not to have TV coverage from our National Tournament and will once again be trying hard to obtain this coverage for our 1972 tournament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$1,020</td>
<td>We also thank NZBC for television coverage of games in North Shore, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and for highlights at our national tournament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>We also thank NZBC for the television coverage given to our national tournament and the very good follow up by Mr B McCarthy. We were very disappointed at the exceedingly small coverage that we received throughout the season and hope the NZBC will see its way clear to giving us the fair share our major sport deserves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Auckland Canterbury and Otago received television coverage of one game and the North/South game was televised at Dunedin but unfortunately through a link fade in one of the transmitters was not broadcast throughout New Zealand. Some areas received highlights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and coverage was given of the New Zealand team’s return to Wellington. We thank NZBC for this coverage but shall be pressing for much greater coverage in 1975, particularly with the advent of the International Tournament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusion reigned in television circles during the past year resulting in poor local coverage and greatly reduced fees. However, we did receive much better local coverage of the International Tournament and some games were shown on a national hook up.

Once again local coverage of netball was small with only Wellington and Auckland receiving coverage. Because of the venue of the NZ Tournament being in Invercargill the North/South game was videotaped and shown on the following weekend. Local associations must persevere in endeavouring to get better TV coverage and must make their approaches early in the year before viewing time is completely taken up.

Television coverage locally was almost non-existent. Bad weather hampered the odd game that was shown. The North/South game was televised in shocking weather conditions but the game was a good spectator one. I thank the TV technicians at Hamilton who had to contend with a severe electrical storm blacking everything out shortly before the game was due to be played, then having hail and rain. They did a grand job in getting things back to normal in time to televise the game.

Very little of netball was seen on television in 1978. However, we did see the test between Trinidad/Tobago and New Zealand which was viewed with interest by both netballers and non-netballers alike. We have endeavoured to receive better coverage in 1979. This may not be possible due to the venues of major fixtures, but every effort will be made to obtain more coverage.
During 1979 we enjoyed increased publicity through the newspapers, television and radio. Part of this was due to the endeavours of the Executive to gain better coverage for our sport and in this respect we have more direct contact with the Media and part was due to the tremendous success of the New Zealand team in the World Championships. It was disappointing that television coverage received from Trinidad could not be shown to New Zealand television audiences. However, this will be compensated for with increased exposure with the Raro Netball Challenge series in 1980.

The on-going struggle for archive footage

As the Annual report summaries reveal, there were renewed efforts under the leadership of President Joyce McCann to increase the coverage of netball on television and to gather archive footage. At a 1973 jubilee celebration in Ashburton, the ‘old faithful’ - the 1932 tournament film - was given a much enjoyed airing. This reignited discussion by the Executive of the need to have another film made for archive purposes of the upcoming national tournament in Napier (NZNA minutes 2 July 1973). Joyce McCann approached the National Film Unit for a quote but their filming schedule demanded an application more than twelve months in advance. Quotes were obtained from Pacific Films and from an independent filmmaker, Robert Knapp, for a one hour film which ranged from $7,800 for a black and white film with commentary through to $10,500 for a colour film with commentary. Yet again, this cost was considerably beyond the resources of the NZNA and they couldn’t consider such a venture without sponsorship. Caltex New Zealand active in sports sponsorship\textsuperscript{14} at the time was approached but declined (NZNA minutes 3 September 1973).

Another issue which had been troubling the NZNA for some time was the lack of a female sports reporter. The feeling was that it was high time that print, radio and television newsrooms should open the door a little and acknowledge the need for equity. It was felt that a female reporter would have more knowledge about women’s sport and increase the awareness of women’s sport. The push for a female sports reporter was broached with Bill McCarthy, Head of NZBC Sport, who suggested that they approach other sporting bodies before putting forward a more formal proposal to the NZBC. Later

\textsuperscript{14}During the late 1960s and 1970s Caltex supported rugby in clubs and schools by providing a free film lending service to coaches. Copies of 16mm films of the All Blacks international rugby matches were available from the Caltex Head Office in downtown Auckland. It was therefore reasonable for NZNA to ask if they were interested in contributing towards a netball film for coaching and archive purposes.
in the year, with the backing of the women’s cricket and hockey associations, NZNA 
President Joyce McCann raised the matter with Lance Cross. Cross professed to be 
interested but felt that the matter had to be shelved until after the Commonwealth Games 
the following year as all the efforts of NZBC personnel were focused on this event 
(NZNA minutes 5 November 1973). It was to be many more years before this bastion of 
male control was challenged when journalist Jane Dent became a full-time sports reporter 

1970s Case Study No. 1: Television sports magazine item leading 
up to the 3rd World Tournament, Jamaica, 1970/71

At the end of 1970, the New Zealand team undertook a gruelling three-month, twenty-
three-match tour of Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, England, Barbados and Trinidad 
on its way to compete in the 3rd International Tournament in Jamaica in 1971. The extent 
of the tour and New Zealand’s defence of their title at the World Tournament aroused a 
higher level of media interest than in the past, although a great deal of this was once again 
focused on team captain Joan Harnett. One nine-minute sports magazine item, discussed 
below, screened on Sports Magazine (Thursday 29 October 1970) and the other shorter 
colour story focused on Joan Harnett, was screened a few weeks later on World of Sport 
(2 November 1970). Both indicate a growing awareness of the high level of public 
interest in the national team of the largest women’s sport in the country and in Joan 
Harnett as a leading New Zealand netballer. It was also an acknowledgement of a female 
viewership for television sport and sports magazine programmes.

‘New Zealand Basketball Team’, Sports Magazine, 29 October, 1970

This item, shot on sound-on-film, fronted by Sports Reporter, Rob Crabtree, profiles the 
soon to depart team with shots of pre-tour trials around interviews with the New Zealand 
Team Manager Dallas Knuckey, Coach Taini Jamison and Team Captain Joan Harnett. 
The heavily edited introduction opens with a training run against a scratch combination 
team. The footage is framed tightly to cover the off-ball and on-ball play of individual 
New Zealand team members which is very different from the usual style of game 
coverage. At the far end of the court, camera right, a NZBC van can be seen with a 
camera set up on the roof. This crew is gathering footage for a news bulletin in addition 
to the longer profile being shot for the mid-week magazine programme, Sports Magazine. 
Although the item is focused on a national sports team and their bid to retain their world 
title, two of the interviews quickly resort to anxiety over whether women can compete at 
international level. They fret over the debilitating effects of such an extended tour and the 
women having to play in the heat and wonder how Joan Harnett, a married woman with a 
child, would cope with being away from home for such a long time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framing:</strong> HA MLS: Joan Harnett, NZ team captain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cam/lens movement:</strong> Panning/tilting, following player not the movement of the ball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soundtrack:</strong> court atmos. Polite support from small crowd as players are trialled on court in various positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VO Narration:</strong> Generated in the studio live during transmission (not preserved). Narration would have focused on each of the players selected by the edit to point out strengths in their playing ability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framing:</strong> HA MLS: Lower body of Joan Harnett, showing her positional play and footwork around the court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cam/lens movement:</strong> Panning/tilting, following player not the movement of the ball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soundtrack:</strong> court atmos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VO Narration:</strong> As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framing:</strong> HA MLS. Positional play of Goal Shoot preparing to receive pass into the circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cam/lens movement:</strong> Panning/tilting, following player not the movement of the ball</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Soundtrack:</strong> court atmos</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VO Narration:</strong> As above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The opening footage is heavily edited to focus on the players selected for the New Zealand team rather than providing continuity of game coverage. This is the work of a skilled camera operator who gathers images away from the flow of the ball and follows the positional and off-ball movements of individuals. The setting is somewhat bleak, played most probably in a weekday afternoon when the netball courts are not in use and a small crowd, with the inevitable pushchairs and prams, are scattered around the sideline. As the game is a training run to try out positions and combinations, there is nothing at stake but the crowd responds to good pieces of play and is clearly very knowledgeable about the abilities of the players. The intro narration was generated in the studio during transmission and therefore not preserved on the archived footage. The introduction would have reinforced the details of the upcoming tour and World Tournament to be played in Jamaica and then focused on the players selected for the New Zealand team, captained by the well-known Canterbury representative, Joan Harnett.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Interview transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Interview transcript](image1.png) | **Rob Crabtree:** Well, Mrs Knuckey, this is quite a long tour. Just exactly how long is the team going to be away?  
**Dallas Knuckey:** We’ll be away 3 months approximately.  
**RC:** Now, this is also going to be a very exhausting tour and the fact that that it seems to be a long time before you actually get to the world championships?  
**DK:** It will be a long time but I don’t think it will be exhausting. We have been invited to tour Australia with just games in Sydney and then to Singapore and these games were arranged prior to going to Jamaica. And of course our English tour, all these games have been arranged so they are a build-up for our team for Jamaica. |
| ![Interview transcript](image2.png) | **RC:** You don’t think the girls will get tired or upset by these climate changes?  
**DK:** Well, we have prepared for that also and um, we hope that we can maintain this build-up. We are allowing them 10 free days in London prior to going to Jamaica and we hope that with free time they will just relax so that they can come back at it again. |
| ![Interview transcript](image3.png) | **RC:** Now, New Zealand of course are the world champions and as such every game is going to be a tough game. In these build-up games will you be using any particular combination or trying everything out?  
**DK:** So far it will be trying all combinations to find the best combination and at Jamaica there will be a few games and we are fortunate in having a few easier, as you imagine there would be, games at the beginning and then we really go into this really tough game where everyone will be after taking the cap from New Zealand. |
| ![Interview transcript](image4.png) | **RC:** Do you foresee any particular problems in Jamaica? |
The interview with the New Zealand Team Manager, Dallas Knuckey, is framed against a suburban backdrop rather than the bleak expanse of a deserted netball court. Knuckey is wearing a somewhat fearsome felt hat which is part of the team uniform worn by both Knuckey and Jamison. Maybe to accommodate the size of the hat, the framing on Knuckey changes from a MCU to a CU during Crabtree’s third question. Crabtree’s manner with Knuckey is extremely polite and respectful. His opening questions about such a long tour being “exhausting” are reasonable considering the demands of the campaign, but he then moves into a more patronising line of questioning which would never be pitched to a male sports team. Although a filmed media interview such as this is relatively new territory for netball team management, Knuckey deals with Crabtree’s questions with polite firmness. She smiles a little at the questions then takes care to allay any fears that the public may have regarding the ability of young, healthy, elite women athletes to cope with travelling and playing the game at international level. As it turned out, the rather onerous itinerary which required the team to play 36 games before arriving in Jamaica “utterly exhausted” (Harnett qtd. in Hawes and Barker 1999 73) most probably cost New Zealand their title.

15Rob Crabtree laughingly observed how “incredibly polite we were in those days” when viewing this footage 31 years later (Crabtree 2011).
RC: Well, the coach of the New Zealand team is Mrs Taini Jamison. Mrs Jamison you’ve seen now your team play its first real competitive game, how pleased are you?

TJ: I’m very pleased with them, they played well in the first half and we had a change of combination and it went just as well once they warmed up and got used to each other.

RC: Being very severe on the team what criticisms would you have of their play today?

TJ: I think we need a bit more work in the defence and through the court. I think the shooting end was very good no matter who we put in the back there with Joan, they went very well.

RC: Now, you have a team of 10 and you have quite a big programme of games to play. Is this going to be enough, are the girls going to get tired?

TJ: Oh I think we have enough. They are very fit at present, they need a bit more toning up which we do this week. A few more match games and then we’ll just about be ready for anything I think.

RC: What have you been concentrating on in your build-up here in Wellington?

TJ: We have been concentrating on better times for the training they have been doing. They have had three sets of training so they don’t get bored with one and we have just been toning them up and been getting the times out of them and they have been doing court work as they haven’t had any court work since September.
RC: Now the main object of this overseas tour is to retain our world title?

TJ: (smiles) That’s right.

RC: Who do you consider will be the toughest opposition in Jamaica?

TJ: I think Australia will be. We will have to watch teams who are used to playing in the heat which would be Jamaica and Trinidad. And England of course are always very strong.

RC: Now, one of the girls just received a slight injury today, is she going to be alright?

TJ: I think so, it was just very slight and we are watching this very carefully and as soon as they hurt themselves, they come off, we’ve got others to go on so it is not worth hurting them seriously before we actually going on tour.

Crabtree opens with a PTC, introducing Jamison as the New Zealand coach and then he turns to ask Jamison his first question. The camera completes a slow on-camera zoom from the loose MCU on Crabtree; through an over-the-shoulder MS into a standard interview MCU on Jamison. Crabtree concentrates his line of questioning on the playing and coaching aspects of the tour and final tournament. Jamison, wearing her team felt hat with considerably more style than Knuckey, presents herself in a strong, no nonsense way which does not encourage patronising questions. She looks every inch a competent coach. Holding a strong eyeline, further emphasised by her sun glasses, she economically deals with Crabtree’s questions. In response to “are the girls going to get tired?” Jamison reinforces her experienced assessment that the players are match fit in readiness to play top level sport. It was customary at this time to refer to sports women as ‘girls’ and both men and women used this term. Male representative athletes were never referred to as ‘boys’ except in schoolboy competition.
RC: (PTC) Well, captain of the New Zealand Team is Mrs Joan Harnett of Canterbury. (Turns to Harnett) Well Joan, you are approaching this world tour and you have just had a really competitive game, what’s the feeling among the girls in the team after this one?

JH: Well, I think that we all feel that once we get to Jamaica we should win. We’ve got the players to do it and I think myself that we should retain the title. At the moment perhaps we are not going as well as we could be but I have always found that when a New Zealand team is picked and they play in New Zealand before they leave we don’t play as well as we do when we get overseas, so I still pick that we should win.

RC: Now, this is what could be called a leading question and perhaps it’s a bit unfair but at this stage how does this team look to you compared to others you’ve played with and seen in New Zealand?

JH: Well, this New Zealand team is as good as any other New Zealand team I have been in. We’ve just got to find our correct combinations and I think we’ll be right, hmm.

RC: What’s the morale like among the girls? Are they really looking forward to this trip?

JH: Yes, yes, the morale is very high and everyone gets on tremendously well so I think we’ll be doing pretty well as a team.

RC: Now, because we are World Champions there
is always that much more pressure on a team when they are competing. Have the girls got any worries, you know, every game they are going to play is going to be a really tough one?

**JH:** Well, every game won’t be a really tough one, I think we will have three hard games, the rest of them will be fairly, reasonably, easy games. England, Australia and Jamaica and possibly Trinidad will be our hardest games so you could say that we have really only got four quite hard games and perhaps Australia will be our hardest.

**RC:** Now this is a long tour, three months for a married woman with a child, like yourself, it must be a bit of a wrench perhaps?

**JH:** Yes it is but I am just hoping that we’re going to be so busy I will not have time to think (laughs).

**RC:** (Laughs with Harnett) Well Joan may we wish you all the best on this tour and we hope you come back still world champions.

**JH:** Thank you very much.

---

The same location as the other interviews is used and this time, as a variation, Crabtree and Harnett stand side by side, framed in a very loose MS as Crabtree completes the introductory PTC before turning to Harnett for the first question. The camera slowly zooms in to frame Harnett in a CU to create a more intimate framing. She is introduced as “Mrs Joan Harnett of Canterbury” and although this was still social convention at the time it does ensure that her marital status is signalled at the forefront. Harnett, by now relatively experienced in handling media interviews, is very natural on camera, holds a strong eyeline and conveys a confident and friendly persona.

Crabtree initially refers to Harnett’s considerable experience as a New Zealand team member over the last eight years. This demonstrates to viewers that she is a long-serving member of the team, is now team captain and her opinion carries more weight. Unfortunately, the interview is not confined to just on-court matters and concludes by following the well-worn sexist line of questioning that dogged Harnett throughout the previous decade. Harnett, used to being repeatedly asked variations of this same question...
just laughs gracefully and agrees. Her deft reply and natural laughter dodges the real question of the appropriateness of a married woman prioritising her athletic ambitions ahead of her obligations as a wife and mother. Crabtree’s tone is not judgmental as such. In fact, it is admiring of her ability and respectful of her opinion. However this does not prevent him from probing into Harnett’s domestic arrangements. There is an implication that it is a matter of public interest and certainly an aspect which women viewers should want to know about.

Figure 32: Outro sequence. New Zealand team Playing Scratch Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grab</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Image](image1.png) | **Location:** Lower Hutt netball courts  
**Framing:** HA VLS: goal third camera right. Reporter leaning against NZBC van takes notes on clipboard. Cameraman filming action from roof of van.  
**Cam/lens movement:** Panning/tilting following game in wider shot  
**Soundtrack:** court atmos  
**VO Narration:** Generated in the studio live during transmission. Narration would have started to summarise the players selected for the team |
| ![Image](image2.png) | **Framing:** HA VLS: goal third, camera left.  
**Cam/lens movement:** Panning/tilting, following game in wider shot  
**Soundtrack:** court atmos  
**VO Narration:** Generated in the studio live during transmission. Outro would have wrapped, mentioning the need to retain the title and maybe provide dates for the viewers of the upcoming World Tournament in Jamaica. |

The item ends with more game footage, providing visual space for the VO narration to conclude the item. The glimpses of the NZBC news crew and van filming at the right rear of the court indicate that participation in the World Tournament is of significance in
the New Zealand sporting calendar. The three interviews provide an interesting overview of the women participating at the top level of the sport in this era: Dallas Knuckey, the rather old-fashioned team manager who represents the decades of volunteer service which nurtured the amateur game; the forthright Taini Jamison, strongly role modelling the success of a Maori New Zealander who played at representative level and became the internationally successful coach of the national team; and Joan Harnett, the first netballer to gain star media status while at the same time challenging social constraints which inhibited the athletic potential of married women. The sexism, inherent in the era, does not totally overwhelm this item and the team and the women are treated with considerable respect.


A few weeks after the *Sports Magazine* item went to air, a colour profile of Harnett as captain of the New Zealand Netball Team was screened, this time on the weekly magazine programme, *World of Sport* (Monday 2 November 1970). Despite outstanding players in the 1970 New Zealand team such as Shirley Langrope and Frances Wairingi, the media preoccupation with Harnett continued and it could almost be assumed that the
New Zealand netball squad at this time was made up of a team of one. Harnett’s physical attraction was obvious but more importantly she was very highly regarded for her playing skills and her leadership qualities. As she gained more experience her television interviews became more skilful. She had strong on-screen appeal and she provided a face around which the media preferred to build an awareness of the game. Harnett frequently noted later in life that she learned to accommodate all this attention and although it focused too much on her, if it meant “basketball would get more media coverage then so be it” (Harnett 2007).

This piece, directed and voiced by Bill McCarthy uses Joan Harnett, to raise public awareness of the upcoming World Tournament. It also has an educative approach about netball skills and fitness. Unsurprisingly, it revisits the angle that Harnett is married with a child but has chosen to stay playing her sport at the top level rather than allowing her domestic duties to become the exclusive focus of her life. The item starts out with a courtside interview and moves to a demonstration of Harnett’s goal shooting and court technique. The middle section provides a series of set-ups showing her training at home, playing with her son and then, somewhat bizarrely by today’s standards, vacuuming the house. As Harnett, at 28 years of age is seen to be coming near to the end of her representative career, the item ends with speculation on her possible retirement.

**Figure 34: Colour Piece, Joan Harnett, *World of Sport*, 2 November 1970**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive analysis and interview transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Image](image.png) | **Location:** Suburban netball court, Christchurch  
**Framing:** NA, MS, tracking shot. Joan Harnett in profile walking along court, suburban scene in background  
**Audio:** no atmos track.  
VO narration would have been generated live in the studio at time of transmission. VO would most probably introduce Joan Harnett and inform viewers that she is the long serving New Zealand netball team captain. The team are soon to leave to compete in the World Tournament in Jamaica. |
**Framing:** NA on-camera zoom to O/S MS to tight CU

**Audio:** atmos. Considerable wind noise on mic

**JH:** Well, I started off when I was in Std 3 or 4 at school and played right through my schooldays then I started on Saturday games. It would have been, 1960, um yes and then from there I went into the Canterbury team and the New Zealand team in ‘63 and of course up till now and I am captain of this New Zealand team to go to Jamaica. (interviewer’s question would have been part of the live studio VO).

**Location:** Netball tournament (library footage of Harnett playing for Canterbury).

**Framing:** NA, LS following Harnett position to take a high ball. reveals her athleticism in the air.

**Audio:** no atmos

VO narration would have filled this audio hole to set up Harnett’s response to a question which was most probably, ‘What makes a good netballer?’

**Framing:** NA, LS, Harnett taking high ball and driving into the circle.

**VO:** JH: Well, dedication and certainly natural ability, the ability to be able to play with other players, there is a lot of things, but I think the most important thing to remember is netball is combination – teamwork.

**BMcC:** Let’s take a look at your game which is pretty good all round. Would you say that you have any stronger points than others? Are you particularly good at something? Do you prefer something?
JH: Well, I like, I like to be able to get in good long straight passes if it’s required at the time and I think that if you can get a good fast ball in it is most important. I also think that good positional play is most important too. Being a goal attack I do shoot goals but I prefer to set my goal shooter up so she, I feel that, she should take three quarters of the goals. I feel that with the work that I have got to do around the court, that she, she’s the one who should do the most of the shooting. She is the one in control of the shooting I think.

BMcC: Your technique Joan is a little bit different from the normal shooting technique of a goal shooter?

JH: Well I do shoot two handed more or less, I, I, the ball is in this hand here and I’ll, the back of the ball rests against my back hand and I’ll push off from that hand but this is just the way I like to shoot, I can’t say that everyone should shoot like that because this is just the way I like to do it.

JH: Well, we usually have three practices a week, that’s for club and rep and on the other nights I do my scheduled list of exercises, then we have games on a Saturday afternoon and a Sunday afternoon so we are busy most days of the week.
Framing: O/S LS Harnett in backyard playing catch with her son David.

Audio: atmos and interview, courtside location with games in progress (not revealed visually)

Reporter: (Unidentified - not Bill McCarthy) You are married with a young son, what difficulties does this present in the family situation?

JH: Well, I’m very lucky I have got a mother and two sisters that are both at school and they live down the road so usually at this time of year it is school holidays so they are able to look after my small son.

Reporter: So you have no problems with babysitters and things?

JH: No, no I haven’t.

Framing: Slight HA, LS Harnett vacuuming her lounge

Reporter: You are also involved in coaching, how much time does this take up?

JH: Yes, I take three club teams this year, usually on a Saturday morning I do the coaching.

Audio: Atmos changes from courtside game audio back to Bill McCarthy interview atmos.

BMcC: Let’s talk about the Jamaican trip, what games will you play?

JH: We’ll have a game in Singapore, Sydney, possibly games in Amsterdam. We are not too sure about that, then we will have a number of games all round England. There is a game in Trinidad and then of course we reach Jamaica and that’s the world tournament starts on the 30th of December.
BMcC: It would appear that it will once again be between Australia and New Zealand on that final day.

JH: Yes, I would say so although I wouldn’t underestimate England or Jamaica. I think they will be two hard games as well.

BMcC: Have they come on sufficiently well in the last couple of years?

JH: Yes they have. England have always been quite good I think they were unlucky to have been beaten by New Zealand and Australia by quite so much in the last world tournament. I think that they seemed rather tired. I think they had good players but they just didn’t quite seem to be able to reach the top level. Ah, Jamaica will be hard, because playing on their own home ground and I think that with their crowd support, it will be quite something.

BMcC: Joan, after the world championships you will be continuing with say provincial and national basketball, well, Netball?

JH: Well they only hold a world tournament every four years, I don’t think I will be around for the next one but anyhow I will always do something for the game, because I love it and I have had a lot out of it and I am prepared to give back as much as I can.

This item is stitched together with a range of library footage, a location interview and some very stagey set-ups for the camera shot at Harnett’s home. The soundtrack is very uneven and material has been grabbed from a number of sources to construct the finished piece. The main interview with sports reporter, Bill McCarthy, suffers from wind distortion across the handheld microphone. The main interview location has little visual merit other than providing the obvious visual context of a netball goal. The questions about Harnett’s personal training regime and her domestic arrangements regarding care for her son are posed by another reporter in a courtside interview where games are in progress in the background. It is presumed that the hole in the soundtrack before this
change of reporter, provided space for the live narrator to indicate the change of interviewer and location. The opening tracking shot of a framed profile MS of Harnett walking along the court is a rather curious choice to open the piece. Although it provides a few seconds of visual wallpaper to allow the narration to set up the item, it is poorly filmed and amateurish. It is presumably shot from the window of the production van and tracks alongside Harnett walking. There would have been much stronger visual contact if the van had been moving slightly in front, shooting a more oblique angle to reveal all her face. It is also puzzling that she has been instructed to just walk, rather jogging or putting up some shots at goal which would be more revealing about her training regime and her netball skills. She walks out of shot camera right and the next cut is to the interview set up, so there is no edit logic around the flow into the interview. It is an unimaginative waste of an opportunity for strong visual storytelling and merely provides mediocre visual wallpaper to accommodate the narration. It suggests that this is a very rushed job, cobbled together at the last moment.

Harnett is framed in a very tight close-up for McCarthy’s interview which is most probably to accommodate the tight microphone placement to minimise wind distortion. On the other hand it could also be McCarthy directing the cameraman to frame tightly as Harnett was considered to be very physically attractive and could hold a tight close-up. The framing is too tight when Harnett uses her hands to demonstrate her shooting action and the very small zoom out does not improve the situation. There is an attempt to provide a range of shots to cut together the sequence of Harnett in a track suit skipping, doing star jumps and then playing catch with her son in the backyard of her home. However the framing, camera movement and the edit are very pedestrian and deteriorate further with the excruciating interior shots of Harnett, dressed up in floral trousers (little different from the carpet design) vacuuming her lounge. The camera is struggling to cope with the low level of light and the one closer shot in loose MCU is in very soft focus. It could possibly be a first for New Zealand sports television to profile a New Zealand athlete preparing for international competition by giving the carpet a good spruce up. It is testament to Harnett’s on-camera persona that despite the reductive effect of this gender stereotyping, she still manages to look poised and somewhat glamorous.

In 1970 interview sound bites were not so tightly edited, particularly in an extended item such as this example. Harnett was able to have quite a high level of control in her interviews because of her self-confidence and the polite manner in which male interviewers questioned women. She deals with questions about her personal life with adroit skill, tending to give her stock answer in a pleasant but firm way which shuts down any further discussion on the topic. The details of her babysitting arrangements never include any reference to her husband or his contribution towards caring for his son: “I’m very lucky I’ve got a mother and two sisters that are both at school and they live down the
road.” The media, increasingly aware of Harnett’s difficult domestic situation, rarely questioned her about how her husband felt about her netball career (Crabtree 2011).

**Is this Gerbner’s symbolic annihilation at work?**

These two sports magazine items both have strong elements of gender discrimination but cannot be dismissed as a form of symbolic annihilation. The constant selection of Joan Harnett by television media to represent the sport owes much to her physical attractiveness. Recurring aspects of her questioning are clearly predicated on a biased playing field where her athletic prowess is constructed around her identity as an attractive woman, a wife and a mother. Despite this, the greater percentage of both these items treats the sport and the participants with respectful seriousness and Harnett is not constructed as a 1970s version of Anna Kournikova. Nevertheless, the fact remains that no well-known male athlete was subjected to such a line of questioning. Journalist and netball reporter Joseph Romanos, believes Harnett was constantly lionised by the male media as she fitted the profile of “everyman’s ideal woman” (Romanos 2008). Harnett, “whose dishy face and frame draws photographers to the courts like iron filings to a magnet” (Aldridge 20 December 1971) did much to increase the public profile of the sport and increase coverage of netball in sports news and magazine programmes. The question would be if there was now enough public following for netball as valued television entertainment to continue to increase the quantity and quality of its coverage without being mainly leveraged through a media-selected poster girl such as Harnett.
Chapter 5 Appendix: From lack of media recognition in 1973 to World Tournament Coverage in 1975

It’s competitive, it’s serious but they cry at the end of games especially when they win!

(Bill McCarthy, Sporting Life, 1973).

Figure 35: Sporting Life, NZBC, August 1973

(TVNZ Archive)

Demanding respect from the media

The two case studies examined in this appendix represent two milestones in the representation of netball on New Zealand television during the 1970s. The first is an extended news item questioning the possible under-representation of netball in New Zealand media. The question is posed to senior players at the national tournament in 1973. The second provides close analysis of the NZBC’s coverage of the 1975 Netball World tournament. This was the first World Tournament ever hosted by New Zealand and is the earliest surviving example of multi-camera OB coverage of netball in the TVNZ archive. Although one is a news item and the other game coverage, they both have strong cultural resonances which inform the increasingly intertwined narrative between netball, broadcasting and New Zealand society during this decade.
1970s Case Study No. 3: ‘Why don’t the media support netball?’
*Sporting Life, NZBC, August 1973*

Although the NZNA was not able to raise the funds to make an independent film at the 1973 tournament in Napier, this culturally rich inquiry piece for television can be considered as having significantly higher value. Rather than just produce a conventional highlights package as an overview of the tournament, officials and players are given a rare opportunity to air their perceptions about media representation of their sport. It was included in NZBC’s sports magazine programme *Sporting Life* in August 1973 as an extended item of 10.46” duration. As this is a sports news production, the item is shot on a single sound-on-film camera using black and white film stock. The crew consisted of Bill McCarthy as director/interviewer, a cameraman and an audio operator. A number of audio and visual sections on a B roll that would have been inserted during transmission are not preserved in the archive with the A roll. Two other pieces of film remain from this tournament in the archive. These were shot at the same time by NZBC crew and were screened on the weekend sports programmes. Highlights from the North versus South game, were shown on *Grandstand* and clips of another unidentified tournament game screened on *Billboard*.

That a television crew was going to the netball national tournament to angle a story around the under-representation of a women’s sport in the media is directly influenced by the popular feminist discourse of the times - it couldn’t and didn’t happen in the 1960s. The opinions expressed in the interviews by players and the President, Joyce McCann, are directly influenced by the increased visibility of feminist politics. There is a new determination to take stronger steps towards gender equity in New Zealand society and why not start with more public recognition of the most popular female leisure activity, netball? However, despite seemingly championing the cause of gender equity the content of the programme undercuts it with old fashioned sexism – and not all of it is intentionally provocative. The item is in fact a collision between traditional gender prejudice and a well-intentioned call for gender equality in the media representation of sportswomen. On the surface the item may appear to be proactive in mediating social change but the subtext reveals many of the tactics identified by Gerbner (1972) which seek to deny and suppress that change.

This item was conceived under the newly formed sports management team lead by Des Monaghan and is an excellent example of his intention to produce an issues-based approach to sports reporting. Although drawing the short straw in regard to access to production technology, the *Sporting life* item notably deviates in content from the usually superficial highlights package of national netball tournaments in the past. Thinking back thirty-four years, McCarthy recollects calling on his contacts to pull in three Bay of
Plenty All Blacks to provide a male endorsement of netball’s value but most of all he unashamedly remembers his interview with the “gorgeous” Joan Harnett:

I went to Napier to the National Championships and we did a 20-30 minute story on the netball championships of that year: where netball was; where it was at; how many people played it; why it was popular. I remember we interviewed a bunch of All Blacks and Joan Harnett was very big at the time, she was a big superstar like the Irene van Dyk of the time and very glamorous, very gorgeous. It was based around her (McCarthy 2007).

Harnett was relatively media savvy by this later stage of her career. As she has so frequently done in the past (evidenced in examples from the previous chapter) she is able to project strongly to the camera, provide well-structured sound bites for the interviewer and delivers them in a relaxed and visually appealing manner. However, the less media-aware but nevertheless the strongest voices in the piece come from the group interview of players and team officials. One player in particular is dominant in her call for more media recognition of the sport. It is out of this group that the frustration of lack of public regard and the strongest calls for change were articulated, rather than through Harnett’s narrowly focused one-on-one interview.

**Section 1: Introduction and hook**

The item opens using conventional television introductory formula with excerpts from two different games at the tournament edited together to create immediate visual recognition. This gives time for the introductory voice-over to set up the subject and angle of the piece. The first game excerpt is edited in almost extreme slow-motion giving an instant visual impression of the skill and agility of the players and the narration indicates that the game is “exciting” and “energetic”. The courtside placement of the camera, shooting from a slight low angle position, enhances the aerial nature of the game. The use and pace of the slow-motion can also be seen as depowering the game as it over emphasises the balletic nature of the aerial play which strongly feminises the action and downplays the power aspect of the game. The second game excerpt, shot from a slight high angle, is played in real time which presents the game as more physical and fast paced before the rhythm is broken by an injury stoppage with a player on the ground. Officials and players gather over her and a player in a short gym tunic, her back to the camera, bends to help. The sexist innuendo and the tone of the narration repeatedly draw attention to how women, even playing at national level, still exhibit physical and emotional weakness. Luckily, the opposing player, who has possession of the ball, indicates the opposite, staunchly holding her position and waiting for play to resume.
**Figure 36: Intro sequence, ‘Why don’t the media support netball?’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive analysis and VO narration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Image](image1) | **Location:** Representative match, National Tournament, Napier, August 1973. Court surrounded by enthusiastic spectators in temporary seating and standing courtside.  
**Framing/cam movement:** L/A, courtside, WS, panning movement following play through court.  
**Editing:** 1-shot with slow-motion added in post production to enhance aerial skills of players.  
**Action:** WA driving onto the circle  
**Audio:** court atmos  
**VO:** Bill McCarthy: *Netball is New Zealand’s major women’s sport. It’s exciting and it’s energetic.* |
| ![Image](image2) | **Location:** Representative match, National Tournament, Napier, August 1973  
**Framing/cam movement:** L/A, courtside, WS, panning movement following play through court.  
**Action:** GS taking high ball in the circle  
**Editing:** as above  
**Audio:** court atmos  
**VO:** McCarthy: *But the public of NZ have not recognised it as a major spectator sport.* |
On one level, McCarthy’s somewhat paternalistic introduction may be well intentioned and he is acting as an agent provocateur to set up the inquiry of the piece. However there is an edge to the introduction that is far from supportive of the women’s cause. The final sentence is delivered in an almost ironic tone of voice: “the fact that it’s not getting recognition from the news media has really upset the girls. They don’t think they’re being taken seriously”. The women are diminished by being referred to as “girls”, which is consistent throughout the piece, although the players always refer to themselves as women. The only time McCarthy uses ‘women’ is when it is prefixed by ‘married’ and can be interchangeable with ‘housewife’. ‘Upset’ is imposed as an emotional descriptor that further trivialises their point of view before they have the opportunity to speak for themselves. It is a case of giving with one hand and taking away with the other. They are being given a rare opportunity to challenge the male domination of televised sport, but the language, tone and presentation already demonstrates that they are not being taken seriously. The additional irony is that this item was made by a skeleton television crew.
with the lowest ranked production kit available. The netball national tournament did not justify the financial investment of a full, multi-camera OB production.

Section 2: Media Coverage and is Netball a Spectator Sport?

The first section of the item opens with the dominant woman in the group (Anne Taylor, centre middle row) emphasising the relatively recent social change of women staying in the sport after marriage and/or children. The implication is that the quality of the games at this level had increased because these experienced players were choosing to stay in the sport or were returning to play competitively rather than just socially.

“Many years ago there was only men’s sport, right, rugby, racing and beer (general laughter from all assembled women). But now you’ve got the women coming into it and the women coming out and playing the game, like all these married women are leaving their children at home and they’re coming to the nationals. And therefore more women are getting involved but the media hasn’t caught up with it”

Building on this call for the media to give the sport more attention, McCarthy, elicits reactions to the following questions:
Do you think that you get a fair deal from male members of society over netball?
Do you think they treat you fairly?
But you must admit it’s not really a spectator sport.
Do you think it’s a game that attracts spectators?
Do you think that it’s sufficiently exciting to attract people?

The questions provoke a range of short responses from the women, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“No”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Everything’s All Blacks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not enough of it on telly”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the players cites the almost non-existence of media coverage for an international tour the previous year:

| “It’s like our coverage when we were in Australia, we got nothing. We were only allowed 32 words, send back to New Zealand. So after you’ve taken an address out you don’t get much for 32 words do you?” |

Anne Taylor then provides an example of the agenda setting of the NZBC which the women see as constantly privileging men’s sport:
“See, they give you a spot on television for a game last year, Auckland to play Rotorua. What do they do? The Chatham Cup in soccer gets a draw and they chuck us off (general laughter of agreement) Well, I mean, what can you do about it?”

Section 3: Netball’s international success

The visual track is blank in this section as it would have been inserted during transmission from an un-archived B roll. It is likely to have been a montage of international footage showing the New Zealand team in action in past world tournaments. McCarthy picks up the line from the last speaker “what can you do about it?” to segue into a more serious narration sequence which reinforces the international standing of the New Zealand team and anticipates the upcoming Netball World Tournament in two years’ time:

**VO:** What the NZ team has done on the international scene should have created a lot more interest than it has. In the last 10 years there have been three world championships, New Zealand has won one of them and been runner up in the other two. New Zealand netballers are regarded as being amongst the best in the world and they will be trying to win the world title back in 1975 when the tournament’s held in Auckland.

Section 4: ‘It can be a tough game’

This section is designed to educate the public a little more about the game and outline some of the basic rules. An emphasis is placed on the non-body contact requirements which are widely understood to be the defining characteristic of the game making it
suitable for female participation. The reality of this non-contact aspect is then questioned as the visuals change from game footage to shots of injury on court: a player on crutches; a player stretchered off the court; another being loaded into an ambulance.

**VO:** In New Zealand the sport attracts a real cross-section of the community. Housewives run an elaborate mid-week tournament, the game’s played widely in schools and there’s the graded weekend competition that produces these players at Dominion Tournament level. Good netball requires great skill, but the game basically is very simple, you can’t run with the ball and you cannot hold on to it for more than three seconds, there are certain areas of the court that certain players can’t go and probably the strictest rule, there can be no bodily contact of any sort.

**VO:** Despite this, there was a long list of casualties at the tournament. 94 people were treated by the St John First Aid for sprained ankles, torn ligaments and hamstrings. There was a broken arm and one girl required surgery for a torn Achilles tendon. Most of these injuries were due to slippery courts on the days that it rained but a vital game can become quite hard.

This section reinforces that elite netballers take their sport very seriously, play hard and can frequently experience the same severity of injury seen in male sport. The rain is offered as a reason for the high number of injuries but the unforgiving surface of a netball court is not recognised. Consideration of the high level of physicality in the game leads into the first interview with Joan Harnett where she is asked if netball is a “rough game”. She agrees but qualifies her assent by placing it within the game context. This answers the superficial question but of course both interviewer and interviewee are talking past the
subtext. This questions whether physical contesting for the ball is a gender appropriate activity in a sport whose specific rules were designed to prevent any challenges to conservative notions of femininity. Harnett, used to these questions, answers with some firmness that “it’s only all in the game” and is therefore a perfectly acceptable level of physical competition.

McCarthy: Joan, do you think it’s a rough game, netball?
Harnett: It can be a rough game but if it’s played properly, no, it shouldn’t be a rough game.
McCarthy: But it’s fairly active and uh?
Harnett: “Yes it can be very active yes and I think that sometimes if players just go for the ball, perhaps, then accidents can occur but it’s only all in the game and they’re going for the ball in, to, the game when you do go for the ball.”

The final part of this section proposes that aspects of the game and the commitment with which the women play are not that dissimilar from rugby, but in 1973 it would have been an uphill battle to persuade the majority of males and many females in New Zealand that this could be possible.

Section 5: ‘Men and the media don’t take them seriously’

This section directly challenges the level of media commitment to the game. It opens with game footage which is shot against an empty spectator stand visually undercutting the claims of popularity. McCarthy’s voice-over is layered with the actuality sound of a half-time team talk by Coach Marion George (Smith) during the final match. Rather unusually for the time, this section is shot with a handheld camera shooting a range of mid and close-ups using onscreen zooms amongst the players. This very informal shooting style gives strong contact with the players and a feeling of immediacy which is now commonplace in modern sports coverage. As most game footage is habitually framed in wide shot in this era and usually only of a game in progress, the intimacy of the on-court team talk has considerable impact. Ironically it is only because this material is being shot on film that such mobility is possible. If the OB van had been allocated, the lack of manoeuvrability of the equipment would have resulted in a more static style of
coverage, shot at a distance through a long lens. This set-up was pre-arranged with Marion George. Most of the players would not have experienced a camera shooting at such close range during a game before but because the aim of the item was to raise awareness of the lack of netball on television, George was more than willing to co-operate (George 2007).

**VO:** The girls say that men and the media don’t take them seriously, but they take their game very seriously.

*(Note: empty spectator stand in background)*

**VO:** There are light hearted moments but the tension of a big game’s evident. Rugby players, if they listened into a half-time team talk would find something very familiar about it...

**Actuality audio:** Marion George in team talk at half-time -

“Attack, attack, attack. Attack on defence too, the defence is not nearly tight enough Joanne, you and Jenny, she’s getting away with murder. Now look they are going to try some…talk to each other. Watch the ball, Keep it up, good luck kids. Ok.”

**VO:** ..except maybe for the handkerchiefs.
Despite the lively, vérité style camerawork and the positive reinforcing of the worth of the game, this section is again effectively undercut by McCarthy’s reference to the handkerchief. One player, partially obscured by coach Marion George in the foreground, briefly uses a handkerchief as she listens intently to the team talk. McCarthy’s observation is delivered with the slightest hint of a laugh to cue audience reaction and effectively draw the gaze away from the central action in the frame - that of female athletes at representative level totally engrossed in the business of winning. Turning the peripherally visual detail of the handkerchief into a ‘joke’ to differentiate between the national male and female sporting code is undercutting and trivialising (Gerbner 1972) the status of these women as serious athletes.

**Section 6: Who looks after the children?**

The content of this section is an almost obligatory inclusion in any story to do with married women engaged in activities outside the home. It places Harnett yet again in the position of spokeswoman regarding issues of child care.

**Visuals:** Montage focused on Harnett

**McCarthy VO:** A feature of the tournament and netball generally, is the number of married women with children who are playing or who have recently returned to playing the game. They get away from the monotony of being a housewife to compete on a national level in this most demanding sport.

Harnett is asked to speak from her own experience on how netball allows a woman to escape “from the monotony of being a housewife”. This is a virtual rerun of the interview McCarthy conducted with Harnett in 1970, addressed in the previous chapter. The loaded child care question is accompanied with a slight laugh, which Harnett shares with McCarthy. It sounds very much like a pre-arranged patsy question, articulating frequently expressed concern in society over the changing role of women. Harnett responds to this question as she always did by speaking of her own experience with such ease and good humour it seems to validate the importance of this topic needing to be addressed.
McCarthy: Joan why do you think that so many married women play netball?

Harnett: “Well I think that it’s important that particularly a housewife, um, gets some relaxation and I think that netball is a really relaxing pastime. I love it. I love doing it, I’ve always enjoyed doing it and I’ve now been playing now for 8 years. I’ve been married 8 years and I’ve been playing for 8 years. And I’m quite sure that most other girls who have been married and those that are married perhaps come back to it after they have had families get the same pleasure out of it too.”

McCarthy: And there are quite a few who come back to it after they have had a family?

Harnett: “Yes there are. Yes, quite a few.”

McCarthy: What happens to their children in the meantime? (slight laugh)

Harnett: “Well, if they’re like me they have got good mothers, my mother lives just down the road from me and she’s very good at looking after my son.”

Once again the narration in this section gives with one hand and cancels the gift with the other. The social change of young women remaining in the sport is presented as a positive but this is instantly undercut by the reductive housewife reference. There is an assumption that being a housewife is a mindless occupation of little merit or reward. Only a couple of months after this item was screened, Sandra Coney in the recently established feminist publication, *Broadsheet*, addressed how the role of the housewife lacked “prestige in the community” (1973 9). She challenged the way in which the “housewife is being constantly told that her job is the most rewarding and satisfying a woman can undertake and that she forms the backbone of society, [but] she is also stereotyped as an unthinking cabbage and a dropout from the ‘real world’” (9). McCarthy’s line of questioning reinforces this gender stereotype, with Harnett being constantly defined by her housewife status.
There is a subtext suggestion here that any woman can take a short time off from child rearing and still play netball at provincial level. This promotes the idea that it is only a recreational pursuit and belittles the standard of the elite competition and Harnett’s status as a representative netballer. Harnett is no Billie Jean King and she never takes a strongly feminist line in an attention seeking way. Like the sport itself, Harnett preferred to work quietly to gain ground from within the establishment. Although this would not have sat well with the more radical feminists of the time, it was a slow but safe path to follow. It gathered allies within the ranks of the broadcasting gatekeepers. This was to pay dividends in the next decade. Taking a wider feminist perspective, John Nauright (1995) believes that there was a change in the way the media treated married women who continued to play the game in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As these women had broken out of their “older restrictions” they were “now expected to become involved in stable heterosexual relationships if they wanted to receive favourable media and public attention” (60). It would not be too simplistic to read Harnett’s constant media reinforcement as a housewife and mother within this critical framework. However, it is important to recognise the subtle degree of power she was able to exert within this controlling hegemony.

In the next interview, NZNA President Joyce McCann makes a cautious comment on the increase of married women in the game. McCann is placed within the visual context of crowded netball courts, framed in a profile MCU in an official blazer and sporting her legendary element-defying hair set. Although McCann avoids identifying the considerable societal pressure that forced young women to leave the game when they married, she does make a direct reference to the consciousness-raising influence of the women’s movement.

“I have been amazed at this tournament to see how many ex-players are back. I think really it is, um that, perhaps it’s a little bit of Women’s Lib and the fact that, er, women now realize that they can go on playing longer than they did in the past. Once they were married they seemed to think, well that was the end of their career but they now find that they can combine the two and they still keep just as fit.”
Section 7: Endorsement from those who count in society

The real meat of the item is the endorsement of “the girls” and the game by three very well-known Hawkes Bay rugby representatives and current All Blacks, Blair Furlong, Kel Tremain and Ian McRae. Once again, the start of this section comes off a B roll, so the visual track is blank, but the atmos track indicates that it was probably more game footage from the tournament.

McCarthy VO:

Rugby men might not be able to play this game but it is amazing who you see turn up to watch the girls play.

Visuals on B roll: Game footage from tournament

The narration introduces the All Blacks, reiterating that ‘men’ play rugby and ‘girls’ play netball at representative level. There is also another reductive element to this statement and it is not as innocent as it’s meant to sound. This was the era when watching girls play sport was a very questionable practice and not something that a red-blooded male should be caught doing. Although it was accepted that a mixed audience would enjoy watching the skills on display there was also an undercurrent that men watching women playing sport was also a sexualised activity. Therefore, agreeing to be interviewed at the netball courts teeming with women in short skirts was quite an ask and the men, particularly Tremain, were suitably awkward. The three All Blacks are in their Sunday best wearing shirts, ties and pullovers under a sports jacket, but not their representative rugby blazers. All three men would have been household names around New Zealand at the time and McCarthy only needs to use their first names by way of introduction to the audience.
McCarty opens the interview by asking Furlong what he thinks of netball as a game. As soon as Furlong responds that the game has got “a lot of spectator appeal”, Tremain, who is somewhat self-consciously shuffling next to him, sniggers at the ‘girl watching’ connotation of Furlong’s response. Furlong grins as well, but rapidly composes himself and continues on to make a positive statement about the game, “I think it’s a very fast, open game that people would enjoy to come and watch”. Tremain’s response to the same question allows him to reveal that his wife plays the game so he has learned “a bit about it” through her but can’t turn down the opportunity to repeat the somewhat risqué observation that “it’s most enjoyable to watch… it’s certainly got spectator appeal” but steadies to make some serious points about the nature and level of the women’s competition.
The camera makes a rapid pan to McRae who appears to be taking the pre-arranged opportunity to speak on behalf of the women’s sport quite seriously:

I think it really is a good game. The skills in this game are just terrific, the handling and quick passing and that sort of thing, it really makes it good to watch. These girls are tremendously fit, they must be to stand up to all the game they are playing, um, I think that as a game of sport it’s very good.

McRae’s comments carry admirable sincerity, which helps to justify this section and is good payback for McCarthy’s efforts to get the men to the courts. Nevertheless, the rather paternalistic and somewhat gauche set-up constantly undermines the positive statements the men are trying to make.

To conclude the All Black sequence, McCarthy asks Joan Harnett to respond to Colin Mead’s public naming of her as “his most ideal woman”. The face of netball’s ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ of the time, Harnett smiles graciously and deftly moves the focus to her
approach to sport and away from the topic of spectatorship raised by Tremain and Furlong: “well, perhaps he liked my attitude towards sport...we had a good chat about sport and his ideas were much the same as mine so perhaps that was why he mentioned that”. McCarthy rounds off Harnett’s interview by giving her an opportunity to state firmly, but modestly, that she is a competitive person and that she does like to win.

**Figure 41: Joan Harnett – Colin Meads’ Nomination as his “most ideal woman”**

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**Section 8: Outro**

McCarthy’s voice-over outro effectively undermines any of the positive reinforcement about the seriousness of the competition. As was to preoccupy the media twenty-six years later when the Silver Ferns lost by one goal to Australia in the 1999 World Championship final, the sight of women crying supersedes all else. Over footage of the final few seconds of a game, McCarthy observes: “It’s competitive, it’s serious but they cry at the end of games especially when they win”. This cuts into an extended sequence of on-court jubilation where the handheld camera quickly gets out amongst the women who are jumping up and down, hugging each other and wiping tears away. The actuality audio is cranked up so that the higher register of excited female voices swamps the male voice-over and contrasts to the male interviewees in the previous section. The handheld camera and the edit capture and enhance the drama of victory which is rarely seen on television where the game footage is usually cut at the final whistle or just after the polite handshakes.
The post-game celebrations continue in a crowded room at night with the post tournament party in full swing. The soundtrack of a young Maori woman playing the guitar and singing is layered under the voice-over. There are a number of men in the room, but the rapid cutting and mobile camera mostly reveals women in full party mode. The young woman (Anne Taylor) whose opinions so strongly dominated the group interview, is now one of the walking wounded, dancing on one leg and waving her crutches around enthusiastically in time to the music. As McCarthy indicates, it is a very familiar scene no matter what the sporting code and an insight flashback into socialising after sport, 1970s style, “When it’s all over though, the tears are forgotten, at the after match function, which to me is very much like a lot of the after-match functions I’ve been at”.

Figure 42: Tearful Jubilation of the Victors

Figure 43: Post-Tournament Party
But before the final wrap there is one more patriarchal anxiety to deal with. After all the effort persuading viewers that this game is competitive, the women are fit and they play to win, McCarthy pitches the age old chestnut: “Do you think it’s a feminine sport?” There is an instant response from the young Maori woman: “Don’t talk rubbish, of course it is…didn’t you see all the beautiful girls?” then widens her eyes and turns her head away as if she has said a very cheeky thing to an important public figure such as McCarthy.

Figure 44: “Don’t talk rubbish, of course it is!”

The initiative is then grabbed by the player sitting next to her with an exceptionally utilitarian, crocheted tea-cosy beanie jammed on her head (in marked contrast to the chic chignon of Joan Harnett in the previous section). With a broad smile on her face and speaking in a very strong New Zealand accent, she challenges McCarthy: “Now, have you seen me on the court leapin’? If you don’t call that feminine?” Peals of delighted female laughter fill the soundtrack as the item cuts to black. The women had been able to have their ‘say’ at last and air their habitually unheard criticism of the unfair playing field discriminating against women’s sport.
Early Feminist critique of *The Sporting Life* extended news item:

A short critique of the *Sporting Life* programme was published by Sandra Coney in ‘The Feminist Eye’ column in *Broadsheet* (September 1973). Coney criticises the programme for “the tone adopted by the male commentators and interviewers in the programme” which she found to be “flippant and patronising”. She felt that getting some All Blacks along to watch some of the games and their comments “trivialised the sport” although she was not sure if this was done “consciously or unconsciously”. Coney also objected to the “one top-notch woman” (i.e. Joan Harnett, whom she did not recognise) being asked “idiotic questions” and took exception to the line of questioning “generally being more concerned about the private lives of the women than their prowess on the court”. She notes with approval Joyce McCann’s reference to “Women’s lib” which is uttered “without a snigger” and enjoyed the outro grab of the “girl” responding to the “is netball feminine?” question. Overall, Coney approved of the way in which “the women acquitted themselves with dignity and good humour in the face of such provocative banality” (14).

**Can value be found amongst ‘provocative banality’?**

Coney’s final comment has considerable validity, but this pertinent criticism aside, it is important to note that the programme also represents a significance departure from the usual reporting of women’s sport. It also stands out in comparison to all other existing
netball archival material from the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, it is astounding that this item was screened on television at all in the early seventies. As reductive as elements of the shaping narration may be, they do not completely undercut or marginalise this group of women. What it does do is provide them with direct access to the viewing public, enhanced by the single channel environment, through which to voice their dissatisfaction at the lack of quality media coverage for women’s sport. They are the forerunners of the elite netballers who were to become sought after television property in later decades. Bill McCarthy’s willingness to cover a story about a women’s sport from this angle, however flawed the delivery, is a partial acknowledgment of the need to address issues of gender discrimination. It is also a partial acknowledgement of a female viewership for sport which is not predicated strictly through a male perspective. The item was therefore timely and only came about because of the new inquiry-based sports reporting fostered by Des Monaghan, who encouraged his sports officers to look for stories “outside the white lines” (Veitch 2007).

1970s Case Study No 4: Netball World Tournament, Auckland 1975

It was an important step forward in New Zealand netball to host the 4th World Tournament but the United Nations ban on sporting contact with South Africa meant that it was held in a difficult political climate. South Africa was banned from sending a team but three South African delegates were allowed to attend. Consequently, Kenya pulled out at the last moment and as the English had toured South Africa the previous year, there was a high possibility that the New Zealand anti-apartheid group CARE (Citizens Association for Racial Equality) would hold demonstrations during the tournament (Hawes and Barker 1999). This was averted by Leila Robinson, vice president of IFNA and referee at the tournament (pictured Figure 46 in rain coat) who had a very close association with Tom Newnham (CARE) and Trevor Richards (HART), both international anti-apartheid activists. This intercession by Robinson was somewhat surprising as she spoke at a HART conference in Auckland while she was attending the tournament and described the NZNA attitude toward apartheid in sport as “blinkered” and lacking in understanding (‘Coaches in Netball are Banned by Jamaica’ 1975). Jamaica played England during the tournament, but Robinson made it clear that

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16 Although many of the interviewees refer to the tournament as the World Championships, it was still called the Netball World Tournament at this time.

17 The politics behind the English tour of South Africa in 1974 and Australia’s refusal to tour despite South Africa offering to pay airfares and expenses is revealed in a joint letter to Trevor Richards and Tom Newnham, written by Jamaican Leila Robinson, 17 November 1976.

18 Robinson’s umpiring style of moving very slowly around the court was somewhat notorious as was the case of Jamaican rum she brought with her to tournaments as ‘survival supplies’ (George 2007).

19 Halt All Racist Tours (HART). Set up in 1969 in New Zealand by Trevor Richards, John Minto and Tom Newnham to protest against all rugby tours to and from South Africa.
this was to support New Zealand’s wish to “keep the tournament ‘friendly’” but they “took the court with great bitterness in our hearts” (qtd. in McLean 1975).

Figure 46: Leila Robinson, Jamaican Umpire and Staunch Anti-apartheid Campaigner

It was a close call that the tournament did not start marred by protest and it was a reminder that their lower public profile did not exempt netball from the same international obligations as others. Although netball wanted to gain a higher public profile, they struggled to accept that their activities would increasingly come under more national and international scrutiny as they moved more centre stage. The fact that the tournament had received higher build-up publicity in the media and was to be televised was most probably a factor in drawing the attention of HART and CARE.

Cultivating the broadcaster

In 1974, Netball was not yet a Commonwealth Games sport but the significant technical and production advances made in the coverage of OB sport following the 1994 Commonwealth Games would ultimately benefit all sports televised in the country. The NZNA recognised that there was mileage to be had out of recognising the leap in quality of the NZBC’s coverage of the 1974 games. The strategic thinking NZNA Executive sent a letter of congratulations to NZBC complimenting them on the “excellence of their radio and television coverage” of the 1974 Commonwealth Games (NZNA minutes 11 February 1974). It was a clever piece of public relations as they rapidly received a letter back noting with appreciation the acknowledgement from netball and adding that it was “not common for them [NZBC] to receive congratulations from Sporting Bodies when the
sport concerned was not included in their coverage” (ibid). Sandra Coney, writing in *Broadsheet* on the Television coverage of the Games was not so complimentary or diplomatic about the Commonwealth games coverage from a feminist point of view:

> All the commentators on TV were men, all the “experts” commenting on the events were men. I suppose there were some women involved in the organisation of the Games, but no doubt they were backstage working in the cafeteria, cleaning out the competitors’ living quarters and typing etc. It just goes to show – if men organise games, you get games for men – and sideshows for women (Coney 1974:7).

**Getting a woman on the ‘inside’**

Serendipitous for netball and a quiet gain for female representation within the media, Margaret Leslie (Marriott) was appointed production secretary OB Sports under Harold Anderson in 1975. Although she was not a journalist who determined content, at last there was a woman on the inside who had a passionate interest in the game and was willing to do what she could for women’s sport and netball in particular. Leslie had been a Manawatu netball representative and so she became the self-appointed liaison between netball and the NZBC sports department. Leslie had frequent meetings with the Netball Executive, working with them to understand the broadcasting process and helping them to devise strategies to get more netball on television, “I wanted the Netball Association to realise the importance of planning ahead to get the coverage the game warranted” (Leslie 2007). Throughout the 1970s, Leslie used her position to grab empty slots in the *Sport on One* schedule on Saturday afternoons for netball. She would ring up Marion George (Smith), the first professional netball coach paid by early sponsorship money from Rothmans, to get her to organise “a rep game of some sort” at a certain time so it could be slotted into a gap in the live sport schedule, usually around a rugby game or the racing. Often only a portion of a game was televised but Leslie felt that every minute on screen counted to help build a television audience and to prove to the television executives that netball had many advantages to offer (Leslie 2007).

In contrast to her somewhat crusading zeal, Leslie remembers Harold Anderson as “a man of few words, a superb producer but he didn’t have a high opinion of women’s sport”. According to Leslie, Anderson assumed that the “general public would not be interested in watching it and that it didn’t rate well”. This notwithstanding, Leslie knew the 4th Netball World Tournament was coming up in August 1975 and pleaded with Anderson to agree to “give it a go” and cover the tournament. “I told Harold that I knew it would rate well [but] he was rather non-committal as he didn’t rate women’s sport on TV.” However, Anderson finally agreed, with the instruction “if you organize it, we will cover it” (Leslie 2007). At a higher managerial level Lance Cross was also supportive thanks to the strong rapport he had with the sport through the efforts of President, Joyce McCann. NZNA secretary Marjorie Jenden remembers that the struggle to get television support threw up the same old issues, “Lance Cross would argue we didn’t get many spectators at
our games therefore it would have little TV spectator appeal and we played outdoors in inclement weather which was not good for filming. We said playing outdoors proved it wasn’t a “girls’ game” and if we got the sport televised we would show a captive audience a sport worthy of any spectator” (Hawes and Barker 1999 77). Print journalist Joseph Romanos felt that although NZBC agreed to cover the tournament, it was in a somewhat half-hearted way:

It was a bit of a pain for TV. They weren’t very excited about it, it certainly wasn’t the hype and hoopla that you got a decade later. I think it was something they couldn’t totally ignore because it was a world championship but really, even in the mid-seventies, I don’t think netball was being treated by people making decisions in the media as a bona fide sport (Romanos 2007).

However, the tournament received a tremendous financial boost with a grant of $20,000 from the Ministry of Recreation and Sport, the first government grant ever to be received by netball. The incoming 1973 Labour Government had established the Ministry of Recreation and Sport and the NZ Council for Recreation and Sport to assist funding national sport and recreation organisations. Although this was a one-off grant from this relatively new statutory body, it was an important milestone for netball. Rothmans had come in as a sponsor of the sport at the start of the 1970s and contributed to the upcoming tournament. This was not a high level of financial support but its significance lay in the willingness of a major sponsor of male sport to add netball to its sponsorship stable.

Broadcast Coverage

All tournament games were played in daylight and those that were televised live were in the afternoon and had to be played on the show court which had a television tower. For the first time, the draw for a netball tournament had to be structured around the requirements of television. The matches selected for live telecast had to be scheduled on the show court at a precise time in the afternoon, which was, according to Joyce McCann, eager as she was to attract television coverage, “a damn nuisance, they made life difficult” (McCann 2003). The weather was atrocious, raining heavily every day, which caused considerable discomfort for the Caribbean teams in particular. On an afternoon in the second week of the tournament, the court for the Australia/Scotland game was under three inches of water. However, playing netball games on an indoor court was unheard of at this time and cost prohibitive. The World Netball Championships were not played in covered stadia until 1991. No matter what the weather, it was netball’s big chance to profile their major international tournament on television and they were determined that nothing would get in the way.

BCNZ’s television schedule allowed for the coverage of New Zealand’s three major games against Jamaica, England and Australia. The recording of other games was limited to highlights packages and news items. The highlights packages were screened in the
sports magazine programme *Sportsnight* in the late evening. Once again, very little of the game footage has survived in the archive. All that remains are: 1) News clip of the New Zealand/Jamaica game, ‘Impressive win for the New Zealand netball team’ (1.02” duration); 2) New Zealand/Wales and New Zealand/Singapore, ‘Rain in Auckland disrupted play only slightly’ (1.47” duration); 3) ‘New Zealand versus Australia’, last ten minutes of the game. The surviving footage was transferred onto film before being archived. The following television schedule from the NZ Listener indicates the limited game time televised, although the publishing of the schedule was an indication of the perceived value of the event and helped to increase the audience size.

**Figure 47: Schedule of Televised Games, 1975 Netball World Tournament, Auckland, NZ Listener, 16 August 1975**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 23 August</td>
<td>Live Cover ‘Sport on One’: NZ v Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 27 August</td>
<td>Report in <em>Sportsnight</em> at 10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 30 August</td>
<td>Netball in ‘Sport on One’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2 September</td>
<td>Live cover NZ v England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 3 September</td>
<td>Report in <em>Sportsnight</em> at 10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 4 September</td>
<td>Live cover Australia v NZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most significant coverage of the tournament is a film commissioned by Jamaican Netball and shot by the Jamaican Agency for Public Information, Town and Country Productions. Colgate Palmolive Co (Jamaica) sponsored the 30-minute film, which was designed as a promotion for the next World Netball championship to be held in Jamaica in 1979. This film gives a pedestrian but nevertheless valuable overview of the various styles of the international game in 1975. The off-court footage offers rare glimpses of the fervent fans who gathered at Windmill Road during tournament week. However, it is not used in this study as it is shot according to a publicity brief and on a single film camera. It is not clear whether this film was actually screened on New Zealand television, although the fact that a copy is preserved in the archive suggests it may have gone to air in the late 1970s.

Rob Crabtree, Head of Radio Sport NZBC, made the decision to fund a full radio commentary of the final game. This was in addition to the daily reports in the regular sports news bulletins on National radio and the Community station network.
Figure 48: Radio New Zealand Coverage of 1975 Netball World Tournament.

*NZ Listener* 16 August 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Stations</th>
<th>Daily reports through Tournament at 5.50pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Programme</td>
<td>Daily reports in <em>Midday Report</em> at noon and <em>Sportscall</em> at 6.45pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Programme Thursday 4 September, 2pm on 1YA, 2YC, 3YC and 4YA stations</td>
<td>Live commentary on Australia v NZ game</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The change in attitude to covering sport post-Commonwealth Games had given television and radio more freedom over what should be covered to reach a wider audience. Full radio commentary of a netball game had not been attempted before, but for Crabtree, the most important feature was that this was an international tournament. Although he had to do a bit of persuading at the top level to get approval, he felt it was an opportunity not to be missed:

> We did the world champs in ’75. I told Allen [Richards] that he had to cover the games on radio. He was disgusted with me [laughs]. We covered it because it was a world championship and we had never had one in New Zealand before so we had to cover it. It took a bit of persuasion of the heavyweights. It was a women’s sport and we had to do some battling to do the ’75 exercise. But we were already doing some [television] OBs of netball so it was logical that we should do the ’75 world champs (Crabtree 2011).

Allen Richards had established himself as a broadcaster and commentator for cricket and soccer, but had never commentated a game of netball and his familiarity with the game was only through compiling the Saturday evening results roundup on IZB:

> It was decided that although we had never had any commentary of netball from Windmill Road, this had to be done because it was the final. Up until then I had been reporting at the end of each day to various countries who were participating and I had some friends in the West Indies. I had got to know people over there in 1972 when I toured with the cricket team and it was quite nice communicating with these other countries but it came as a rather rude shock to me that I was told that my next role was commentator of the final because I had never followed netball closely enough to know all the intimate rules, you know the little parts that make the game different from other games. However, with great help from New Zealand’s former women’s cricket captain, Pat McKelvey, who came up from Wellington and I actually called all the play and she interjected with all the interesting little side parts in her comments in relation to the play and somehow we got through. But we survived it alright because there was nobody else doing that sort of commentary and nobody had anything to match it by so we muddled through...It was a bit nerve wracking as I didn’t know the Aussies, you know and but we managed (Richards 2011).

Trish (Pat) McKelvey, because of her experience providing live radio updates from the netball courts in Wellington and her involvement in early television commentary, was
flown to Auckland to work alongside Allen Richards. McKelvey remembers the designated split between their commentary roles changing and “it became a shared thing as it was obvious that I knew more about the netball than he did and so it…almost became the other way round as we progressed through the week” (McKelvey 2011). She also provided the comments for the morning radio sessions and then again on the sports roundup at night, which she recalls as being “a pretty full day” for little financial reward which was luckily not her raison d’être for being there. Their commentary position was in the stand opposite the television cameras and commentary team. For McKelvey it was a “deep end” experience where she had to learn as she went along:

.. it was different, nobody ever explained to me about the fact that when you do a radio broadcast you are actually talking about the game because the people can’t see it but it’s a totally different view when you are doing a television broadcast. Because people can see it they don’t actually want you to tell them what they think they’ve seen etc etc. It was bums on seat learning basically, there was no training, there was no come into the studio and we will give you some training (McKelvey 2011).

Figure 49: Tournament Spectators, 1975 Netball World Tournament, Auckland

Listening to the radio commentary during NZ/Australian final
(TVNZ Archive)

Television Commentary Team

NZBC asked NZNA who they would like to have in the commentary team, who knew the game and the international players at the tournament. Marion George (Smith) was on the netball executive and the tournament organising committee and although she had no prior broadcasting experience, was asked if she would like to do the game commentaries alongside a more experienced broadcaster. Peter Montgomery was brought in to do this role, fresh from Michael Fay’s early America’s Cup Challenge. He had limited
knowledge of the technicalities of the game so the logic was that George would call the
game and bring in her knowledge of the players, the playing style of the different
nationalities and help educate the public. Montgomery, who knew the ropes as a
professional broadcaster, would be the link to the OB director (Richard Finney). It was
thought that Montgomery’s commentating style would provide a bit of broadcasting
colour to back up the game commentary. He was also skilled in building a ticking clock
narrative for the viewers:

And it’s a fantastic performance under pressure by the Australians, just under three
minutes to play [audio dropout from tape damage], making it hard for New Zealand.
It’s crisis time for the girls in black and white (Montgomery game commentary 1975)

The large crowd crammed in around the court on temporary seating were hugely
responsive and Montgomery used the build in vociferous crowd support to endorse his
tension building techniques: “Well, New Zealanders are just about breaking the scaffold
stands apart!”

**Figure 50: Examples of Commentary Styles**

| Action: New Zealand centre passes to GA on side of NZ circle. NZ player goes down surrounded by heavy Australia defence. |
| Montgomery: ”Just look at that wall of gold that’s been put up as a fantastic defence by these determined Australian girls” |

| Action: top centre screen, Granger falls into laps of spectators as she attempts to prevent the ball going out of court. |
| Marion George: “Shirley Langrope, Christine Pietzner, Shirley Langrope, oh, ball put out by New Zealand” |
| Peter Montgomery: “Frances Granger hurtles in to become a temporary spectator” |

As Figure 50 indicates, Montgomery had a strong visual awareness, a quick turn of phrase
and added an occasional moment of humour to the commentary. The understandably
inexperienced George in comparison tends to over-describe the play and relies on
providing the names of the players as a main information point.
For George, her first foray into television sports commentary at this level was quite a challenge:

There was a huge scaffolding like a 4 or 5 story building and we had to climb up a ladder, it was just arctic, in freezing cold and wind and wet and sit up there with very little shelter and do it from a monitor. We weren’t supposed to watch the game we were only supposed to watch the monitor because we were commentating on what people could see but it was almost impossible sometimes because of the weather and we would have to give that up and actually watch [the game] to see what was going on so it was absolutely hilarious.

We had to allow for things like advertisements so we had no idea. That was the other thing, we quite often didn’t know when we were going back to the studio or when they were coming back to us, um and there was a bit of hit and miss there, that was the main funny thing, something would happen and we would think oh no we are not on and then Bill [McCarthy] would get in our ear and say you’re not on, we're back at the studio and you know...you had to really improvise quite a lot of the time (George 2007).

National coaches were still very much locked into the old system of running their campaigns when the needs of the media were either non-existent or very secondary. George was deputised to negotiate with the coaches to obtain the basic information television required for its commentary team, which was not an easy task:

I was given the job to find out who was playing in the team[s] because in those days you couldn’t substitute unless they were injured and I could never get a team out of Joyce Brown coaching Australia. She wasn’t interested in telling television or the media anything so you were up against that sort of thing all of the time...trust the Jamaicans and the Trinidad-Tobagoans, [they] seemed to want to do any swifty ideas and deals that they could do - it was hilarious but we managed to get through and it was wonderfully enjoyable (George 2007).

**Reaching their audience**

At this time the World Tournament was still structured around a round robin style competition rather than a tension building quarter/semi/final structure which is preferable for television. In the round robin structure, the outcome can be known before the final game but luckily, in this tournament, the winner was not able to be calculated until the last game between NZ and Australia. This meant everything was at stake for New Zealand in the final telecast game which provided the right ingredients of excitement. Not part of the netball OB for this event, Michael Scott, Head of NZBC production, decided to go to the tournament as a spectator. He had long believed that netball was a “top television sport” and deserved to be given more coverage:

I went along to three or four days of the competition and I just got caught up in it. Some of my friends thought I was mad but it was terrific. It was the first time I had seen a crowd of people at a netball match chanting for their team. It was exciting being there, just for the spectators alone. I remember I was hoarse after we lost to England in that game. It was a great tournament (Scott 2007).

Marion George remembers the initial reluctance by Harold Anderson to support coverage of a women’s sport and then recalls his surprise that the viewing public were so involved in the televised competition:
[Harold Anderson] rang us from Avalon - rang Peter [Montgomery] and I when the game was finished in Auckland in ’75 and congratulated us on the television and the rapport that it was getting in Avalon. He said that everyone on the staff down there had gathered around the television set because it was very exciting and it was that game between Australia and New Zealand. I think when I look back he was against this whole television thing but he did ring us up. I think he came up to see us before it all started...There was a little bit of consternation about it initially. He was amazed at the interest in us. He said that we had done very well and that the viewing was fantastic and that the numbers had gone up for television - for women’s sport (George 2007).

Margaret Leslie’s belief in the game as a valuable television product and her insistence that the World Tournament would capture the imagination of the public was vindicated by the national response:

I do remember returning to Avalon and Keith Quinn telling me that there were at least 100 people watching the games on each of the monitors scattered around the building.

Anderson was pleased, it rated really well. We [staff] were not shown the ratings back then but it rated well, helped no doubt because New Zealand were winning. Anderson was really pleased with the ratings result. He called [me] into his office and thanked me “for nagging me so much to cover the netball” and he was now keen to get more live netball on TV (Leslie 2007).

**Camera Placement**

Two courts were set up for television coverage although the second court was somewhat makeshift and had to contend with some visual obstructions. As indicated in the sequence below, shot coverage on this court was very basic and aimed at gathering material for highlights packages. The New Zealand versus Wales’ game below is shot on this second court using two cameras only.

**Figure 51: New Zealand versus Wales Highlights Package**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cam Position:</th>
<th>HA scaffold tower or temporary stand end-on.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VO:</td>
<td>(B roll with narration not archived)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This would have provided a summary of the game, the implication for New Zealand regarding the draw and drawn attention to the difficulties posed to spectators and players by the weather.
**Cam position:** HA scaffold tower or temporary stand end-on perspective.

**Note:** the temporary court divider and scaffold support which visually obscures the shot when the camera zooms out. The acute high angle and the obstructions at the near end of the court make it difficult to get a clear shot in the shooting circle. This is a very visually compromised set-up and would be unacceptable for a full televised game.

---

**Cam Location:** Courtside camera

**Framing:** Cutaway of ‘crowd’ sitting out the atrocious weather which dogged the tournament

**VO:** as above

---

**Cam location:** Courtside camera

**Use of cam:** only used to pick up cutaways of crowd above, or this shot of lower bodies to emphasise the severity of the conditions and the amount of water on the court.

**VO:** particular mention would be made at this point of the dangerous conditions for the players.

---

**Editing**

As this is a highlights package, the cutting in the post-production edit differs from hot switching during a live game. However, even though there are two cameras available, the courtside camera is only used as a cutaway from the main flow of the game. The game is shown through the high angle end-on camera, which becomes severely visually compromised at the near end of the court. At no stage are the close-up shots gathered by the courtside camera edited into the visual mix. Although there would be considerable visual disparity cutting shots between the end-on and the courtside cameras, this would still, technically speaking, not be a jump cut. However, it is on the edge of the cutting line and to avoid any visual leaps between the two, shots from the courtside camera are only included to add cutaway detail. This set-up provides very basic game coverage and
is no doubt shot under very trying circumstances from compromised camera positions. From the limited camera coverage, it appears that this game is played adjacent to the centre court and the limited coverage considered acceptable for a highlights package of a low ranked team playing New Zealand.

**Camera placement and cutting of the New Zealand/Australia final**

The three cameras covering this game are set up in the conventional ‘belt and braces’ configuration of two high on the scaffold and one at court level. All three cameras are in a centre court position and rely on panning to cover the goal circle ends of the court. In comparison to the example above, there is some attempt to use the courtside camera to cut in closer detail of incidents during the game. This is not always totally successful and the cutting tempo is often a beat behind the action, but it does provide the commentators with occasional opportunities to add storytelling detail. Peter Montgomery, as the experienced broadcaster, is more able to instantly pick up detail from a closer shot. What is noteworthy is the underuse of the courtside camera for close-up detail while play is in progress, as the director appears reluctant to stray too far from the safety of the wide shots from the elevated cameras.

The general principles for covering the game appear to be reliant on Cam 1 shooting the high, wide master shot to cover the centre court action, then cutting to Cam 2 alongside, framed on a slightly tighter shot as the ball comes near the goal circle at either end. The cutting between the two high angle cameras also lags behind the play in some instances and as the framing is still wide on both cameras there is often not a great deal of difference between the shots. The courtside camera is used in the main for when there are breaks in the play such as a ball out of court, a collision on court, a throw-up (tied ball) or a personal infringement penalty. The rationale here is most probably because the speed of the game is slowed and there is less risk of being caught in close-up with the play suddenly moving out of the frame. This ‘safety first’ cutting rationale is very conservative and indicates a superficial understanding of the nature of the game by the camera crew and director. It is adequate, but it mainly records the action from afar rather than working the cameras harder to construct a more visually exciting event.
Figure 52: Cams 1 and 2 Coverage New Zealand versus Australia: last five minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Cam 1" /></td>
<td><strong>Cam 1:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HA, WS, master shot, centre court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zooms out to wide shot to reveal crowd surrounding court as centre pass is taken and moves to the top of the goal third.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Shots record the action and reveal pattern of play from a side view, but when these shots dominate the edit it tends to depower the speed of the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Cam 2" /></td>
<td><strong>Cam 2:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HA, WS (tighter than camera 1) framed on a section of the goal third cutting the circle in half.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoomed in to pick up play as it drives towards the circle. It is still very distant from the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cutting:</strong> This shot directly follows above as part of the conventional cutting pattern as the ball moves towards the circle. When used well, camera 2 should be framed just ahead of the play and the cut called as the play enters the frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Cam 1 &amp; 2" /></td>
<td><strong>Cam 1 &amp; 2: Mix</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissolve between Cam 1 HA WS at end of game and Cam 2 HA MS of crowd to show audience reaction to game result. There are a series of dissolves which mix together a range of shots revealing New Zealand and Australian supporters in the crowd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> dissolve or mix used sparingly. Only used once during the game to mix between Cam’s 1 and 2 as the centre steps up to take the centre pass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be recognised that the director had only one additional camera (Cam 3 courtside) with which to vary the visual mix of the two cameras shooting wide. The mid shots from Cam 3 are able to convey some of the emotion on court, but are much underused in the goal circle as the camera is in the wrong position as soon as the players turn to face the goalpost. The inclusion of one or two more courtside cameras at the end of the court, sideline or backline, would have considerably strengthened the visual
storytelling. It is impossible to know whether these extra cameras were just not in the budget or that the awareness was so limited that the players turning away from the only courtside camera for all the action in the goal circles was not factored into the planning. That was a lesson yet to be learned by the OB producers.

**Figure 53: Close Framing Between Cam 1 and Cam 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cam 1: HA, WS</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> New Zealand defence cut off circle option as Australia feed across outside of circle. <strong>Note:</strong> Rothmans sponsorship sign at left side of frame on fencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam 2: HA, WS</td>
<td><strong>Cutting point:</strong> cut made as Australian player takes the ball in the air top right of frame. <strong>Note:</strong> cutting on action is a convention of continuity editing. The impact of this cut is lost as the two cameras have such similar framing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use of Cam 2 for closer shots of action**

| Cam 2: HA, MLS     | **Cutting points:** Inpoint: cuts from Cam 3  
|                    | Outpoint: cuts to Cam 2  
|                    | **Note:** this tighter shot on Cam 2 is rarely used. (Also note Australian Centre, Norma Plummer, recent coach of Australian ‘Diamonds’). |
**Figure 54: Cam 3 - Use of Mid Shots During Breaks in Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Image](image1.png) | **Cam 3**: NA, MS, mid position courtside, shot zooms out to cover action from the MS on the NZ player. Enables viewers to see the emotional state of the players.  
**Action**: preparing for throw-up between GS and GK.  
**Cutting points**:  
**Inpoint**: GS moves into position for throw-up.  
**Outpoint**: as Australian GK gains possession and passes out of circle. Cuts back to Cam 1 master shot. |
| ![Image](image2.png) | **Cam 3**: NA, MLS, mid position courtside  
**Action**: Australian GK throw-in from sideline  
**Cutting points**:  
**Inpoint**: Cam 1 as ball goes out of court and GK runs into position to take shot  
**Outpoint**: Cut back to Cam 1 once ball leaves hands.  
Cutting sequence follows the movement of the ball |
| ![Image](image3.png) | **Cam 3**: NA, LS  
**Action**: Shooting down the court showing rear view of Australians driving onto their shooting circle.  
**Note**: The camera is shooting in poor light levels near the end of its focal range, hence the soft picture resolution. The shot appears to be slightly low angle in comparison to the bulk of the HA coverage from Cam’s 1 & 2 and is a fleeting insight into the real pace and power of the game |
**Figure 55: Example of Three Camera Sequence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual frame grabs</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cam 1: HA, WS      | **Action:** NZ Centre, Christine Pietzner falls when taking high ball, contacted by Australian player  
**Cutting points:** cut on action as Pietzner falls (cut lagging a second behind action)  
**Inpoint:** start of play from NZ sideline throw  
**Outpoint:** Pietzner on ground |
| Cam 3: NA MLS, slight zoom out to cover action | **Action:** Australian defence, backs to camera, NZ centre, Pietzner, on ground with possession of ball at edge of circle  
**Cutting points:**  
**Inpoint:** player on ground obscured by Australian defence  
**Outpoint:** Pietzner starting to get to her feet |
| Cam 2: HA, MLS     | **Action:** NZ centre, Christine Pietzner, starts to throw penalty pass, Plummer behind  
**Cutting points:**  
**Inpoint:** Pietzner gets to feet to take pass on side of circle  
**Outpoint:** Ball leaves Pietzner’s hands |
| Cam 1: HA, WS, goal circle | **Action:** GS has two shots at goal then loses possession  
**Cutting point:**  
**Inpoint:** Ball leaving Piezner’s hands, short pass to GS inside circle  
**Outpoint:** GS loses ball from rebound |
A rudimentary OB but was it watchable?

Close study of the camera placement and cutting decisions provide a precious time capsule of netball’s television history. The immense value of this footage is that it is the earliest surviving example of multi-camera coverage of a netball game filmed in New Zealand by the NZBC. As the interviews with broadcasters and television crew reveal, it was a struggle to get agreement from the broadcasting hierarchy that there was merit in covering a women’s sport and that there would be a receptive television audience. At the production level the minimalist coverage is a reflection of the limited budget, equipment availability and knowledge of the sport by the producers and crew. At the recent centenary of Auckland Netball Association, this clip of the 1975 New Zealand/Australia game was played to a large crowd of netballers ranging from current Silver Ferns through to women in their 90s who played the old 9-aside game in the 1920s. This footage may be 36 years old and mainly covered in wide shot from the restricted view of three cameras but its reception was electric. Trans-Tasman rivalry never fails and the Auckland Netball Centenary crowd got drawn into the tension of the close game and the intense excitement of the crowd and commentators as the game built towards the final whistle. It was one of the on-going talking points of the evening as women of all ages dissected the game, analysed individual performance, critiqued positional play and bemoaned the fact that they just never get to see such rich historical footage. It worked just as intensely on an audience used to the sophistication of modern televised coverage as it did for the television audience in 1975.
Netball has the trophies, the money and the fans. So what’s missing? According to the country’s most informed critic – it’s a man!
(Cathy Campbell Eye Witness News 1989)

When the team asked for video facilities at Crystal Palace to prepare for their first game against England they were told there was a “nice local cinema just a few miles down the road.” (Hawes and Barker 1999 125)

Figure 56: The Distinctively Branded New Zealand Team, Tour of England 1988

(TVNZ Archive)

The maturing relationship between sport and television

Although the most spectacular growth of televised sport was still a decade away, by the early 1980s sport and television had reached what Rowe describes as a “mature stage in their relationship” (1996 573). Top rating programmes on television were frequently sports events, with major sport spectaculars such as the Olympics commanding increasingly huge global audiences. Smaller markets such as New Zealand were regularly exposed to imported sports programmes from countries that were wealthier and more technically sophisticated (Goldlust 1987). Familiarity with professional productions using state-of-the-art technology influenced producers and audiences alike and created a production benchmark irrespective of technological and budget constraints.
Sports bodies had increasingly adapted to the needs of television, changing even the rules of their sport to better meet the scheduling and entertainment objectives of the medium. Playing times were altered, the overall and internal timing of games was changed or more strictly controlled, rules were changed to ensure more clear cut and competitive outcomes, the pace of games was increased by eliminating or minimising action lulls that soaked up time or would only appeal to the purist minority (Rowe 1996 573). Minority sports which Rowe, picking up Goldlust’s marriage metaphor, tellingly characterises as ‘TV suitors’, worked hard to rationalize their structures and redesign their profiles to fit the “telegenic sports mould” (ibid). For women’s sport internationally, this often went as far as the sexualisation of female athletes and sports apparel which New Zealand netball could rarely be accused of employing20. For the sports already reaping the benefit of exposure on television, the central issue became how to keep coverage, rather than questioning the wisdom of association with the medium.

Kerry Packer’s reorganisation of cricket continued to flourish in this decade. His aggressive commercial model sought out a primetime audience and was structured to synchronise with television schedules. The far-reaching influence of the intense commercialisation of cricket cannot be underestimated as it established some key structural and marketing principles for the televising of traditional sport outside of the highly commercialised US system. The radical rethink of how to film sport was not lost on the young production Turks working in New Zealand television at the time:

Thank God for Channel 9 and thank God for Kerry Packer, all the aficionados of cricket, but it was the saviour of the game. It was an extraordinary time, the bosses couldn’t run away from it. It was coming through from Australia on tape, the bosses had nowhere to hide. The standard had been set by Hill and Morelli - different angles, new ways of doing things. I just knew there had to be a better way than the old way. And so to me the inspiration for me and for others of my time was Channel 9 Australia… I’ve never been one to follow what people do. [ I] have watched and observed and tried to find a better way to do things, I like tighter, I like to get into the head space (Graham Veitch 2007).

The highly publicised success of the marriage between commercial television and professional sport did not of course provide an easy pathway for netball. It did foreshadow a different perspective on the repackaging of a traditional game that was not lost on the more commercially aware sports administrators. Netball and women’s sport in general were not in a position to undertake such a high level of structural or commercial risk taking but the shaping of a specific competition was attractive to the broadcaster and

20 The Silver Ferns, for political, cultural and personal reasons have never resorted to the production of a nude calendar to raise funds whereas the Australian team compromised to produce an arty ‘athletes in underwear’ calendar in 2001. The refusal to completely strip was led by the team captain Katherine Harby: “the producers of this magazine feel that we, as female athletes, would gain greater publicity and mileage by taking our clothes off and producing a calendar semi or fully naked rather than producing a calendar showing our athleticism which is of greater interest to the young girls who play our game” (Katherine Harby ABC 2000).
struck a responsive chord with a wide general audience. At the start of the decade, netball still needed to woo the broadcaster into a more consistent relationship in order to secure a stronger hold in primetime. Elaborating Goldlust’s marriage metaphor, it was time for netball and television to ‘go steady’ but both parties needed to do some attitude adjustment to ensure a more harmonious relationship. This was not achieved until late in the decade.

**Technical advances and making ‘good television’**

During the 1980s, significant technical advances in commercial television quickly filtered through to the domestic market. The introduction of the industry standard camcorder (camera and video recorder combined) and the VCR (video cassette recorder) enabled a rapid shift in the production and reproduction of images and access to visual material. As the unit cost reduced, mass marketing of the domestic VCR\(^\text{21}\) rapidly expanded. This technology offered domestic consumers the ability to time-shift viewing, copy off-air and build a personalised archive, independent of institutional control and expense. Running parallel to the mass marketing of domestic cameras recording on video tape, consumers could now crash-edit between two VCR machines or invest in a simple editing switcher device to reassemble raw footage or material taped off-air. The importance of this new production and post production technology for sports coaches, players and sporting institutions was considerable. It was now possible to gain cost effective access to televised images of elite sport and record and duplicate game footage. By the mid to late 1980s, game analysis using the new domestic gear became more commonplace and the cost barrier and the gate keeping function of broadcasters was sidestepped. There was a considerable drop in visual and audio quality between the professional formats and the domestic VHS medium, but this was secondary to having access to and control over hitherto scarce game footage.

By the 1980s further refinements to the increasingly light weight mobile cameras and the ability to manipulate visual effects with Chroma-key\(^\text{22}\) and Quantel\(^\text{23}\), provided television producers with the ability to relay and manipulate images of a higher quality and visual complexity (Whannel 1992). Wireless microphones became more refined and reliable and could gather an independent sound source. Umpires could be mic’ed and their

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\(^{21}\) VHS claimed the domestic market during the so-called ‘format wars’ between VHS and Betamax during the 1980s although there was little discernible difference in quality to the viewer. There was also a rapid proliferation of video parlours in the early to mid 1980s to provide programme content for the home viewer.

\(^{22}\)Chroma keying (blue screen/green screen) composites two overlaid images together.

\(^{23}\)In the mid 1970s Quantel produced a digital frame store function which allowed picture-in-picture inserts to be generated during broadcast. It was first used in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. In the mid 1980s Quantel produced a visual effects compositing system which also had a non-linear digital editing capacity. This provided OB directors with the ability to key in sophisticated visual effects and graphics information during live broadcast.
audio was used as part of the complex game event soundtrack. Although, as international netball umpire Dawn Jones discovered, carrying the new miniaturised audio unit was not without its challenges:

Well, you started to get microphones and that in itself, when you were an umpire, was a sheer challenge because...the microphones were designed for a man that had a pocket that he could put it in and for women their dress was just not suitable and it took some time before they decided on the idea of having little pockets with velcro and so on, that they could tie around the waist and actually attach. I can recall umpiring a New Zealand versus Australia under 21 game at Christchurch...and they taped the battery unit to the top of my leg with masking tape. Well not surprisingly after running up and down the court once it was down round my ankle so whether they liked it or not I removed it at that point and chucked it aside but it was a ‘to-do’ because they weren’t really prepared for being involved in a women’s sport and what it involved (Jones 2007).

Morris and Nydahl identify that by the 1980s, television producers had the technical capability to “design sports spectacle laced with visual surprises” (2004 101). This enabled a “range of dramatic experiences” (ibid) to be constructed which shifted real time and spectator perspective. Sports producers increasingly employed highly cinematic visual and oral storytelling devices as the complete dominance of the single camera master shot was replaced by a multi-camera perspective. This resulted in a uniquely complex viewing experience. The increasingly skilled use of the zoom, the close-up and the cutaway drew the viewer into closer emotional engagement with the game. Replay, slow-motion and freeze frame suspended natural game flow, while at the same time increased a perception of continuous action, which offered the viewer an analytically rich sense of visual intimacy with both the action and individual athletes. This meant a single action could be divided into “separately distinguishable new units of purposive, dramatic action” (102) to construct a unique story of the game event. This flow of events, constructed by a director creating a “compelling storyline” (ibid) is closely related to but is not ‘real life’. The televised version becomes the dominant record of the game event, as those consuming the mediated form vastly outnumbered the live spectators.

However, Morris and Nydahl’s notion of the director as auteur sits awkwardly with the 1980s context of television sport production. Canadian Richard Gruneau accepts that the building of these dramatic sequences is a “complex process of selection” (1989 134) but adds a more critical dimension to Morris and Nydahl’s essentially auteurist notion of the director. He cites Hargreaves’ (1986) assertion that there is a set of media sport news values employed by production personnel who tend to express “dominant ideological tendencies in capitalist societies” (135). This is backed by the views expressed by Gitlin (1979), Clarke and Clarke (1982) and McKay and Rowe (1987). Gruneau’s critique of these views is that they downplay the political and economic limits that are the inevitable context for television sports production. Johnson (1989) and Stoddart (1994) draw
attention to the inadequacy of forming conclusions of the televised text when such analysis can be built on an inadequate understanding of the production process. Timely studies by Gruneau and MacNeill of televised sports coverage in the 1980s added a much needed critical insight into these production processes which provided a more revealing and practical understanding of the medium. As noted by Silk and Amis (2000), this research into the labour processes and key decision making by production crew is still “vastly under research and theorized” (289).

Gruneau’s case study of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s coverage of the 1986 World Cup downhill ski race and Margaret MacNeill’s (1996) study of the Canadian Television coverage of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, both address the gap between the broader theoretical perspective and the practical realities of television sports journalism and OB production at the time. MacNeill usefully identifies the autonomous element of text production afforded to OB crew on location but is aware that this cannot be cut away from the strong influence of conventional television codes of practice. However, she is not as deeply aware of the impact of the production crew on the sporting text as Gruneau’s analysis reveals. The polysemic nature of the text offering a variety of interpretations, Gruneau believes, puts pressure on television producers to use all their skills in order to “position viewers in particular ways and gain credibility for their own preferred viewpoints” (1989 152). Gruneau’s earlier study foregrounds MacNeill’s position, reinforcing the construction of the text by routine acceptance of “discursive practices in production” (ibid). He believes that this is not achieved by a “finely tuned process of political socialisation on the part of the production crew” (ibid) but by a shared understanding that, for example, the ways in which cameras are positioned to make the course look fast, shots composed to emphasise the individual and the narrative organisation and cutting rhythm of the production, all contribute to the understanding of what makes “good television” (ibid).

The above studies, while important to provide an insight into production practice at the time, do not directly address issues of gender equity or whether the codes of unwritten practice for ‘good television’ are engaged in the same way for women’s sport. Margaret Carlisle Duncan and Michael Messner’s 1998 study, ‘The Media Image of Sport and Gender’, looks at analysis by the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) study (1990) of six weeks of televised men’s and women’s sports news coverage gathered during 1989. Unsurprisingly, the AAF study found men’s sports received 92% of the airtime in comparison to 5% for women and 3% for gender neutral topics. The most interesting aspect was the assessment of the technical quality of the coverage of women’s sport.

24The six week period in 1989 included the final rounds of the men’s and women’s NCAA basketball tournament and the men’s, women’s and mixed matches at the US Open Tennis Tournament (Carlisle Duncan and Messner 1998 171).
The production values for men’s sports were found to be “far superior to those for women’s sports” and “tended to trivialize the women’s games, while framing men’s game as dramatic spectacles of historical importance” (Carlisle et al. 1998 173). There was also a difference noted in quality between the camerawork, editing and sound quality and that more slow-motion replays and onscreen graphics were used to enhance the viewing of the men’s game (173). The industry justification is that the lower production value for women’s sport is simply an acknowledgment of the reduced level of expectation and interest of the market. The counter argument, later endorsed by Kane and Greendorfer (1994) and Messner, Duncan and Wachs (1996) is that women’s sport on television rates poorly because the inferior production actually make it less interesting to watch (Carlisle et al. 1998). The insights from early netball commentator Trish McKelvey in the previous chapter endorse the content analysis from the 1990 AAF study and Carlisle, Duncan and Messner’s (1998) findings. The first step turning a women’s sport such as netball into good television was for television management and production crew to see the sport as a valuable commodity which would repay the similar technical and creative investment afforded to male sports.

**New Zealand Television in the 1980s – radical legislative and structural change**

If the seventies was a decade of New Zealand television coming-of-age, the 1980s was conducted in an altogether different environment. New Zealand entered a prolonged period of economic depression and unemployment at the start of the 1980s, which tipped into a short but intense period of speculation ending in the stock market crash of 1987. It was very much a boom and bust decade. Economic and social tensions manipulated by the reactionary Muldoon-led National government gave way to a Labour landslide in 1984. The second half of the decade witnessed some of the most comprehensive changes to the commercial and legislative structure of the government sector ever undertaken in New Zealand, helmed by the then Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas.

Despite the constrained economic situation the BCNZ entered the decade financially secure. A monopolistic dominance with an increasingly commercial outlook was forced in part by the dwindling income from the licence fee throughout the Muldoon era (Smith 1996). TVNZ was created in 1980 with the inevitable amalgamation of SPTV with TV One. It made sound business sense to have TV ONE focused on sport and British orientated programming and TV-2, with its American bias, gathering a younger demographic. As media commentator Paul Smith observes, the launching of TVNZ fitted into a wider political and economic agenda and “coincided with a new decade in which the private sector would alter not only the nature of television, but of New Zealand society itself” (1996 18).
The competitive gain for TVNZ in the next decade was created through a somewhat turbulent period of restructuring pain in the 1980s. The most radical changes in the history of New Zealand broadcasting happened in the latter part of the decade as part of wider initiatives to restructure the “commercial activities of government enterprises” (Spicer et al. 1996 17). Legislative change was required to enable these restructuring processes to take place: the Broadcasting Amendment (No. 2) Act 1988; the State Owned-Enterprises Amendment (No. 4) Act 1988; and the Broadcasting Act, 1989 (Spicer et al. 1996 18). This encompassing overhaul of the broadcasting industry evolved out of two major government-appointed committees of inquiry - the Rennie and the Officials’ Committees. The Rennie recommendations allowed TVNZ to maximise the value of its state-owned assets and provided the SOE (State Owned Enterprise) with a commercial edge from which it could aggressively defend itself against domestic competition25 and pursue international opportunities. The Rennie Report identified the proposed changes as a high risk strategy but Spicer et al. (1996) credit them as providing the foundation for TVNZ’s secure position in the 1990s.

Under the free market policies wrought by ‘Rogernomics26’, TVNZ, like other government institutions, was selected for a fiscal make-over to remove a “lazy and bloated” (Horrocks 2004 29) bureaucratic structure. In 1986, Fleet Street and BBC-trained Englishman Julian Mounter, with considerable experience in regional television, was appointed to streamline TVNZ, increase profits and hone the battle plan to face competition. Mounter believed that TVNZ needed to capitalise on the rapid changes in broadcasting and that continuing to mimic the BBC was a recipe for disaster (Spicer et al. 1996). Critics of this aggressive approach believed that the careful recommendations on maintaining core principles of public service broadcasting acknowledged in the so-called ‘third channel hearings’ in the Royal Commission on Broadcasting (1986) were largely ignored in the 1989 Broadcasting Act. This Act enshrined free market policies, prioritising the importance of profit and high ratings over the recognition that broadcasting had “special cultural importance” (Horrocks 2004 29). The 1989 Act effectively deregulated the broadcasting industry (Spicer et al. 1996) and paved the way for further deregulations in the early 1990s.

To superficially offset the openly commercialised restructure, the Broadcasting Commission (later renamed NZ on Air) was created in 1989. Its role was to foster local content production (excluding sport) within a critically limited fiscal environment. In the

25 Commercial challenges facing TVNZ at this time were the proposed third channel, TV3, which came into the market in late 1989, the on-going deregulation of the telecommunications industry and the need to keep up with the pace of rapid technological change (Spicer et al. 1996).

26 The colloquial epithet given to the free market and deregulation policies of the Labour Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas.
same year, TV3, impoverished after years of struggling to obtain a broadcasting warrant (Horrocks 2004) entered the market underfunded and unable to match the monopolistic stranglehold of the restructured TVNZ. However as Day (2000) notes, there was always anxiety lurking beneath TVNZ’s position of privilege. As far back as the radio years of the 1920s broadcasting was never exempt from on-going political interference. This uncertainty, the tightening fiscal environment and the threat of an asset sale, meant TVNZ habitually played it safe throughout the 1980s. They shut down any initiatives requiring entrepreneurial expenditure and developed what Day (2000) identifies as a siege mentality. The much-needed upgrading of the plant and equipment didn’t become a reality until the very end of the decade, when the Hobson Street network centre in Auckland was built and new equipment purchased.

**New Zealand televised sport and rugby’s temporary fall from grace**

In somewhat of an understatement, Boyd-Bell identifies TVNZ’s entry into televised sport in the 1980s as “shaky” (1987 142). The US-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games effectively denied it a chance to refine and promote its growing international expertise. However this gap in the televisial sporting calendar paled in significance the next year when the 1981 Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand ripped the lid off long simmering social and political anxieties. TVNZ sports crew covered all the games, including the on-field events at the infamous Hamilton match. Televising this tour placed the broadcaster in a contentious situation, which could be read as a pro-tour and an endorsement of the Muldoon government and was personally compromising for many of the personnel involved (143).

Aside from the arguments that sport and politics could and should be separate, the anti-tour protests went much deeper than just opposition to contact with a South African rugby team that used sport to reinforce their doctrine of white supremacy. At the local level, opposition to racial discrimination rapidly widened to include other issues of pressing social relevance; gender discrimination being high on the agenda. New Zealand sociologist Shona Thompson (1988) identifies women as being very prominent in the anti-tour demonstrations, fuelled by the desire to challenge the controlling male and rugby hegemony in New Zealand society:

> It is argued that much of the women’s protests against the tour, particularly as it continued, was motivated by emerging conscious opposition to the forces of patriarchal power over women in New Zealand society, intricately linked with the power of capitalism and white supremacy, in which the sport of rugby has played an exceedingly strong symbolic and reductive role. New Zealand women were seen to represent a strong challenge to that previously held dominance and from a position of subordinance made a substantial contribution to the emerging hegemony (Thompson 1988 210).
Thompson suggests that the 1981 protests made a substantial contribution to an emerging hegemony in New Zealand which brought about a shift in power relations and challenged the way in which the “cultural freight carried by rugby” (Fougere 1989 117) controlled contemporary society (see also Chapple1984; Richards 1999). Changes in this decade did not instantly create a world of equal opportunity for women and the gains were not great or shared equally. Outstanding individual athletes such as middle and long distance runners Anne Audain and Lorraine Moller, world squash champion Susan Devoy and ironman (sic) Erin Baker followed Billie Jean King’s example and fought to gain the same public recognition and financial rewards as their male counterparts as issues of ‘shamateurism’ were rapidly forcing professionalism into the open (Whannel 1992). These women, competing in a decade when New Zealand produced more female than male world-ranked record holders (Ferkins 1992), used their international status and publicity to highlight issues of discrimination against female athletes. They were able to leverage support off the country’s desire to punch above its weight in the international sporting arena.

Throughout the 1980s rugby struggled to recover from the negative backlash associated with 1981 and did not regain central public regard until winning the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987. Soccer, a minor sport in New Zealand gained an unaccustomed profile on New Zealand television the next year during the All Whites attention-grabbing campaign to qualify for the FIFA World Cup in Spain. The qualifying games throughout Europe and Asia enabled TVNZ to demonstrate its commitment to provide coverage of national teams in top level competition. The All Whites ‘Road to Spain’ campaign allowed TVNZ to enhance their status as an international broadcaster of high competency, in the “top league” (Boyd-Bell 1987 143) with American and European organisations. TVNZ’s rapidly growing sports OB competency, domestically and internationally, enabled it to become a senior member of the Asian-Pacific Broadcasting Union, providing coverage for the member countries (ibid). The decision to invest in cutting-edge technology introduced state-of-the-art computer graphics, remote cameras and instant replays. This level of investment paid off with TVNZ’s highly regarded coverage of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. TVNZ’s footage was purchased by over twenty nations and was viewed by one-third of the world’s population (ibid). The state broadcaster’s sports department now had the expertise, the professional experience and

27 Amateur athletes in the 19th century ideal were expected to play for the love of the game without financial reward in contrast to professionals who were paid for their services. Shamateurism became the term used to describe the double standards increasingly in place in the 20th century where athletes were paid in kind with gear, travel etc. provided under the counter in order to maintain their amateur status. It was almost impossible for elite athletes to achieve at international level without this clandestine financial aid. The considerable disparity in sponsorship and prize money between men and women made it doubly difficult for women to achieve at elite level.
the technical capacity to make high-quality television on an equal footing with the rest of
the world. On the domestic front, it became significant which sports got the benefit of
this level of professional attention without having to raise the full cost of production
themselves.

Netball was in the right place at the right time following the vacuum created by rugby’s
temporary slump in popularity post-1981. Taking care to present themselves as a
political-free-zone, they appeared less problematic to a broadcaster who were looking for
positive sports stories to present to the public. There were considered easy to deal with
and admired because of their care to avoid feminist connotations and sounding strident in
their wish to gain greater broadcasting exposure (Knowles 2011). The small gains made
in the previous two decades and the rapid economic and cultural changes created a
broadcasting niche which netball was able to colonise. Unfortunately, this privilege was
not shared to the same extent by any other women’s sport in the country. The 1980s was
the decade when a number of key factors combined to consolidate netball’s position as
the only female sport in the country to receive major television patronage and attract
increasing sponsor investment. It was the first real opportunity for the game to start
capitalising on a more consistent primetime presence.

The increased public demand to fund and recognise the value of
women’s sport

The one-off grant that enabled netball to host the 1975 World Tournament in Auckland
was an isolated but important start to attracting more regular government sponsorship.
This funding was the downstream result of the initial flurry of attention given to sport
through the creation of the Ministry of Recreation out of the 1973 Recreation and Sports
Act. However, the latter part of the 1970s did not see a significant increase in the level of
government funding of sport and what was available was spread thinly across recreation
and sport. By the end of the decade, sporting bodies openly expressed the view that sport
in general and elite sport in particular was increasingly missing out to what it considered
to be “nebulous recreation activities”(Collins and Downey 2000 212). Others, holding
more egalitarian ideals of recreation, felt that funding elite sport was to the detriment of
the majority (ibid). There was still doubt in some circles that government should take any
role in allocating funds to sport (Stothart 2000). In any case precious little went to
women’s sport and recreational activities. The groundswell against the stifling
dominance of rugby union unleashed in 1981 fed into a series of inquiries and
conferences in the 1980s on women and sport.

Although increasingly driven by a commercial aspect to its core business practice, TVNZ
was still essentially a public service broadcaster and as such was still charged with
delivering a diversity of programming, accommodating the tastes of minorities and
fostering a shared sense of national identity. The sporting activities of women fitted into these criteria and as such the state broadcaster had to heed calls to increase coverage of women’s sport. It was influenced by government pressure from the newly appointed Ministry of Women’s Affairs (established in 1984), which commissioned a study to support “the expansion of women’s rights in law and in practice” (Bell 1985 10). In the foreword, Ann Hercus Minister of Women’s Affairs records that 94% of women consulted thought that while the women’s movement had “brought changes for the better” (10) in society, there was still a lack of practical application of this new found equality in their personal lives. As calls for equity, increasingly backed by Government incentives, took more concrete form, netball was in the right place to benefit.

In response to growing public pressure regarding gender discrimination in the allocation of community resources and inspired by the Australian ‘Fit to Play’ conference on women, sport and recreation (1980) the NZ Council for Recreation and Sport held the ‘Women and Recreation’ conference in Wellington. The opening address by the Hon. D.A. Highet, Minister for Recreation and Sport, strongly indicated the government would address barriers to sporting and recreational opportunities for women. To avoid soft-soaping around the issue, conference presenter Andrea Baker chose a straight talking quote from another conference submission to open her paper, ‘Team Mates or Tea Makers’ - “Women in sport do not, in New Zealand occupy an equal place, nor enjoy the same prestige as men, nor do they have equal access to existing facilities and funding” (qtd. in Cooper 1981 36).

There was no paper published in the conference proceedings on the relationship between television and women’s sport. However, Ronda Cooper’s research paper, ‘Women’s Sport in the Media’, commissioned by the Committee on Women in 1980, was presented at a panel discussion chaired by Diana Jones, with television sports broadcasters Keith McEwen28 and Ron Findlay. Out of this panel discussion five main points provided a useful perspective on the perceived status quo:

1. that most people working in the media are men and that most sporting representatives requesting media coverage are men and therefore male interests dominate media coverage;
2. that in television, sponsorship is a key to supporting sporting coverage and men’s activities find it easier to gain support from sponsors than do women’s activities;
3. that the relationships between the media and sporting groups are very poor and lack of warning of imminent events by sports groups often ensure their activities are not covered (12-18 months advance warning of anticipated events was preferred for TV coverage);

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28 Head of TVNZ Sport, Keith McEwen’s name is misspelt as McKeowen in the 1981 report. I have used the correct spelling of his name as it is not a direct quotation.
4. that sports producers rely on “gut feelings” to decide on particular coverage, but as women attending the panel indicated, it was very much men's gut feelings and not women’s which led to coverage decisions;

5. That sport producers did not consider that women’s sport was of sufficient standard of performance to be good “commercial” television. This point was rejected by those women attending the session.

(Women and Recreation Conference 1981 166)

Although it did not result in increased funding of women’s sport, this conference was a significant step forward in the increased politicisation of the status of women’s sport in New Zealand. Alongside educators, community workers and the army of sports administration volunteers, broadcasters and politicians were included in a debate in which they now wished to be seen as actively engaged. For netball in particular, this was a discussion which could only be of long-term benefit in the form of government funding and increased regard as a valuable television product.

Sport on the Move report (1985) and its significance to netball

The formation of the Sports Development Inquiry committee and the resultant Sport on the Move Report (1985) was the combined initiative of Sir Ron Scott, organiser of the 1974 Commonwealth Games and Mike Moore, the Minister of Recreation and Sport in the new Labour Government. Mindful of the newly formed Australian Institute of Sport programme, the stated aim of this Government inquiry was to improve the “delivery of sport to all New Zealanders” (Stothart 2000 92). There were 278 written submissions received, with Netball New Zealand making a major contribution to the inquiry. Their submission focused on the way netball had achieved and was able to maintain its dominant position from a very fragile funding base. A key area of their submission drew on their past 24 years of experience vying for media attention and sponsorship and provided evidence of a robust infrastructure which nourished the sport despite a chronic lack of media attention in the previous decade. At the time of the report, the registered membership of netball was estimated at 114,210 (excluding schools competition), second only to rugby at 200,000 (estimate only). Men’s cricket was the next highest with 75,000 registered players (Sport on the Move 1985). The report acknowledged how the New Zealand netball team had achieved against the odds - that being the on-going undervaluing of women and women’s sport in New Zealand society.

Echoing the concerns expressed at the 1981 ‘Women and Recreation’ Conference, the Sport on the Move report briefly addresses the overwhelming media bias in favour of men’s sporting achievements. It draws attention to the severe under representation of women’s sport by the media, which could lead to the logical conclusion that “women’s sport in this country is a non-event” (111). Evidence is quoted from the O’Leary and Roberts study (NZ Listener June 15-21 1985) that claims rugby receives “427 times more
media coverage than netball” (Sport on the Move 1985 111) although both codes have memberships of over 100,000. In response to this, rather surprisingly, the New Zealand Sports Foundation informed the Sport on the Move research team that interest in netball is confined “mainly to participants, their families and friends” (112). This somewhat ill-informed assumption is not based on the evidence provided by audience response to international or provincial netball fixtures on television between 1975 and 1985. It also perpetuates the myth that there was not an audience of size and value in New Zealand to justify television coverage of women’s sport. However, the report does address the need for more media promotion for women’s sports to help “capture a wider audience” (112). The report’s recommendations propose that a Women’s Sport Promotion unit be set up, which, amongst other goals, would “promote, monitor and report on the coverage of women’s sport by all media outlets” and “work with women’s sporting associations to assist in developing skills for media liaison and sponsorship negotiations” (114).

Coverage of women’s sport in television news: O’Leary and Roberts survey (1985)

The O’Leary and Roberts study, which informs the Sport on the Move report, is based on an earlier piece highlighting the subordinate position to which TVNZ relegates the reporting of women’s sport. The survey selected random samples over a 15-day period of TVNZ’s 6:30pm news during the May to July winter sport season and immediately prior to the Los Angeles Olympics. The peak TV ONE audience at this time was estimated at 1.5 million. Although the content analysis is focused on television sports news items and not actual game coverage, it still provides an invaluable insight into the huge imbalance between the reporting of male and female sport in the early 1980s. Of the 249 items recorded over the sample period including both international and local sports news, only 13% were directly related to women’s sport. Three hours, 24 minutes and 25 seconds were dedicated solely to men’s sports and only 26 minutes and 37 seconds on women’s sports. An item length breakdown indicated that the highest proportion of items covering women’s sport were less than 15 seconds in duration. The most revealing imbalance is the extreme contrast between rugby and netball. Rugby scored just under an hour of combined coverage in comparison to netball’s nine seconds.

It is therefore unsurprising that O’Leary and Roberts are able to make the claim that the:

Imbalance in the presentation of sports news items about men and women far exceeds the larger number of males participating in sport. It perpetuates the stereotypes of masculinity and active sports participation and femininity and passive spectatorship (1985 16).

On this evidence they believe that the BCNZ is failing in its obligation, required under the Broadcasting Act, to “provide and produce programmes which inform, educate and entertain”, as well as to “cater in a balanced way for the varied interest of different
sections of the community”. They conclude that “in no way can it be said that nine seconds of netball coverage “inform” or “educate fairly” and that “the time is well overdue for television to represent accurately the social reality of sport in New Zealand” (16).

**Cometh the hour, cometh the women!**

For netball to become a consistently valuable product in order to secure and widen its viewership and enhance its sponsorship appeal there needed to be changes from within - not just from political pressure on the broadcaster to provide more quality airtime. In sport, just being highly visible is not enough; you need to be winning as well. The history of Trans-Tasman competition has proven that many times and programme content that has cultural resonance will be reflected in the ratings. The ratings, whatever their failing as a system are television’s commercial currency for the broadcaster and advertisers. Netball needed to put a complete sporting and economic package together that appealed to the public as well as the broadcaster and sponsors to prove itself as ‘the’ women’s sport worthy of a higher level of patronage.

The combination of Lois Muir as national coach and Anne Taylor helming the NZNA Executive provided netball with much needed success on the court and in the marketplace. Taylor rapidly set up a series of strategic alliances with commercial partners and broadcasting that enabled the game to consolidate its dominant position early in the decade. The legacy of the old guard from the 1970s had moved the game a little closer to the mainstream but its ideals were still firmly rooted in a conservative distrust of the media sport marketplace. Despite their drive for a higher level of media representation, this was often predicated on the belief that the sport should remain unchanged and it was for the media to adapt. There was also a level of distrust of sponsorship, which was seen as capricious and tied to outside influences which challenged the amateur ideals of volunteer guardianship. There was a horror from some administrators that netball would be sponsored by women’s products such as tampons which would be seen as a public shame (Jenden 2003).

Anne Taylor believed in engaging a more proactive approach to television and business which netball traditionalists often found difficult. From the outset she decided to build a closer working relationship with television as well as bring in expertise from the

29O’Leary/Roberts italics

30 This is not the same Anne Taylor in the 1973 Sporting Life extended news item (Chapter 5 Appendix)

31When Johnson and Johnson became a major sponsor of netball Marj Jenden’s worst fears became realised. Promotional material for the 1991 World Netball Championships prominently reinforced their sponsorship slogan: ‘Proudly brought to you by Carefree Tampons and Stayfree Adhesive Pads’.
commercial marketplace to broker more lucrative sponsorship deals. She began in an informal way, in the early 1980s:

I had a set plan at the start which was that there was men’s sport on television, I lived in a sporting household, my husband was a sportsman and it was my background as I was a Phys. Ed. teacher and I basically believed that women could do anything that men could do and it was just on that one surmise, when I think about it now, it was just on that one surmise, that we could get netball on television. If a women’s sport was going to go on television it could be netball. I did believe that it could televise. So that was my first stance and it was probably my stance for quite a long time. So that’s what I went out to achieve really (Taylor 2007).

Taylor also recognised, that although netball’s survival and growth in the past had been predicated on the volunteer labour of women, it was now time to open up to the business world and draw on the expertise of men. Within television she found a strong ally in Keith McEwen, TVNZ Head of Sport (1978-1986), who had done his time standing on the netball sideline watching his own daughter play and was a staunch supporter of the game. In many ways McEwen held a somewhat unusual view for a broadcaster at that time:

Women have always known how good this game was, I don’t think men ever appreciated [netball] until they saw it on television what a fantastic game it is… In terms of my international broadcasting colleagues…Canadians, Australians, they couldn’t believe that we had this love affair with this wonderful game… I would try to point out to them how skilful this game is. This is a game played at 100 miles per hour with huge skill factor and it’s got everything that you could ever want in a game.. It was a very telegenic game. That was its magic. It’s very televisable...because it all happens in a little rectangle...and it’s in your living room and you want to be with it. It was easy to have a love affair with this game (McEwen 2003).

He saw it as a game that should be accorded quality television coverage, “it was such a good product and I couldn’t see why we [TVNZ] weren’t doing more with it” (ibid). Taylor was the new breed of netball administrator who was willing to meet the broadcaster half way to get netball more established as a key television sporting code. Under the combined stewardship of Anne Taylor and Keith McEwen, TVNZ began to develop a much stronger relationship with netball. Taylor had a clear benchmark for what she saw as fundamental to building a television audience for the game - the need for quality rather than quantity:

I saw television as a way to educate people...I saw that we could educate people and we could get better netball and we could lift the standard if we had a vehicle to be able to do it and I just saw that [television] as the vehicle to do it...in the initial stages...and some people probably got quite upset with me over it, but I believed that the first thing was quality so if when we were negotiating what we could put on or where we could put it on, if it wasn’t going to be a game of standard, I didn’t want to know about it (Taylor 2007).
It was time to move away from the ad hoc system of the past whereby a random game or part of a game was televised because it happened to be played at the time television had a gap in its schedule. Taylor believed that this hit and miss arrangement was detrimental as the coverage was irregular and the quality of the games could be “terribly poor” (Taylor 2007). This was an organisational aspect that Taylor believed netball needed to address by structuring the competition to create the best product available for television, not the other way around. “My view was that it was not when television could do it, it’s when can we give the game of quality that can go out there so we can get the people to sit on their chuffs and watch it”. To achieve this there needed to be a change to the mind-set of those who believed that the game needed to be protected from outsiders and sheltered from commercial demands:

We would never have got it on [television] if it had not been for Keith McEwen. We had to make a lot of changes to the things we did to get netball more regularly on television. We had all sorts of rules and regulations about the length of the time we played games. At one stage we only played them 20 minutes each way at a national championship and that was going to have to go. We had to have players who could last for a full game on the court and we had to be able to do that with x number of teams to x number of games.

For me the whole key to everything was taking Keith [McEwen] down to a Council meeting in Dunedin where we had quite a few life members...who wouldn’t want to go down this path because we were getting away from tradition...One of netball’s problems all the way through and even now, is that they are very parochial to their own little group...and we had to have changes. We had to take their right away from running events and us taking them over, I mean, that was a real major and TVNZ were not going to wear working with this group here and that group there and another one here. Keith had to sell that one, I gave him that one to sell...Keith did an absolutely wonderful job, he won their hearts and after he went away and the votes came to make the changes we had to make – there was no problem (Taylor 2007).

At this time one of McEwen’s keen interests was to develop satellite coverage of international sporting events and he was determined to include netball as one of these sports. Under his leadership, the 6th World Netball Tournament, held in Singapore in 1983, had three key New Zealand games televised live and in full on New Zealand television (21, 22 & 23 June). TVNZ sent a crew to Singapore, noteworthy as the only national broadcaster committed to covering the tournament for their national audience. President of Wellington Netball and member of the NZNA Executive, Christine Archer, believes that the seeds to make netball a more commercial product were sown in Singapore in 1983 (2007). NZNA did not have to pay broadcasting fees and TVNZ were taking a more active role in helping to attract commercial interest in the sport. Although for technical reasons the quality of the Singapore footage was compromised, the screening of these full games had a very positive effect back home and rated well. The New Zealand audience responded strongly to the inevitable Australia versus New Zealand final - New Zealand losing by five goals.
Lois Muir noted this television coverage as being an important landmark in selling the game to the New Zealand public:

That year in Singapore, our game was shown live back home. It caught the public's imagination. Everyone was saying the game's competitive - but it always has been. It's just that all the top games were overseas – very few were played here – and the New Zealand public never got to see them. We've been working for 12 years to be a sport in our own right and were nearly there. We've got to entertain – it's just like a business, we're marketing a product (qtd.in Stratford 1988 169-70).

The product was increasingly becoming one of quality as the Muir era melded a long serving team of outstanding players such as Yvonne Willering, Margaret Forsyth, Margharet Matenga, Lyn Parker, Rita Fatialofa, Leigh Gibbs, Tracey Fear and Waimarama Taumaunu. As Matenga recounts to Trish Stratford in her ‘Guts, Tears and Glory’ interview, the unprecedented media attention in 1983:

…really changed everything for me. The game was shown live on television back here for the first time and they seemed to latch on to me. I was catapulted into the
limelight with things like, ‘Marghie Magic’. Shooters tend to get singled out but I suppose people warmed to me because of my manner. I just can’t go on the court not smiling. I always look as though I’m enjoying the game because I am… I was really proud of the attention (qtd. in Stratford 1988 128).

The Lois Muir factor

Muir represented New Zealand as a player 1960-1963 and became one of the most long-serving and successful sports coaches in New Zealand sporting history (Stratford 1988). By the time her team won the world title in 1987, Muir’s ten-year track record had not been surpassed by any other New Zealand coach with only four losses from fifty-four international games. She was well-known to the public through the success of the New Zealand team and was regularly interviewed on television. Muir understood what the media wanted and provided them with insightful, analytical comment which made her stand out in a decade that was becoming increasingly saturated with televised sport. Joseph Romanos, one of the earliest print journalists to focus on women’s sport and netball in particular, believed that Muir was an important factor in the increased television presence of netball during the mid-eighties:

Lois Muir was a huge identity. I mean the English couldn’t believe it when she went on that caricature of her on that, ‘Splitting Image’32, yeah, they couldn’t believe it, because I remember talking to Kendra Low who was the England captain and Jillean Hispsy and they couldn’t believe it because they were treated, I mean they wouldn’t get a sentence in The Times of London and would never be on TV and Lois was the national netball coach and a genuine celebrity in NZ. So I think she did a vast amount, she was there so long and she was quite identifiable and quite media savvy, media friendly. She did a huge amount to push netball, trying to and inadvertently as well, just because of who she was (Romanos 2008).

Figure 59: Lois Muir Puppet, ‘Public Eye’, TV ONE, 1988

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32 Muir, with her instantly recognizable severe hair style, black NZ tracksuit and no quarter given approach to sporting success was so well know to the New Zealand public that she was caricatured on the satirical programme ‘Public Eye’ in 1988. This was the New Zealand version of the UK puppet political satire ‘Splitting Image’ (at the time of the interview, Romanos couldn’t recall the name of the NZ spin-off).
**Becoming a top-tier television property**

In 1984, TVNZ, named netball as one of its four top tier sports, along with cricket, rugby and rugby league. This placed netball in an enviable position; it was not required to pay the cost of OB production and it was receiving a royalty payment for games screened on television. This was not at the same financial level as the male codes but not having to raise sponsorship money to pay broadcasting costs was a considerable financial gain in contrast to all second-tier sports in the country. On one level, this could be interpreted as a hugely significant step in recognising the value of netball and a logical follow on from the increased public response to more netball coverage on television. However veteran netball broadcaster Brendan Telfer believes this was a coldly pragmatic decision by TVNZ upper management resulting from the political pressure in the mid-1980s for the government and by association the state broadcaster, to support women’s sport. Whatever the motive, the increased presence on television and the gradual move from the clutter of weekend afternoons to mid-week primetime assisted the sport to widen and deepen its demographic pull:

I don't think it was out of any great love for netball because they are all basically fairly standard conservative New Zealand males whose definition of sport started and stopped [with] rugby, cricket, rugby league. But they had a political direction that they had to adhere to. Their political masters were telling them that they wanted to see more women on television and netball was a perfect opportunity to do so. It was the largest female participation in NZ, it worked well in the television sense, it was all over in an hour, hour and a quarter and so the enthusiasm to have netball on was driven 1) by the fact that it rated, 2) by the directions coming from their political masters. It didn't come, as it were, from the heart. With all due respect to these guys, because I know them well, but it rated and at the end of the day, television ratings, you know, cover up for a lot of other shortcomings you might have or feelings about things. If something rates, stay with it - netball rated. It was always argued that if you put the netball back on 2 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon its ratings would go through the floor compared to where they were at half past seven on a Wednesday night or something and that was true but, um you know, it did create an audience at half past seven at night and it became a self-fulfilling prophesy - you put women's sport on at that hour and it's a good sport, it'll rate (Telfer 2007).

**The move to indoor stadia**

Another key change that gained momentum during the decade was the decision to bring the game indoors at the elite domestic and international level. This changed the way the game was marketed, played and televised. As noted in previous chapters, netball had always prided itself on its ability to cope with whatever the elements threw at them to prove their toughness in comparison with the male codes. However, this legacy was not one which brought with it many commercial benefits, in fact quite often the contrary. As previously documented, the inability to charge admission fees on Council grounds, for example, hampered their ability to negotiate little more than a token income from television fees. It was time to move the elite game into controllable interior venues and
create a more heightened game experience. For the first time an elite netball competition was repackaged into a more commercially aware public event which benefited all parties. Televised images of event-centred hospitality added a perception of commercial value and drew a wider range of sponsors into an association with the game.

However, the move to indoor stadia was not just about comfort and commerce. It constructed a far more profound sense of occasion as thousands of people gathered together to partake in a common spectatorial experience. Gaffney and Bale (2004) identify the stadium event as a vital element in constructing reality and a sense of identity through a shared “historical experience” (35). John MacAlloon (1984) argues that becoming caught up in the “different sort of levels of intensity and involvement” (qtd. in Obel 2001 170) in the spectacle and emotion of a game event could have an unanticipated positive effect for the spectator. New Zealand sociologist Camilla Obel (2001) recognises the way in which being part of an event can link a stadium with “significant emotional meaning” (171) and create an “archive of material of remembrance” (172) for the spectator. In New Zealand the shared historical experience of a major stadium event had previously only been associated with male sports, particularly rugby, which helped to foster a “sense of shared purpose, historical process and cultural belonging” (Gaffney and Bale 2004 35). The television audience is able to capture this sense of time, place and historical moment vicariously through the way in which the OB director and game commentary weaves this subtext into the narrative of the game event. The need to bring the game inside was well overdue. In Auckland the property speculation boom pre-stock market crash enabled the Chase33 Stadium in Kohimarama to be built. This finally gave netball a suitable indoor option. Up until then, there were few indoor stadia throughout the country which were suitable or available for netball. They were constantly in competition with indoor basketball where the different court size and the limited run-off area made it very difficult to adapt for the game and the needs of the broadcaster (Jones 2007). Once they gained access to suitable indoor stadia, netball began to build a wider and deeper sense of historical association and cultural belonging. This also increased its inclusion in Benedict Anderson’s (1991) sense of imagined community surrounding expressions of nationalism and sport in the country.

This move was a practical but nevertheless profound change that happened at the threshold of the modern commercial era of the game. As the elite competitions gradually moved from a public space, which connoted relative anonymity, the new indoor locations

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33Chase Corporation, who purchased the naming rights for the Kohimarama Stadium, built on the grounds of Selwyn College in 1987, was one of the major corporate high flyers who were bankrupted a few months later when the stock market crashed. The venue is currently known as the ASB Stadium. Diocesan School, under the leadership of Dawn Jones, also built an indoor venue during this time which could accommodate netball rather than just basketball.
started to create an aura of higher cultural significance and commercial possibilities. Although the many threads of this subtle but important process are not able to be fully explored within the scope of this thesis, there was a significant spin-off with television production crew at the ground level. Bringing the elite game inside, the impact of primetime scheduling and the increased television and sponsorship investment signified a change in value which could not be ignored. There was a noticeable increase in investment at all levels in TVNZ to explore the televisual potential of the game. As this was matched by an increase in production budget, there was logically a need to extend the audience size and market revenue to justify that cost. In other words, there was a higher level of commitment by the broadcaster to make more of the sport they had historically undervalued. Stoddart (1994) and Silk, Slack and Amis (2000) identify craft pride as an important part of televised sport production. The case studies below provide evidence of that growing craft pride in the televising of netball in New Zealand towards the end of the decade.

**Case Study: Television Coverage of 1987 World Tournament, Glasgow**

As Muir recognised, the best international netball was nearly always played outside New Zealand and the local audience only got rare glimpses of the skill level of the New Zealand team. The 1987 World Tournament in Glasgow was the last to be staged in an outdoor arena and as the brief content analysis below reveals, the coverage by host broadcaster Scottish TV (STV) was not a polished performance. This coverage contrasts to the quality of the Milo series, a team effort by NZNA and TVNZ to repackage netball for primetime entertainment (see 1980s appendix). Encouraged by the viewer response to television coverage of the Singapore tournament and the more highly publicised recent successes of the New Zealand team, TVNZ sent a crew to Glasgow to work with STV (an offshoot of the commercial arm of ITV). STV had little experience filming netball. Channel 4, also an independent UK broadcaster, provided some technical input as they had considerably more experience in covering live sport. The BBC, who made their reputation on sports OB coverage, was not interested in becoming involved in what was always regarded in the United Kingdom as just a schoolgirl’s game. According to Moira Ord, then President of Netball Scotland and President of IFNA, the relationship between STV and netball was up until this time “negligible” (2007). However, they were keen to learn and grateful for the input from the TVNZ crew before and during the tournament. Sports producer Gavin Service was sent to Glasgow to “do the back room stuff” (Service 2007) and look after TVNZ’s broadcasting requirements. He found that there was “not a great deal known about how to cover netball over there” (ibid) although he had no experience covering netball himself at the time. To familiarise himself with the specifics
of the game rather than just relying on his general production knowledge, Service attended live games in New Zealand before leaving for Glasgow. He was impressed with the speed and skill of the game, which he realised was not well represented in the previous television coverage he had seen, “I was stunned how quick it was, how fast the sideways play and passing - television actually slows it down” (ibid). In Glasgow, he was surprised that there was no other television presence from nations such as Jamaica and Australia and that TVNZ and Scottish TV were “the only ones in it” (ibid). The tournament organisers, used to the small or virtually non-existent media interest in netball in the UK, had to improvise to house the TVNZ and Radio NZ crew. They were “crammed into a sort of portacom” and broadcasting conditions at the venue were less than ideal, “Scottish TV gave us a commentary position up in the temporary stand. It was bloody cold!” (ibid). Service, like many others in television sport at the time, was frustrated by what was seen as netball’s “stupid tournament set-up in that it didn’t have a final” (ibid). The round robin points-based format in which the winner could be known before the final day of competition had always provided a major hurdle for television.

There was no quarter/semi and final structure, which was considered essential to build the television audience. Ord recalls how difficult this made the initial negotiations with STV:

> It was quite a major step to overcome with television because they immediately asked, looked at the programme and said when’s the final and when’s the semi-final? They were also interested when Scotland was playing. They couldn’t understand that we didn’t have semi-finals and a final. And that was almost a backward step so we then had to look at the overall programme, because in those days everyone played everybody and we tried to guide them and say ‘look this would be a good game, it will be a close game, some of the Caribbean teams to be seen like Trinidad because of their style, England obviously because we thought they would be near the top and obviously Australia and New Zealand. Naturally we wanted Scotland there and we tried to select the games that they should televise. They took some advice but not all of it (Ord 2007).

Ord confesses to have known little about the technical aspects of television then but knowing the game intimately she was aware, like Service, that conventional television coverage did not show the speed of the game. Netball Scotland wanted to make the most of the rare opportunity to televise the different playing styles of international teams. This could be squandered by unimaginative or deliberately basic camera placement. There was a high likelihood that the British male crews, who had possibly never watched the sport live, would make assumptions about the game based on the limited visual configuration of the standard three camera set-up. STV, open to suggestions and encouraged by Netball Scotland included pre-production planning attendance at a variety of games before working out the camera positions at the Crown Point venue. Slightly more media savvy representatives from Netball Scotland persuaded STV to not just automatically go with the conventional perspective from the top of the stand looking down on the players:
They brought them [the cameras] down to a lower level and watched maybe, the feet, you know, from the feet up rather than head down because then you would see the speed that the players were moving at and so there was quite a bit of trial and error (Ord 2007).

Early talks with TVNZ assisted Netball Scotland in their efforts to encourage STV to raise the production bar for the domestic and international audience. Ord believes that the collaboration between TVNZ and STV was of “tremendous” benefit and resulted in a much higher standard of coverage.

TVNZ, with a guaranteed viewing audience back home, had a much higher requirement for highlights and full game coverage than STV which had limited air time allocated to the tournament. Naturally STV also wished to profile their national team, although they had little chance of winning a game. By contrast TVNZ had to cover the New Zealand team throughout the tournament. New Zealand actually met Australia in what would now be a semi-final and played Trinidad-Tobago in the last game of the tournament, which determined the winner on a points basis. Service recalls having to do everything he could to ensure that the last game was recorded for New Zealand audiences, “We were covering the last game come what may!” (Service 2007). At the other end of the scale, Netball Scotland totally unused to having any games on television, were delighted with the 19 hours of coverage although those rarely included a full game. STV tended to re-cut the footage for the local audience into highlights packages which were played in early evening news bulletins or on late night reviews. “We didn’t really get games live during the day on television” (Ord 2007). Despite the initial difficulties working with a broadcaster who had never covered the sport, Ord felt that it was a very positive experience for all parties:

I think we had a good relationship with them and when they saw the game and [sic] being played at that level, because if any of them had seen the game before they had either seen Scotland playing Northern Ireland or maybe a little snippet of England. I have to say with Australia and New Zealand and the Caribbean teams there, it opened their eyes and I think they realised that it really just wasn’t a wee schoolgirls’ game. So yes, they were dead keen, apart from admiring the girls and their legs which we got sometimes (Ord 2007).

Camera placement and shot selection

The first example is taken from the last few minutes of the New Zealand/Australia game. The New Zealand victory allowed them to play Trinidad-Tobago the next day and win the tournament. In many ways this was considered by New Zealanders and no doubt by many Australians, as the final as New Zealand had lost the title to Australia in 1983. For the New Zealand team and Lois Muir, it was unfinished business and carried with it the well-established basic ingredients of a Trans-Tasman clash which always ensures high television ratings.
The following storyboard (Figure 60) below is a typical shot sequence following the ball from the centre court through to a successful shot at goal. Although somewhat pedestrian in comparison to TVNZ’s domestic coverage, there is a genuine attempt here to do more than just record the action from the master camera high in the stand. There are only four cameras available to the director from which to build the sequence and consequently there are gaps in the flow of some facets of the visual storytelling. The preoccupation with capturing the ball going through the hoop in a tight close-up is characteristic of this era and possibly a hangover from crews covering field sport such as soccer, rugby and even hockey. In these games the ball going into the goal or across the try line is a not to be missed shot that is used in replays and repeatedly in highlights packages and news bulletins. In netball, the ball goes through the hoop in excess of eighty times in an average scoring game. Therefore, to repeatedly see the ball in an isolated close-up becomes annoying if it is at the expense of the on and off-ball play. The tendency to tilt up and focus exclusively on the ball effectively cuts away from all the players, even the goal shoot, and creates a sense of discontinuity.

The action and engagement for both the spectator at the live event and the television viewer is with the players, not exclusively the ball. It was a lesson still to be learned by television directors getting used to the pace of the game and understanding the subtleties of the game skills required in different areas of the court\(^{34}\). Conventionally, OB directors devise stock sequences for the sports they cover which enable the game story to be told efficiently and effectively but because of the relatively small action area and the speed of the game, it is understandable that directors would take a safe option by mainly covering the action wide and going in closer when the pace of the game slowed. Therefore, the following shot sequence can be seen as an example of a director learning to cover the game but at the same time endeavouring to make it more visually appealing for the television audience.

\(^{34}\) If a television director works on the assumption that netball is very like indoor basketball where the centre court area is virtually an uncontested corridor between the two action ends of the court, the subtle tactics of mid-court zoning and off-ball play become edited out of the game. If the focus is solely on covering the movement of the ball, falls back to a centre wide shot for all mid-court play or works on the man-to-man principle of defence, the complexity of the whole court game is lost or diminished.
### Shot sequence: From centre play through to scoring of NZ goal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing: HA WS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cam position: top/centre temporary stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: wide coverage of overall play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Covers main action and reveals on and off-ball play within each third of court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Slows down the speed of the game on screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enables viewer to see the individual skills of a player from a distance but denies close identification of individual physicality and skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distances audience from psychological reading of game and of individual players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All side-on cams mask the power of the drive through the centre court and the tightly contested area around the outside of each shooting circle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Framing: as above, cam pans left to cover action |
| Cam position: as above |
| Action: NZ attack driving into circle |
| Positives: |
| • covers main action |
| Negatives: |
| • Distances viewer from close visual engagement with the heavily negotiated space around the entry into the circle |
| • Lack of end-on or courtside perspective diminishes the audience’s ability to recognise and appreciate the skills of the circle players |
| • Continuation of HA shot appears to slow the action on screen and undercuts the physicality of the game and the intensity of the decision making required by the players in this key area of the court |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing:</th>
<th>MS, court level camera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cam Position:</td>
<td>courtside, goal third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td>Australia defending NZ shot at goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• closer framing profiles the competition between the two key players at this moment in the game and allows closer contact with their body language and facial expressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Courtside, lower angle reveals the elevation achieved by the Australian defender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More dynamic engagement with pace of the game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• none - within the style of this coverage and limited camera selection available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing:</th>
<th>MS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cam Position:</td>
<td>courtside, goal third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td>cam tilts to show ball going through net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reveals success of shot at goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• constant repetition of this shot solely on the ball going through the hoop only confirms that a goal has been scored. It cuts away from the players and the action/reactions still happening under the goal ring which is often more revealing of the tension and drama in the game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It becomes a stock shot that is repeated throughout the game and becomes frustrating for the viewer as it repeatedly isolates them from the action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Framing:** MS

**Cam Position:** courtside, goal third

**Action:** NZ goal shoot gathers ball after successful shot to return to the centre for the next pass-off

**Positives:**
- From the LA mid shot of the ball going through the hoop the sequence ends by cutting back into the drama of the competition between the NZ GA Margaret Forsyth and the Australian GD. Although the ball is effectively dead after a goal has been scored, the body language of the adversaries in a seemingly routine part of the game is part of the psychological storytelling and enriches the visual drama being told in a tighter framing.

**Positives continued:**
- By holding the focus on NZ GA Margaret Forsyth in mid shot, the audience is able to continue to read her state of mind. Her body language indicates that she is calm, has control of her playing space and is not intimidated by her opponent. She appears to be intensely focused on the game and is producing a game winning performance
- If the director had constantly reverted to the high/wide master shot, this more intimate drama within the main drama would not be revealed

**Positives continued:**
- Camera continues to frame on Margaret Forsyth as she purposefully strides back to her GA position for the next centre pass. Her body language acts as a visual metaphor through which the audience can read the determination of the NZ team to secure a victory at this late stage of the game

**Negatives:**
- The closer focus on a goal shooter, selects her out from the team and endorses her as making a stronger contribution than others because of her ability to score goals. This can distort or undervalue the skills of the centre court players who are mainly filmed in HA wide shot.
New Zealand versus Trinidad-Tobago

This short series of shots from the final game of the tournament is an indication of the growing skill of the STV OB director and production crew. Perhaps they listened to the advice of TVNZ crew and to coaches knowledgeable of the dramatically different style of play of a Caribbean team. In the 1980s, there was a greater range of playing styles between the top international teams than there is now. The West Indian teams were famous for the rugged physicality of their play and their aerial skills as they moved the ball at speed through the court, pushing the contact and progression rules to the limit. Their style of play, in fact, challenged all the rules originally devised to depower and feminise the game and was often breathtaking to watch. To film Caribbean teams using mainly the two high angle cameras providing the master wide and mid shots, would effectively undercut the visual drama and flair of their game. It is noteworthy that the courtside camera was used more effectively with the low angle shots able to convey the power, pace and flair of the Jamaicans. It is also notable that there was a handheld camera waiting courtside behind the New Zealand goal circle. At the final whistle, the camera follows the players out onto the court and captures the euphoria of the New Zealand team winning on the international stage.

Figure 61: NZ versus Trinidad-Tobago, World Tournament Glasgow, 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last minutes of game and handheld coverage of on-court celebrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cam position &amp; framing:</strong> HA wide shot coverage (master cam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> Trinidad-Tobago centre pass in last minutes of game</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Positives:**  
  - Safety master shot for restart of play covers unpredictable action  
  - Records action impartially  
  - Live key of simple on-screen graphic provides instant visual information for incoming viewers |
| **Negatives:**  
  - HA distances viewer from action  
  - Does not convey tension near the end of the game |
| Cam position & framing | LA, MLS courtside camera, cuts into the mid court play from the HA WS |
| Action | Trinidad-Tobago fighting to get back into the game in the last minutes of the final quarter |
| Positives | • Increased use of courtside camera moves the viewer closer to the game  
• Emphasises the skill of individual players, particularly the athletic power game of the Trinidad-Tobago players  
• Contributes to building a more visually dynamic action sequence |

| Cam position & framing | MLS courtside camera, cutaway of New Zealanders in the crowd in the opposite stand |
| Action | spectators all in raincoats, New Zealander holding up a slogan painted on a sheet. |
| Positive | Cutaway to the crowd indicates the level of support for the team even though they are at the other side of the world. A cutaway such as this is a useful part of sequence building which draws the crowd into the action of the game and they become part of the storytelling strategy of the main narrative. |

| Cam position & framing | LS courtside camera |
| Action | New Zealand attack driving into goal circle |
| Positives | • Rather than drawback to HA master shot, director has opted to return to the courtside camera  
• Adds pace and tension to the final minutes of the game anticipating the final whistle  
• Power play around the edge of the circle more accurately recorded by courtside camera |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cam position &amp; framing: MS, courtside camera,</th>
<th>Cam position &amp; framing: courtside camera, zooms from MS on player into CU following the ball into the net</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> GS Tracey Eyrl shooting for goal</td>
<td><strong>Positives:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positives:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continued preference for court level camera increases viewer connection with NZ team at late stage of game</td>
<td>• Visual intensifies the importance of the shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides close visual contact with the player under pressure to perform</td>
<td>• Provides shot variation in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negatives:</strong></td>
<td>• Rough zoom draws attention to camera technique mirroring rising game tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clumsy zoom disrupts smoothness of shot transitions within sequence</td>
<td>• Increased use of CUs on courtside camera matches growing intensity of final minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CU on ball and hoop cuts viewers totally away from the action under the goal post as players position to contest possible rebound or control ball before return for centre pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cam position & framing: HA master shot, NZ goal third

**Action:** final whistle blows, NZ players throw their arms up in jubilation

Note: handheld courtside camera waiting behind NZ goal circle ready to move onto the court to frame up on NZ attack’s reaction at the end of the game

**Positives:**
- Wider shot of goal third reveals the reactions of both the winning and losing players
- Inclusion of the courtside cam indicates the importance of capturing the moment

**Negatives:**
- Distanced from intensity of the moment by the wide framing

### Cam position & framing: CU, handheld camera on court filming amongst the NZ players as they are joined by their coaching team and bench players

**Positives:**
- Moves through the players and the coaching team, identifying them individually for the commentators and the viewers
- Captures intensity of the moment of victory
- Intensity of player reaction matched by crowd response in background

### Cam position & framing: CU/MS, handheld camera continues to move through the NZ players as they are joined by Lois Muir

**Positives:**
- Provides strong images of winners
- Focus on Lois Muir enables commentators to provide background on the importance of the victory for the new coach
- Links visual identification of well-known NZ coach with an important winning performance
Cam position/framing/action: MS, second handheld camera on the court focused on NZ captain, Tracey Fear as she opens celebratory champagne. A camera crew (who gathered footage above) are in the background of shot gathering interviews for NZ television news.

Positives:
- Continues to reinforce the importance and jubilation of winning at international level
- Strong focus on well-known NZ team member, Tracey Fear
- The amount of camera coverage, signified by the crew in the background, reinforces the significance of the win for the NZ audience

Cam position/framing/action: MLS, second handheld camera on the court, reverse shot of team members watching Tracey Fear as she opens celebratory champagne. Rapturous crowd response continues.

Positives:
- Continues to reinforce the winning narrative
- Reveals the personalities of the individual team members as they relax after the tension of the game
- A cinema vérité behind the scene sequence as competitive player mode is dropped and the viewer is able to see another side of the players.
Cam position/framing/action: MLS, from second handheld camera. NZ team line up before main stand after presentations to players and New Zealanders in crowd join with them to sing the patriotic anthem of the moment, the 1987 America’s Cup campaign, ‘Sailing Away’ to the tune of Pokarekare Ana:

Sailing away, sailing away,
New Zealand can do it,
Take it away.

And our pride is in New Zealand
And our pride is in the race,
We’re together as one people,
In the challenge that we face.

Positives:

- Extends on-screen coverage of the winning moment
- Reinforces the international achievement of NZ netball, the NZ netball team and coach Lois Muir
- NZ team’s choice of victory song makes an immediate association with the patriotic sentiment behind NZ’s first America’s Cup Challenge earlier in the year and makes a strong statement linking netball to expressions of national pride.

This second sequence, capturing the last moments of the Trinidad-Tobago game and the victory celebrations, provides an interesting contrast in filming style. This is only possible to analyse because of the extended post-game coverage. As the shot list above reveals, there was a deliberate attempt to more accurately represent the different styles being played by the two teams. Although the relatively low number of cameras hampers sequence building, the director did not resort to cutting in safe mode by sitting back on the master shot for the majority of the game. The slightly low angle shots from the courtside camera inject pace into the coverage and the impact of the Caribbean style of play is more evident. In contrast, the increased number of closer shots of the New Zealand players in the goal circle provides strong visual evidence of the way they were able to contain the Caribbean game and win the championship. The shot transitions are often visually uneven but this adds to the tension of the final match and the audience is
given an opportunity to move closer inside the game than was usual in a Northern Hemisphere netball broadcast.

The informal victory sequence at the end is just as much an element of successful television as the game footage. The emotional celebrations, shot up close with a well deployed handheld camera, gave the television viewer a strong point of identification with the players and their achievement as national representatives. It also provides footage for highlights packages and news promotion clips for the evening bulletin. The decision for the team to align themselves with New Zealand’s America’s Cup boat KZ 7 ‘Kiwi Magic’ is a reflection of the ground swell of patriotic fervour which had grown throughout New Zealand during the highly publicised 1986/87 America’s Cup campaign. Rather than attempt a haka as previous New Zealand netball teams had done sometimes awkwardly in the past, the team and the New Zealanders in the crowd responded in full voice to the BNZ sponsored music video, ‘Sailing Away – all of us’. This TVC (television commercial) featured a wide range of New Zealand entertainers, well-known athletes and celebrities and received saturation television exposure during the Louis Vuitton Challenge that year. It emotively promoted the message that national unity is the necessary ingredient which brings international sporting success (Perry 1994) which became linked by association through the netballer’s victory rendition at Glasgow. Despite KZ 7 losing in the final round of the Louis Vuitton Cup to Dennis Connor’s ‘Stars and Stripes’, it was heralded as a superb year for New Zealand sport, with New Zealand capturing the netball world title and the All Blacks winning the inaugural Rugby World Cup. It is noteworthy that, as limited as the coverage of the 1987 Glasgow tournament proved to be, the television exposure of the win was greeted with high acclaim in New Zealand which increased the public acceptance of netball as an important contributor to the growing success of New Zealand athletes.

Netball receives “unprecedented attention” (Campbell 1988)

The increased publicity from the 1987 win at Glasgow consolidated the recognition of Lois Muir and members of the team who had become “part of the sports landscape after their names being mentioned seven to nine years in a row” (Romanos 2008). Romanos believes that the stability and success of the team “did help netball to get a higher profile that it never lost. It only went on from there” (2008). A year after winning the World Championship title, Lois Muir and the highly successful captain Tracey Fear announced

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35KZ 7 – ‘Kiwi Magic’ outperformed every other boat in the competition leading up to the Louis Vuitton final with ‘Stars and Stripes’. Although the NZ team ultimately lost, the reputation of New Zealand’s sailors, designers and boat builders received significant international recognition. It provided the foundation for the series of challenges which resulted in success in 1995 and 2000 and fed into the underdog taking on the world myth which fuelled the commercially manipulated patriotism associated with each campaign for a sport that had little connection in reality to grass roots New Zealand.
their retirement. TVNZ reporter Cathy Campbell, who with Trish Stratford covered the New Zealand team at Glasgow, did a relatively long piece for TV ONE’s *Eyewitness News* on the end of the Muir era and the new future for netball. Its tone and content is in stark contrast to Bill McCarthy’s provocative but inherently sexist 1973 query on whether the media was giving netball a good deal. The marked change in attitude signposts the significant gains made in the public image of the sport over that 15 year period.

As the montage of selected images (Figure 62) reveals, the retirement of these nationally regarded sports women is given serious treatment and is refreshingly devoid of backhanded sexist compliments about the game or the players. There is only one slip when Campbell’s voice-over rather oddly states that, “Netball’s high profile begins at home although this doesn’t make it just a sport for housewives”. Campbell appears to be trying to counter the belief that it is only women who follow the sport on television but the reference is not well expressed and sits awkwardly in the text. However, the images convey a strongly recognisable national team that captures media and spectator interest and is packaged as a mainstream news item rather than a curiosity from the sporting margin.

The first section is focused on the achievements and opinions of Lois Muir and Tracey Fear. Fittingly, images of Muir open the item as she delivers one of her typically tough team talks at half-time:

> Get yourself going. You’re a fresh player; we are not seeing enough of ya. Push yourselves. They don’t deserve to win the way that they are playing. You make that decision out there yourselves (Muir 1988).

The game is played in an indoor stadium and netball’s decision to allow the cameras onto the floor for the team talk provides dramatic footage of a coach in action. It confirms the reputation of Muir as a successful New Zealand coach - irrespective of gender. The interviews with Muir and Fear are a formal interior setup. They are well lit and carry authority. Muir is dressed in her trademark New Zealand tracksuit, very much representative of the era and her readily recognisable coach persona, while Fear presents a carefully groomed professional image.

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36 The 1980s was the era of the track suit as part of the rapid acceleration of the sports and leisure wear market. Although later in the decade sports coaches and sideline administrators started dressing in more formal attire, Muir was rarely seen out of her black New Zealand track suit.
The segue into the next section uses a somewhat lame play on names to label what is touted as a new era for the sport, questioning whether it is possible to sustain international success - “Is there life after Lois and a future without Fear?” (Campbell 1988). Concern is expressed in the voice-over that the Muir era where netball has achieved “unprecedented attention” could be compromised by her departure. Over images of the New Zealand team playing England and the victory celebrations of the 1987 tournament, Campbell continues to reinforce the new regard for the sport: “Though the faces may not all be as recognisable as the All Blacks, the sport has certainly impressed enough people to be confident it is heading for the big time”. This cues into a montage, cut to the 1986 Peter Gabriel hit song ‘Big Time’, of the New Zealand team
victorious against international competition, signing autographs and representing the country in their black livery with the silver fern emblem which was soon to become their official team name. These seemingly routine images of the team were more significant then than they may appear now. They are carefully selected to reinforce the success of the team and emphasise through repetition the suitability of the team as part of New Zealand’s sporting hierarchy. The montage is followed by a discussion, reinforced by Tracey Fear, on the significance of the $1.5 million sponsorship investment in the sport which should ensure its future development and is somewhat unique in the netball playing world.

The last section of the item is largely shaped around the opinions of Joseph Romanos who made a significant contribution to the increased press coverage of netball during the decade (pictured interviewing Lois Muir in the last frame above). Romanos believes that the reluctance of the international media to recognise the sport is based on the limited reach of the game beyond the traditional Commonwealth countries which, he argues undervalues the worth of a world title. This is still an on-going criticism, even though the current fan base and television ratings and those in 1988 indicate that there are other values which can be used to judge the worth of a sport. The last word is given to Romanos to throw out a challenge to the netball hierarchy that if the game is to continue to develop they need to open their ranks and draw on male expertise:

> The international rules still don’t permit a man to be a time keeper or umpire or even coaches. If you are going to keep it that closed in you are obviously not going to get men involved. Over the last few years with television’s involvement especially I think that men have seen what a competitive and aggressive and physical game it can be and it’s certainly comparable with rugby or soccer. It’s just a pity the rest of the world don’t understand that (Romanos 1988).

No counter argument is provided to challenge Romanos’ masculinist view that the sport cannot expect to flourish if it does not hand over some of its autonomy to men. He is not suggesting a male CEO, for example (which did happen in the next decade), but is suggesting that the relatively closed society of women in the past is going to hinder its progress in the future. Although there is some truth in his argument, this does not adequately reflect the changes going on behind the scenes towards the end of the 1980s exemplified by the creation of the Milo International Netball Series. By necessity and choice, male business and broadcasting expertise were accessed to refashion netball into an entertaining business-orientated media product and the success of the Milo series reinforced this new approach. The case study of the New Zealand/Australia Milo series in April 1989 provides a dramatic insight into the increased technical and commercial investment in a female sport. To return to the O’Leary and Roberts assertion that the “time is well overdue for television to represent accurately the social reality of sport in
New Zealand” (1985 16) the investment in the Milo series was an inspired initiative through which to address this imbalance.
Chapter 6 Appendix: 1989 Milo International Series - the Showcase of Made-for-television netball

This guy at Channel 9 actually said to me, “Sheila’s in skirts on television! And you expect us to cover it?” (Lindsay Singleton 2007)

Figure 63: First Test NZ v Australia, Milo International Series, 26 April 1989

At the same time Lois Muir’s coaching achieved top results, off the court NZNA President Anne Taylor was also working hard for the sport. She applied her entrepreneurial skill to further increase media coverage and draw more sponsorship money. The four-yearly World Tournament and relatively infrequent international clashes were too far apart to provide the broadcaster with regular high-level international competition through which to build a mass audience. At the 1983 Singapore World Tournament what stood out for Taylor was the realisation that New Zealand despite feeling that it was always on the back foot in its negotiations to get better media coverage, was actually far ahead of all other netball playing countries at that tournament, including Australia:

The television rights for that championship were very much negotiated by New Zealand as we were the [only] ones that had any television [coverage] and it was
Television New Zealand’s camp of people that went up there and also a lot of the sponsorship came out of here too because it went with our television production from here... We used the same sponsors with it [World Tournament] between Television New Zealand and our marketing company, so I’m sitting there thinking there’s got to be something coming out of this...I can remember it clearly because I was sitting on a bench in Singapore and I was about the only person watching the game. It was Jamaica playing some other minnow and I’m thinking ‘I’m sure there’s some television production we can get out of this thing. There’s got to be something better than this and I am sure that there’s got to be some production that we can get and the television rights for that (Taylor 2007).

From this kernel grew the first of made-for-television competitions, the Milo Tri-Series and following that the Milo International Netball Series in 1986. This was a key development in the closer relationship between netball and TVNZ based on a more equal level of collaboration. Together they restructured elements of the traditional game into a new television package which appealed to the viewer and attracted new sponsors. The interest generated by the ground-breaking new format spilled over to the OB production crew. The combination of the games moving indoors and the increased miniaturization of high-end technology encouraged technical experimentation. The crews got more inventive in camera and microphone placement as they responded to the drive to entertain and took increasing pride in the way they broadcast the game.

The initial format of the proposed Tri-Series changed rapidly over a short time with input from the broadcaster and major sponsors. This successful format and the extended airtime became the solid base from which the game refashioned itself into primetime entertainment. It fostered a rapid growth of its live audience and broadening the demographic reach of its television viewership. For Australian goal shooter Vicky Wilson, coming to New Zealand to play in the Milo Tri and International series was a revelation:

I think we played six tests over here and six back in Australia. We moved them around; we had Jamaica, Australia and NZ, the three way test. It was the product - that we had something to sell. It was exciting, it was a different format. It was two 20 minutes halves and some teams played the double headers. It was exciting to compete in. There was an anticipation of who was going to win and an ability to back up. It was the first time they used 12 players, but they did something different, that you didn’t know the result (Wilson 2007).

Gathering commercial expertise

Marketing was a relatively new player in sports media in the early 1980s and certainly not a service that many women’s sports had the inclination or the financial resources to access. As recognised in the 1981 ‘Women and Recreation’ Conference and noted in the recommendations of the Sport on the Move Report (1985), the promotion of women’s sport was often hampered by lack of expertise in media liaison and sponsorship negotiations. Anne Taylor was well aware of the lack of business skills and commercial networking clout in an all-women, volunteer base sport such as netball and knew it was time to go out and find it. From 1983 onwards she started working informally with
Lindsay Singleton at Harvard Sports Management. This became a full business relationship with NZNA by the mid-eighties at the start of the Milo television series:

He’d plagued me for some years before it all happened, to do something for netball, because he thought it was a good sport and something could be done with it and it was two or three years before we could convince the [NZNA] Exec that something could be done with it...they all had their own things...even Lois [Muir] had her own thing (Taylor 2007).

When Taylor returned from Singapore she contacted Singleton to start the process of creating a made-for-television game package:

Look, I’ve got this great idea, it’s starting to come. I believe that there’s an international television product out there and we should be looking at having the top six teams in some sort of a competition. Exactly how the competition was going to be then I didn’t really know and he said, oh yes, you could be right (Taylor 2007).

In 1981 Singleton had been involved in setting up the Super 10 Rugby union competition (the forerunner of the current Super Rugby, NZ/Australia/South Africa Southern Hemisphere competition) and had experience at brokering international series between sport and the broadcaster. He could see the potential in Taylor’s suggestion. Although it was to take them 18 months to get the concept into workable shape, Taylor and Singleton knew they needed Australia to buy into the idea early on for it to work. They went over to Australia in 1984 to sell the initial concept to CEO Anne Smith and Secretary Rob McMurtry of the All Australia Netball Association (AANA). The idea was a radical departure, from using television as a tool to just cover and hopefully popularise the game more, to creating an international competition to entertain a broader primetime audience. The initial reception in Australia was mixed. Taylor felt that “Robert [McMurtry] could see it, but I don’t think these other women saw it too much” (Taylor 2007).

The next year they took a more detailed proposal back to AANA based on a Tri Series format with games only 20 minutes each half. This was because both Singleton and Taylor believed that this would provide better television entertainment rather than have the full hour, four quarter international format. This meant that three forty-minute games could be run end-on-end with each team playing two games. It would provide a tight package for television which would be more schedule friendly for a general free-to-air broadcaster. TVNZ Sport, under Keith McEwen, was very keen to develop the series. McMurtry came over to New Zealand to familiarise AANA with the strong relationship netball had with the broadcaster here. Singleton then accompanied McMurtry to Channel 9, Channel 7 and ABC to pitch the idea. Singleton remembers with amusement the mixed reaction they got from some of the Australian broadcasters which was very different from the reception in New Zealand. “This guy at Channel 9 actually said to me, ‘Sheila’s in skirts on television! And you expect us to cover it?’” (Singleton 2007). In the end, Australia, according to Taylor, “sort of conceded that it was worthwhile and they came...
in” with the addition of Jamaica. They were backed initially by sponsorship from Prudential in Australia and then Milo (Nestles\(^\text{37}\)) in New Zealand.

Singleton, like many others drawn to the new field of sports marketing, was considerably influenced by his contact with PBL Marketing, which was linked to the Kerry Packer publishing and broadcasting empire in Australia. Singleton subscribed to the Packer modus operandi of “we’ll create our direction and we’ll create the product to fit television around it” (2007). However, Singleton felt that New Zealand was still deeply suspicious of the radical changes which transformed mediated sport in Australia. He interpreted the protective attitude here as “our sport is our sport, we don’t know how to get you to maximise as a television broadcaster your role in the sport but you can only televise what we produce. You have no right to actually ask” (ibid). He acknowledges that this attitude was also driven by the relatively negligible return from television rights in New Zealand. He believed this fostered an attitude of “why should we have to fit in with television, particularly as they are not paying us any money or bugger-all money” (ibid).

Harvard was eventually employed by NNZ to bring a higher level of sponsorship into the game. Their brief was to capitalize on the growing relationship between netball and television and promote to potential sponsors the commercial value of women’s sport and the female television audience. Singleton’s contract required him to pull in the sponsorship and sell the advertising around the proposed televised games. In order for this to be successful in a marketplace that rarely provided financial support for women’s sport, his mantra to Taylor was “I can’t sell the advertising if the game’s not worth watching” (Taylor 2007). This matched Taylor’s view that screening anything less than quality games would undermine the commercial appeal of the game and be harmful for the future of the sport.

In 1984, there was a concerted effort by NZNA to seek commercial sponsorship backed by an increased evidence of female control over domestic discretionary income. Country Foods Ltd sponsored the Swiss Maid domestic league, Nestles put $500,000 into the new Milo International Series and Trustbank came in to support the national tournament which was becoming financially difficult to maintain (Hawes and Barker 1999). The combination of increased value placed on the sport by the broadcaster and market payback for sponsors led to an increase in the number of games on television. Five full matches were screened in 1985. The viewership for netball grew from 125,750 viewers in 1983 to 377,000 in 1985 (105). This further encouraged commercial revenue. Sponsorship deals were very hard-nosed. Business deals were based on the seconds that a particular logo or signage appeared on screen. A weak game played down one end of the court generated poor sponsorship exposure and did not rate well with the viewers.

\(^{37}\)In New Zealand Nestlé was marketed under the anglicised brand name of Nestles.
Television contracts were still on a one-off basis but were now brokered through Harvard on a more businesslike footing. The money now flowing into netball, although not at the same level as rugby or cricket, was nevertheless significant. As the commercial partnerships consolidated through the Milo Tri and International series, TVNZ increased their level of production investment. It was the impetus the technical crew needed to infuse the game coverage with a higher level of creativity as they came to understand its entertainment potential.

**Case Study: Milo International Netball Series, Auckland 26 April 1989**

In comparison to the coverage of the 1987 World Tournament only two years earlier, TVNZ’s coverage of the Milo International series reveals a radical shift in production values to showcase the new look of the televised game. It was this re-evaluation and increased investment in the game that increased the quality and the quantity of netball’s television profile beyond that of any other netball playing country. Rather than just offer the bare game coverage of the past, the airtime was increased to two hours. This allowed for a more informative pre-game package which introduced the players to the audience and provided tightly summarised player profiles. Quarter and half-time game analysis from former players and post-match interviews added to this increased flow of information. Suddenly there was considerably more in-depth discussion of the game which appealed to both the new and experienced netball fan. Former players were able to build on their already high audience recognition and the general public were educated on the finer points of the game.

Although major netball tournaments had been played indoors in England in recent years, the newness of the indoor venue for New Zealand is illustrated in the title sequence where no library footage of indoor competition was available to cut into the opening montage (see Figure 64). TVNZ’s investment in new character generators enabled them to present more detailed on-screen information. Game statistics and player profiles, including interview grabs could now be inserted around the live presentation of TVNZ sports presenter, Cathy Campbell. Shot and edited in advance, this material is also an indication of the increased TVNZ budget. The ability to key a score update on-screen while the game is in progress accommodates the casual viewer and helps to build the narrative as the game reaches a climax in the final minutes of each quarter and before the final whistle. In comparison to the often compromised outdoor locations, the modern stadium setting created a heightened atmosphere and stronger visual and aural opportunities. The interior acoustics intensified the impact of the crowd atmosphere. An additional camera set up outside the stadium gathering atmosphere-setting shots as the crowd files in, also
added to the sense of occasion and contributed to the general buzz of excitement surrounding the staging of this relatively novel netball event.

Figure 64: Pre-match Sequence, 1st Test Milo International Series, 26 April 1989
Shot coverage and cutting the game narrative

Figure 65: Camera Placement Milo International Series, 26 April, 1989

There is some variation of camera placement for the three-game Milo Internationals 1989, depending on the layout of each stadium, but a configuration of seven cameras is the norm. Six are manned during the game and one a fixed camera in the stand. Another camera is set up on a tripod in the interview area, which is used for the post match interviews and the outro. The six manned game cameras provide the director with more dramatic visual choices to cut into the master shot and add depth to the game narrative. These additional cameras are the crucial difference between just maintaining game continuity to being able to dynamically shoot ahead of the action. The camera placement is a little different from that conventionally followed now, with no central courtside camera below the two elevated cameras gathering the master shot. Instead there are two cameras at each end of the court a few metres back from the baseline. These cameras (3 and 4) shoot the action in the goal circles, the long shot down the court and the team benches at the opposite side of the court. They are also used for tighter shots of individual players or incidents such as injury or a throw-up. They both gather shots which would now be taken from the central courtside camera (usually referred to as Cam 3 or the Personality Camera) and supplemented with courtside cameras behind each goal circle.

High in the stand behind the baseline at one end of the court, Cam 5 shoots down the court and picks up crowd cutaways. The sixth manned camera (Cam 6) is handheld and gathers cutaways of the Australian bench during the game. Interestingly, there is no handheld camera used for the New Zealand bench during the entire game. Cam 6 only
moves to shoot the New Zealand bench during the advertising breaks. The handheld
camera is also used to gather close-ups during the national anthems and for the courtside
interviews. The unmanned Cam 7 (the Beauty Cam) is fixed on a tripod and provides a
visually interesting angle shooting diagonally through the stadium. It is used as an
establishing shot to lead in and out of an advertising break and a backdrop for the live key
of match graphics. The montage of camera positions below (Figure 66) indicates the
increased options for the director. It is noteworthy that the lack of a handheld camera on
the New Zealand bench during play denies the potential to intercut between the benches
to enhance the off-court storytelling options.

Figure 66: Position of Game Cameras

Cam 1: HA centre
Master shot - covers all game action

Cam 2: HA centre
Closer shot circle both ends
Cutaways of crowd

Cam 3: Court side left

Cam 4: Court side right

Cam 5: HA end-on

Cam 6: Handheld
Australian bench
Cams 1 and 2 in the high, central position still carry the bulk of the coverage in the centre court, but the compact design of this relatively small indoor stadium (seats approximately 3,000) means the master shot cameras are relatively close to the action. There is a tendency to use both these cameras as LS and MS master shots rather than using Cam 2 on a closer framing to consistently reveal the play ahead of the ball. The combination of the two courtside Cams 3 and 4 and the high angle end-on Cam 5, injects speed into the game. In the past, the overuse of the two centrally located high angle cameras visually depowered the action.

Cam’s 3 and 4 are not able to get right into the action as the steadicam was to achieve in the next decade but they capture the action and the skill of individual players with a visual intensity which is never possible from high in the stadium at the end of a long zoom lens. The players athleticism and ball handling skills become more evident, even to the non-netball playing viewer, and the emotion behind their ‘game face’ able to be detected. In the goal circle these cameras keep the players and the ball located in the shot instead of zooming and tilting following the ball going through the net. This opens up the on and off-ball play around the shot at goal and enables the commentators to discuss attack and defence tactics in more analytical detail.

Figure 67: Additional Camera Positions

Cam 7: Fixed camera, Beauty Shot. HA diagonal LS
Cam 6: Courtside interview set. Reporter cam. and 2 shot
Cam 8: Courtside interview.

Cam 6 is constantly offering the bench shot to the director if a reaction to an on-court action is required, such as the scoring of an opposition goal or a game turning intercept. Bench shots, combined with cutaways of the crowd, are a visually powerful context for the commentating team to weave into their storytelling. Cam 6 also covers the courtside interviews and goes on-court to shoot the New Zealand team talks during the breaks. Shot off the shoulder the perspective from this camera breathes and jostles amongst the players. Right in the centre of the action it conveys a sense of privilege which is not afforded to the live audience. The only drawback is that audio was not gathered during
the team huddles, forcing the commentators to make educated assumptions about the content of the coaches’ team talks.

The pattern of cutting follows a formula necessary for all OB coverage of sport, irrespective of the code. At the start of each pass off, the sequence opens with a high/wide master shot and cuts to Cams 3 or 4 as the ball moves to the top of the goal circle. Cam 5 is used to vary the coverage of the goal being shot if the ball is down the left end of the court. This is a useful position from which to cutaway to the crowd if the shot on goal is successful and fills the dead time as the ball is returned for the centre pass. This delays the return to the master shot for a few seconds which is a richer use of this momentary down time. Cams 3 and 4 are also used to focus on the successful goal shooter, usually framed in mid shot.

**Quarter time game analysis**

Just under one minute is provided at the end of the first quarter advertising break for the commentators to make brief analytical comments of the game so far and set up the second quarter. Yvonne Willering, as the game expert, offers her analysis of the performance of each team as the director cuts between the New Zealand and the Australian benches.

**Figure 68: Quarter Time Game Analysis (duration 55”)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cam 7: Fixed camera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentator’s VO, analysing 1st quarter of the game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentator: Trish McKelvey and Expert comments: Yvonne Willering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General crowd atmos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cam 3: Courtside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note: handheld Cam. 6 entering left of frame to shoot inside the huddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentator’s analysis continues Crowd atmos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cam 6: Handheld, edge of NZ huddle
Commentator’s analysis continues
Crowd atmos
No sound boom on team talk

Cam 4: Courtside
Australian team huddle, shot across court
Note: crouching sound tech linked by comms to the OB van holding a Sennheiser microphone
Commentator’s analysis continues No audio Australia team huddle
Whistle to resume play ends break

Cam 6: Handheld camera
NZ break from huddle to return to court
Commentator’s analysis continues, suggesting possible tactics for the next quarter

Cam 1: Master shot
Restart of play
Cam 6 can be seen top left, leaving the court to get back to position in front of the Australian bench

Half-time advertising break and game analysis
At the start of the half-time advertising break, Campbell delivers the reminder call “We’ll be back, live at Chase Stadium after this break” to maintain viewer loyalty. All advertisements except one are noticeably pitched directly at the female audience and the household shopper (who was presumed to be almost exclusively female in the 1980s). As series naming rights sponsors, Milo holds the lead spot followed by Bendon. An upbeat
TVC for the Holden Barina is noteworthy in its images of active sporting women which includes the then current fitness fad of ‘jazzercise’.

Just over two minutes at the end of the half-time advertising break is devoted to analysis of the first half of the game. All the material in this break is generated live with no pre-recorded inserts. Former captain and now Bendon promotions officer, Tracey Fear, provides another perspective on the game in addition to the expert comments of Yvonne Willering. This is the only time that a replay is used as there were only A/B roll facilities available in the cinetape OB truck linked to a couple of cameras. Although an instant roll/take was now possible without a pre-roll, a replay still took time to select and cue in a linear system. The replay is well chosen, focused on the highly skilful play by Sandra Mallet (Edge) as she makes a fake pass when feeding the circle. Voicing over the replay, Fear pinpoints the outstanding skills of an individual player. Campbell then discusses the second-half game plan as the director cuts shots of opposing teams on screen. Fear’s comments are concise and technical and she treats the audience with respect, helping them understand the finer points of a player’s skill which adds value to their viewing for the second half of the game.

**Figure 69: Half-Time Information Package (duration 2.10”)**

**Cam 6:**
Handheld, 2 shot. Tracey Fear, ‘Bendon Netball’ logo on shirt analyses first half of game. Campbell and Fear working off visuals on field monitor placed to cam right of Fear, out of shot.

**Replay:**
Slow-motion replay (from Cam 5)
Fear analyses Mallet’s skills.
This is the only slow-motion replay used during the game.
Cam 6:
Fear continues to educate the audience on the significance of the replay sequence and relate it to the way in which the second half of the game may be played.

Cam 3:
Courtside, cross court
Campbell directs Fear's comments to the NZ team asking her to summarise what the coach would be saying to her players.

Cam 4:
Courtside, cross court
Campbell sets up Fear to discuss Australian team tactics: “What is the feeling in the Australian camp? What are they going to try now?”
Cam 3:
Tightens shot on NZ coach Lyn Parker. Campbell asks Fear to discuss Parker’s pre-match comments.
Replay whistle sounds, cam starts to zoom out as NZ team breaks huddle.

Cam 3:
Onscreen zoom to long shot as players start to take positions on court.
Fear rounds off her analysis.

Cam 1:
Slight pan to the right towards NZ’s attacking end of the court.
Campbell rounds off half-time game analysis and throws to commentators.
Three-quarter time coverage

The twenty seconds allowance for the three-quarter time game analysis after the advertising break is minimal and there is no time to elicit game analysis from Willering or Fear. McKelvey’s role is to rapidly update the viewers and get them committed to watching the final quarter. There are only three camera cuts to cover McKelvey’s comments before court play is resumed. No replays are inserted to summarise the previous quarter of play. Using the same rationale as screening full length movies on television, the commercial breaks take more precedence later in the game, once the audience is sutured into the action. Hence the minimal 20-second time allowance for game analysis in the three-quarter break.

Figure 70: Three-quarter Time Coverage (duration 20”)

Cam 1:
- Pans to centre position as game restarts
- Game commentator: Trish McKelvey resumes commentary

Cam 7:
- Fixed cam (Beauty Shot position).
- Commentator McKelvey rapidly summarises the third quarter.
Final Minutes of last quarter

In what was a fortuitous turn for New Zealand netball, TVNZ and the Milo series, the New Zealand team won by one goal in the last minute of the game. With main game cameras focused on the crowd reaction, the director had a wealth of exuberant cutaways with which to wrap the outro. The handheld camera rapidly relocated from the Australian bench to mingle within the victorious New Zealand team on the court. The director intercut these shots of the winning team with a mix between Cams 1 and 2 as they pan across the wildly celebrating crowd. What is not there is coverage of the Australian team in defeat, which is now standard practice. An additional handheld bench camera would have solved this.

At the end of the 1980s the crowd did not wear team colours, dress outrageously or behave in such a way to deliberately attract the attention of the television cameras – that was still in the future. For this crowd, being in the stadium in 1989 and being part of watching the New Zealand team win against Australia was a very new netball viewing experience\(^\text{38}\). Using a greater number of well-placed cameras, the director was able to capture the almost euphoric atmosphere in the stadium following the final whistle.

\(^{38}\)I still remember the moment well and there was a general consensus that at last our game was being given the production and airtime attention it deserved.
Although this was not a World Championship final, the visual impact is markedly more intense than at Glasgow two years earlier.

Figure 71: Snapshots from Final Minutes of Last Quarter
Post-match interviews

Only three minutes were allocated for post-match interviews after the advertising break and before the credits. Once again no replays are used. It was also not possible technically to cut a highlights montage in time for the outro and credit roll. The decision to do all on-screen interviews seated is somewhat stilted and would seem very awkward to a modern audience. Such a staged interview setup depowers the momentum of the post-match victory and denies the viewer the immediacy of the on-court interview. However, this is 1989 and the fact that an additional three minutes post-game interview slot exists at all is significant. Time is allocated to the New Zealand team captain and coach but there is no interview of the well-known and successful Australian coach, Wilma Shakespear for example. The interviews with Waimarama Taumaunu and Lyn Parker provide inside the game insights and gain more specific exposure for key netball personalities. These women present as intelligent and articulate and engage the audience with their passion and knowledge for the game. Media personnel when remembering this era note that this was often lacking from interview subjects in the major male codes such as rugby (Telfer 2007; Romanos 2008).
The significance of the 1989 Milo International series

This three-test series between New Zealand and Australia proved to the broadcaster that this style of game presentation was a ratings winner. Bringing the game indoors, moving it into primetime and the addition of a pre and post-match package became the basic ingredients of a formula which was to prove its ratings and commercial worth in the next decade and beyond. Netball, as part of TVNZ’s live sport stable, was now more actively laced into what Rowe calls the “logic of all television” (1999 146) to secure and expand an audience. A more suitable formula for the technical coverage of the modern game was now established and the battle won to allocate a higher production budget to the sport. The formula would be increasingly refined through the use of more cameras, trial and error with camera placement and the use of miniaturised cameras, (i.e. attached to the goal post which initially proved to be a visual and continuity failure) and increased audio options. However, the successful template established at this time was based on a larger production budget, higher production values and extended airtime.

As a contemporary contrast, the US study of women’s televised sport by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found that television “symbolically denies power to women” (18). In their analysis of women’s intercollegiate basketball, which is one of the few women’s games nationally televised in the US, they found that the physical skills of the players...
were “virtually ignored” through the commentary and technical analysis and commentary on strategy, “all but absent” (11). They were surprised that there appeared to be little difference in the televised depictions of the men’s and women’s game. The real ambivalence was in the commentary. Their conclusion was that the women’s game was positioned as a pale imitation of the men’s competition and the message was that it was neither a “real team sport nor a real game” (11). Although there were some problems achieving a professional level of netball game commentary throughout the 1980s, this could be attributed to lack of experience and poor identification of talent by the broadcaster. However there was never a denial of the skill of the athletes, undercutting of the game or limited recognition of strategy and skill. In fact quite the contrary, as the half-time analysis by Tracey Fear, discussed above, reveals. Her articulation of the athleticism and court skills of Sandra Mallet is completely counter to the US experience identified by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988).

TVNZ’s financial and technical commitment to the extended game package and more complex OB coverage was not exceptional for the time, as it was becoming typical of the OB coverage of first tier and international sport. What was novel was that these expensive above the line costs were being invested in a women’s sport because they would reap ratings and advertising rewards. It also reinforced that the game had considerable cultural significance and appeal for the New Zealand public. Anne Taylor, who worked so closely with television during this decade felt no ambivalence from the broadcaster that the game did not justify this level of attention:

No, it wasn’t handled like a token [gesture]. Well, I don’t believe it was and certainly in dealing with them I don’t feel that way about it, no. I think we were all working in the one direction and I never felt at any stage that they had done that as a token to us. I always felt that we were both doing it for the same reason and we used to talk about what wasn’t so good about that game and could we fix that to make that better, maybe look better on television…from my point of view there was never any ‘aggro’ about this we would just sit down and talk and make it better for next time. Once they became more knowledgeable we didn’t have so many problems with some frames without a ball in it and...because they started to read the game that’s why I think that we have now the best cameramen in the world because you go to other places where they televise netball and it’s not that great. I think our cameramen do an absolutely wonderful job and have for a long time…I don’t think we have problems with cameramen once we got over that first stage (Taylor 2007).

In marked contrast, Australian netball international Vicky Wilson remembers the lack of television coverage and media attention the game and the Australian team received back home in the 1980s:

Every time we toured here [New Zealand], when I made the Australian team there was this expectation that we were going to be bombarded with media and it was certainly something that we weren’t used to but we were so envious of what NZ had to offer and we found it exciting to work with the media and the coverage was just exceptional to what we had at home and to be able to watch the games happen...To us ‘live’ was just amazing. But it was also kind of funny in that normally in Australia we were able to go home and stay up until midnight and watch...
the game played back but here if you wanted, once you went back to the hotel you had no chance of watching it as it had already been on...I suppose the brand awareness of the Australian team and who we were and the personalities...we never had that so it, just, green with envy when we came over here (Wilson 2007).

Rebranding in an increasingly media visible era

At the end of the decade and going into the next, the incoming NZNA President Dawn Jones built on the entrepreneurial advances made by Anne Taylor. The decision was made to move the Head Office to Auckland into a street level location, rename the NZNA to Netball New Zealand (NNZ) and modernise the logo. In what proved to be a very astute decision, the national team was rebranded as the Silver Ferns to engender notions of national pride similar to the All Blacks. It was a case of the sport knowing a little more about their major asset than the marketers at the time:

At that stage IMG were our marketing company and I can still remember Bill McCormack saying to me “it’s an absolute disaster…it will only remind the public of trains and butter”, because at that stage there was the Silver Fern train between Auckland and Wellington and you had Fern Leaf butter and I can remember saying to him, ‘Well, it’s too late we’ve told the media and now we will have to make it work’. Well, within a couple of days the media had picked it up and just used it everywhere and from that day they were the Silver Ferns and they were never called the New Zealand Netball team but it was the start of it... the media loved it (Jones 2007).

The quiet demise of ‘compliant femininity’

With a toehold in primetime, netball was poised to experience “unprecedented media coverage” (Nauright 1999 48) in the next decade. Recognition of the game as a strong televisual product with the capacity to build and hold a significant audience base had been established. The collaboration between the sport and the broadcaster to maximise the televisual appeal and reach of this women only game is a noteworthy achievement of gender equity. Netball started to look at its own sport from the outside, as would the broadcaster, and work in a more equal partnership to create good television. As nervous as netball was about endorsing a strongly feminist agenda, a feminist goal was achieved in the coverage of the 1989 Milo series. The current and former players are presented as serious, committed, intelligent athletes who have deserved ownership of their sport. The production of the televised game is treated with new respect which cannot be dismissed as tokenism on a technical, attitudinal or managerial level. The impact of bringing the game indoors and into primetime positively influenced both the viewing public and the production crew alike. The public were now able to be intimately engaged in the maturing Southern Hemisphere style of game as it forced beyond the boundaries of compliant femininity into highly physical contestation. The physical and mental toughness, nurtured under the Muir regime, was on full display and the audiences loved what they were seeing. However, this was just the beginning of the new era of netball – not every barrier to gender equity had been dismantled!
Chapter 7: 1990s – We are Worth More!

For decades it was the silent giant of New Zealand sport: the game no one wrote about, the game no one knew about. Now the revolution is here, Netball is money and netball is the 90s woman. It’s even liberated man. It’s a whole new ball game.

(Margot Butcher, North and South, June 1991)

I soon got told by people [TVNZ] that you needed to understand that netball suffered from a lack of global...coverage and therefore no television channel is going to pay you a very big price because they had nobody to sell it to. And that we were lucky... to get anything because most female sports in New Zealand got nothing. And that we should consider ourselves very lucky to be earning this sort of money. And so with the whole relationship....we felt lucky; television sort of had the upper hand and they drove the bargains and we basically fell into place.

(Nelson Cull, NNZ Board Chairman, 2001)

The growing media sport nexus and the expansion of pay television

As television coverage became the major revenue stream for top league sport, it also became one of the most valuable properties for media organizations (Nicholson 2007). The need to secure broadcasting rights for premiere sport to gain competitive advance became paramount. Failure to do so could result in significant loss of income and in some extreme cases, lead to the demise of the media organisation. This situation became
more acute for free-to-air broadcasters as pay television made an aggressive move into the media sport nexus. In Europe, rapid expansion of pay and satellite television delivery systems became a major factor in the “reordering of the global media/cultural complex and reinterpretation of the meaning of televised sport” (Williams 1994 378). Rupert Murdoch famously described televised sport as a “battering ram” through which to create new markets for his News Corporation (Miller et al. 2001 64). In the UK, World Cup Cricket was only available on BSkyB and Rupert Murdoch’s high stakes attack on the control of media and cross media ownership and his purchase of exclusive rights to cover the newly established FA Premier League football irrevocably shook up the industry. His 1992 deal with the English Football Association for ownership of the newly formed FA Premier League hugely increased the amount of money following into the game through television royalties with BSkyB paying £204 million over five years, which was approximately six times the amount paid by terrestrial partners (Williams 1994). It forced British viewers to reluctantly accept that pay television was becoming an “accepted component of the media sport nexus” (Nicholson 2007 27) as it was in North America. Murdoch’s totally commercialised assault on what he saw as a backward looking public service model inevitably raised questions about public access issues of social democracy (Williams 1994). However the juggernaut had started to roll and would create similar issues on a smaller scale in New Zealand. In 1995, rugby union turned professional and assumptions about live free-to-air access to major sporting events as a basic public right were put to the test – and lost.

In the intense bidding for sports rights, pay television operators, with their narrower range of programme genres, are often able to out-bid free-to-air broadcasters that support a wider range of public entertainment and costly news services. This has resulted in the increasing disappearance of live sport from free-to-air television. In Europe, the USA and Australia, protective legislation was created to prevent sporting events, considered to be of national cultural importance, from being taken away from the mass free-to-air audience. Such anti-siphoning laws generally require a pay television rights-holder to have a free-to-air partner to ensure that a clearly defined group of sporting events continue to be screened live on free-to-air television. The list of guaranteed events is quite extensive in a country such as Australia, where there is broad agreement that sport is an expression of national culture39. No such curb on the free market was seen as desirable during the radical changes to New Zealand broadcasting in the 1990s, a period when the favourite theme was deregulation.

39To date Australia’s list includes Horse Racing, Australian Rules, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Cricket, Soccer, Tennis, Netball, Basketball, Golf and Motorsport.
However as Miller et al. (2001) identify, on a global scale satellite sports broadcasting had become the primary “unit of currency in the cultural economy of sport” (68). In the process of globalisation they observe that both the sports covered and the television companies covering them were transformed. As the competitive world of televisional sport, news and entertainment programmes grew more intense, sport became more telegenic. For some sports and their traditional viewers, this created a tension. For others it was an opportunity to shake off a few millstones from the past and explore a new look and find new audiences. It was an opportunity for the broadcaster to consider new ways of leveraging a higher commercial value out of its traditional sports and major sporting events. It was also an opportunity to invest in new technologies which could make hitherto non-television sporting contests more compelling for the public. TVNZ’s coverage of New Zealand’s successful ‘Black Magic’ America’s Cup challenge in 1995 exemplifies this process of televisional entrepreneurship. It opened up a completely new audience for what was previously a fringe and non-spectator friendly sport.

Television in New Zealand – maturation of the media sport product

TVNZ had emerged from its Mounter-led restructuring fully internationalised, with a rapid upgrade of its international and internal satellite capacity and operating effective international sales and domestic advertising departments (Smith 1996). Horrocks (2004) argues that Mounter’s drive to turn TVNZ into a highly competitive organisation was done in the “spirit of the new global capitalism” (33), which was ambitious and impressive in commercial terms but “narrowly focused in cultural terms” (ibid). Strategies for meeting domestic competition head on were well developed, with the state broadcaster holding an almost unassailable monopoly in anticipation of the arrival of the new broadcaster TV3. TVNZ had started a significant international programme acquisition. Its 1990 Annual Report documented $64 million spend on high-ranking US programme purchase, some of which were never transmitted (Smith 1996). In a video presentation to senior staff in 1989, TVNZ’s CEO Julian Mounter defined TVNZ’s strategy as totally dominating the New Zealand marketplace in the acquisition and broadcast of sport, since this was of critical importance to the future of the network. His speech drew upon the language of both war and sport, with reference to past bruising encounters between the All Blacks and Australia. TVNZ needed to become tough and aggressive, with no quarter given. The acquisition of sport was seen as the “main plank of TVNZ’s strategy to win the audience” (Spicer et al. 1996 65).

Throughout its radio and television broadcasting history, TVNZ had developed firm associations with major sports bodies in New Zealand and particularly with rugby union, rugby league, cricket and netball. Under the new head of sport, John Knowles, these sports were offered long-term contracts (usually four years) with a clause for right of
renewal for the same period built in (Knowles 2011). These renewal “fishhooks” as Knowles called them, purchased exclusive rights for a sport and protected the broadcaster’s investment in the development of the sport as a valuable television property. TVNZ considered these contracts to be good business and vital to the development of major sports and their sponsors, providing them with long-term guaranteed exposure and income (Knowles 2011). Such contracts could span nearly a decade and become a financial straightjacket if the sport increased in popularity, as happened with netball. The rapidly changing media sport environment throughout the 1990s led to a number of sports challenging this long-term ownership by TVNZ where the commercial rewards seemed tipped in the favour of the broadcaster and not the sport. The negotiation in the aftermath of the 1999 Netball World Championships exemplifies this situation.

The acquisition of rights for the 1990 Commonwealth and 1992 Olympic games further consolidated TVNZ’s hold over major sporting properties which virtually assured high rating viewership. For TV3, hampered by their delayed broadcasting debut and impoverished by the lengthy third channel hearings, the 1990 Commonwealth Games held in Auckland proved to be an early nail in their coffin. Unable to screen any coverage of the Games or even film news items outside the venues, their ratings share of 24% at the start of the year plummeted to 11% during the games coverage (Spicer et al. 1996). Within six months the channel was in receivership carrying a debt in excess of $80 million (Smith 1996) and its inability to compete in the area of high profile national sport had been a significant factor in the demise of the network. One of the claims TV3 made in the ensuing bankruptcy hearings in the High Court was that TVNZ’s exclusion of TV3 from broadcasting major New Zealand sports had been illegal under the Commerce Act, 1986. Although not uncommon in other commercial markets this kind of conflict was relatively new to the New Zealand broadcasting environment and just a taste of what was to come. Somewhat compromised by TV3’s spectacular financial failure the Government threw the network a life line the next year in its general deregulation of corporate foreign ownership. This began an era when New Zealand broadcasting was up for sale to the highest bidder and enabled Canadian Communications conglomerate, CanWest Global to pick up an initial 20% shareholding and gain effective control of TV3 (Smith 1996) with the provision to extend their shareholding in the future.

The wholesale deregulation of the foreign ownership market created a broadcasting environment unique in the western world and drew the interest of global media conglomerates. The opening up of the country to more foreign and cross media ownership provided fertile ground for further media change. Televised sport was seen as

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40High Court of New Zealand Auckland Registry, CP No. 929/91.
already well represented (even, in the eyes of some critics, as over-represented) and therefore not in need of state funding through the Public Broadcasting Fee. This effectively prevented issues of gender balance and limited diversity of televised sport from being directly addressed. Sport, albeit predominantly male sport was placed alongside news and current affairs and as such was expected to flourish without NZOA subsidies. However, it left the genre fully exposed to the increasing pressures of commercialism. In New Zealand second tier sports were finding it increasingly hard to gain a presence on free-to-air television and became frustrated at TVNZ’s “relentlessly commercial attitude” (Parker 1992 94). The New Zealand Hockey Federation, for example, could not gain coverage of their international Olympic qualifying tournament in 1991 because they couldn’t raise the $20,000 per day cost demanded by TVNZ to televise the 16 day tournament (ibid).

Pay television enters the New Zealand market

The 1989 Radiocommunications Act opened up UHF41 (Ultra High Frequency) and the next year the government held a rapid fire auction to sell the frequencies off to private bidders. Sky Television, with its intention to set up a pay network, won four national channels and a number of regional frequencies which gave it the potential to “threaten aspects of free-to-air broadcasting” (Smith 1996 88). This, combined with the deregulated broadcasting market, attracted 51% US transnational and telecommunication industries investment in SKY. In its first years it was a relatively low key affair as customers and retailers got used to the technical requirements of the UHF delivery system (90). SKY was founded with the viewing tastes of Kiwi males in mind, much the way Pay TV had grown in the USA and Europe and particularly Britain’s BSkyB. In 1990, SKY went to air with Rugby League, the first of the Big Four codes to move to pay television. League was, however, still available to TVNZ (which had bought shares in the pay service and was so far able to work in partnership).

In comparison to the more spectacular launch and crash of TV3 (prior to its reconstruction under foreign ownership), SKY moved slowly but steadily through the market, waiting for a wind shift. SKY had already achieved a small inroad into the monopoly coverage of rugby by outbidding TVNZ for exclusive rights to the 1992 All Blacks tour of South Africa which prevented one million New Zealanders from seeing the test matches live. For some time this remained an isolated event (Smith 1996). A major break came in 1995 when the international rugby union became professional, based on the recognition that amateurism as “the central plank on which the game had been built” was “no longer viable in the modern era” (Fitzsimons 1996 319). The newly professional

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41TVNZ and TV3 operated on the VHF (very high frequency) band but the UHF was currently unused for television at that time (Smith 1996).
NZRU sold the television rights for all big games to SKY in a ten year contract. Thus TVNZ lost all live rugby coverage of New Zealand, South Africa and Australian games, including the Super 12 competition and test matches. SKY also became the major rights holder for Rugby League, which it on-sold to TV3. This intense escalation of commercial competition between free-to-air and pay television was moving in tandem with the increased level of open professionalism in the major male sporting codes which now relied on the revenue from television rights as their main source of funding.

In April 1998, TVNZ dropped out of the bidding for the renewal of international cricket rights, which went to SKY. Only two months later there were rumours that TVNZ might also lose its deal with SKY for delayed coverage of top rugby games (Espiner 1998). In September 1999 - against the background of the sale of TVNZ’s 12.6% stake in SKY to Independent Newspapers Ltd (INL), SKY and TVNZ’s bidding duel for the Rugby World Cup and TVNZ’s announcement that it was going to move into digital pay TV as a direct competitor - SKY on-sold the delayed coverage rights for rugby to TV3. SKY CEO Nate Smith provocatively observed that:

> Rugby, along with news, *Montana Theatre*, *Coronation Street* and cricket is the fare we associate with TV ONE. Now, with the sports elements of the emotional glue gone, viewers and advertisers may well re-evaluate how they see the channels. (qtd. in Taylor 1999)

After nine years of competing in the deregulated market, the TVNZ sporting stable was drastically reduced. Sports commentator Murray Deaker noted that “in the short term, three of the big four sports have slipped from their [TVNZ’s] grasp” (Deaker 1999). NZ *Herald* columnist Brian Rudman observed:

> No doubt it’s hard for sports-obsessed state television to see the loss of rugby broadcasting rights - coming on the heels of losing cricket - as anything less than the end of civilisation as they have created it for us (Rudman 1999).

In an effort to retain the loyalty of the New Zealand public, TVNZ took out a massive double page advertisement in the *NZ Herald* headed ‘WHO’S A GOOD SPORT?’ On one page were listed: ‘World Netball Champs, Davis Cup Tennis, Rugby World Cup, Formula One World Champs, America’s Cup, Heineken Tennis Open, Sydney 2000 Olympics’. These were ‘ALL FREE ON TVNZ’. On the other page all the sports events listed under SKY were crossed out, with the explanation: ‘SORRY YOU’LL HAVE TO PAY TO VIEW THIS’ (*NZ Herald* 23 September 1999).

Findlay MacDonald’s *Listener* editorial reinforced the view of TV ONE General Manager Shaun Brown that the dispute was not just about sport and had not been for some time. MacDonald believed that the “massive commercialisation of the national game has

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42Exclusive coverage of cricket’s domestic games in a five year contract, with a five year renewal option.
inevitably led to this point” (1999). He quoted Nick Hornby’s observation that “when the
game gets sanitised and commodified and packaged and on-sold and sponsored and
branded, something is lost” (ibid). Both Brown and MacDonald’s cynicism regarding
increasing commercialisation of rugby, such as the rights ownership moving from free-to-
air to pay television, was matched by growing public disenchantment. There was
considerable distaste with the speed at which the All Blacks seemed to be becoming more
of a constructed marketing brand and less of a grass roots expression of who we are.
Despite the hold that rugby, as the national game, may have had within New Zealand
society, the slump in popularity following the 1981 Springbok tour had proved that this
status was not invulnerable. Many New Zealanders felt that values had been diluted in the
process of professionalisation - values still invoked in marketing but less often seen in
practice. Therefore the impending Rugby World Cup had a great deal more resting on it
than just winning the title. The traditional values of national identity needed to be
reaffirmed. However, before this was to take place, there were a few netball games to be
played.

Netball – the “rotting mullet” of televised sport

In a provocative evaluation of the new era of televised netball which was now being
regularly touted in print and television media, Paul Holmes, in the first year of his
eponymous current affairs programme Holmes, set up a three-way interview via satellite
with Canberra University Communications academic, Professor Bill Mandle and
television sports journalist Trish Stratford. Mandle had been widely reported on both
sides of the Tasman as pronouncing the game of netball to be “about as exciting as
watching a rotting mullet” (Holmes 1990). Giving it his best shot to try and turn the
world back to the gendered priorities he openly espoused, Mandle declared that:

It’s a dud. It was a great mistake of a game. It’s not going to be a spectator sport.
It’s okay for socialising. It’s okay to occupy a Saturday morning in New Zealand or
a Saturday morning here in Australia, but goodness gracious me, to try to think that
anyone would want to report netball, report it? and put it on the back pages of
papers, or televise it and expect ratings to ensue from it – you’ve got to be out of
your mind.

The skills are very limited indeed; the tension is as repetitive as a bad game of
basketball, there’s no sense of energy, there’s no sense of purpose, there’s no
sense of real conflict in it. It’s a dud of a game. It’s a pity women committed
themselves to that. (Mandle on Holmes 1990)
Stratford’s protestations that a recent televised tour of New Zealand by the Jamaican netball team captured a 25 ratings point high, made up of an equal split of male and female audience with high young adult representation was brushed aside as irrelevant. Mandle’s exhortations appear almost tongue-in-cheek but Holmes makes it clear that he does not share Mandle’s view. There is nevertheless a sense of this being a discriminatory rear guard action to discredit women’s sport and very specifically netball in the face of the recent increase in positive media attention. Despite being chosen for his provocative views, Mandle’s interview lacks bite as contentious current affairs television. Holmes further undercuts Mandle in his outro by quipping, “we approached Lois Muir to discuss this with Professor Mandle but Lois couldn’t understand why we had the geezer on!” (Holmes 1990).

“Netball is money and netball is the 90s woman”

In what was a timely article, Margot Butcher, writing in *North and South* magazine in 1991, set out to chart the rise in media interest in netball after decades of the game being ignored. She accurately recognises that “netball went after the media” (82) rather than the other way around. The strength of television coverage in New Zealand in 1991 in comparison to other countries Butcher cites as an indication that New Zealand netball was well ahead of “our Tasman cousins” (ibid). This is backed by Stell (1991), who observed
that few women’s sports in Australia “receive live television coverage -the best they can usually hope for is edited highlights screened outside peak viewing times”\(^{43}\) (235). In New Zealand the new commercial fervour surrounding the game occasionally pushed a little too close to the acceptable edge for some of the rank and file still unfolding itself from the decades of conservatism. In a marketing display which was a perhaps a bit too ‘out there’ for netball, Butcher cites the televised coverage of the 1990 Bendon National League final. In the half-time break, rather than cut to commercials, TVNZ continued coverage of the parade of models in “skimpy Bendon lingerie” \(^{44}\). Butcher reports that “even (female) members of the television crew protested at filming what they saw as an affront to women’s sport” (ibid). In defence of this coverage, Head of TVNZ sport John Knowles somewhat ingenuously commented, “it was what Bendon did on court, we were there and so we covered it, like showing the brass band at halftime at Eden Park\(^{45}\)” (ibid).

It was a natural spinoff from the increased television coverage of games that individual netball players began to be recognised as personalities in their own right and were offered more commercial opportunities. Julie Townsend, a member of the successful 1987 World Championship team, had become the best known face of the Silver Ferns and was much in demand for speaking engagements, television commercials and Women’s Weekly profiles. She had her own five minute netball slot on an evening television sports show and became a weekly personality on the local quiz show A Question of Sport. Townsend was athletic, intelligent and articulate and made the most of the opportunities her high media profile offered. Townsend was willing, as Joan Harnett had been in a previous generation, to use the exposure for the sake of the sport:

> Now with people seeing netball from the outside [ie television] or reading about it in newspapers or seeing netballers at charity events or speaking at dinners…it’s very important for children to look up to role models and say, ‘I want to be like that player.’ That’s what happens in rugby and cricket (qtd. in Butcher 1991 87)

### The infamous TVNZ primetime showdown

Following the significant success of the Milo International series at the end of the 1980s and the publicity about the upsurge in viewer support, committing long term to having netball as a regular feature on primetime television should have been a foregone

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\(^{43}\)In 1992 women’s televised sport in Australia received 1.2% coverage, with no coverage on commercial channels. By 1996 this figure had only increased to 2% (Australian Sports Commission 1996 13).

\(^{44}\) Sitting courtside in a corporate box I did witness in close up the rather surprising but well-executed Highland Fling performed by the dancers/models clad in Bendon’s Elle MacPherson tartan underwear range. It was an interesting moment to pause and ponder on my feminist principles and the new era of women’s sports marketing.

\(^{45}\) At the same time, TV3 covered in close up Bendon’s underwear models in the Nutrimetics-Bendon international women’s tennis tournament, which Knowles referred to as being done in a “much raunchier style” than TVNZ (Butcher 1991 83).
conclusion. But despite the success of the netball ratings and the significant audience response to netball as a demonstration sport in the 1990 Commonwealth Games, an ongoing primetime presence was not guaranteed. TVNZ was now highly commercialised with a mandate to return maximum yearly profit to the government. The Programming Department was now the decision maker who demanded the highest ratings with the lowest content cost per hour. This was a hard-headed accounting formula that local programme production and OB sport could not always achieve. The issues of netball’s long-term access to primetime came to a head in an infamous confrontation which has been passed down in TVNZ oral history. The main combatants were the Head of Sport John Knowles and Ross Plapp, an Australian programmer on contract to TVNZ from Australia’s Channel 9. Knowles, in collaboration with NNZ president Dawn Jones, NNZ CEO Alistair Snell, Nestles (Milo) and TVNZ Sales and Marketing worked out a deal which promised a premium primetime schedule if NNZ came up a consistent annual offering of test matches. This was agreed by all parties and as far as Knowles was concerned it was “all fine and hunky dory” (2011). He signed a four year contract with NNZ before notifying Programming and the shootout to secure netball’s future on primetime hit the TVNZ boardroom. The following dialogue is a summary of the drama as relayed by John Knowles (with considerable relish):

**Plapp:** This is a sheila’s sport and it has no place in primetime. You’re going to ruin my schedule and now I see you have signed a contract without consulting me to put netball in my schedule. It will shatter it to pieces. I am not having this!

**Knowles:** I have signed the contract, too late!

**Plapp:** We will go and see Mounter.

**Knowles:** (Mounter at this stage was the CEO, so we marched up there and this guy was fuming).

**Knowles:** Julian, I think it will work.

**Plapp:** No, No, you are going to have to break the bloody contract.

**Knowles:** How about we just give it a try?

**Plapp:** No, I want Knowles sacked. He is not fit for his job if he is going to do stupid things like this.

**Knowles:** (There was a test coming up against Australia fairly shortly within the next 6 weeks or so).

**Knowles to Mounter:** Let’s see what happens to that test match?
Plapp: I will tell you what will happen to this bloody test match. It will crash the ratings and ruin the primetime schedule. I tell you what Mounter, it is either him or me!

Mounter: John, are you confident in your ratings?46

Knowles: I think so, it looks alright to me - half the population is female and it is an interesting television sport. (Knowles 2011)

At the end of this heated exchange where Knowles and primetime netball had their collective heads on the same execution block, Mounter gave the thumbs up for the primetime screening. Knowles, with his professional reputation on the line, galvanised his local contacts to try and get everyone possible to watch the game:

I did all I possibly could to get promotion for the game. On a personal level, my girls played down at Pakuranga courts and I told the people down there; please I need everyone possible to be watching the netball next Tuesday night otherwise it’s going to be terrible. So we put special announcements over there, at other courts, North Shore and I had some friends that were in netball still in Dunedin so I got them to do special announcements; ‘don’t forget to watch on Tuesday night’. Anyway, the thing it rated pretty well and I remember I was out of the office somewhere and I got them to send me a fax of the results and I saw the figures come up and there was an average rating of 22 which was stunning stuff - nothing to do with the extra promotions I had done but it was intrinsically a strong sport, so that was fine, in fact Plapp left not long after that. I would like to think that the two things were joined together but I don’t think they were (Knowles 2011).

Under Knowles, the logic of netball in primetime was never challenged again and he used this position to obtain the best screening potential for elite netball. In one of the earliest examples of New Zealand television using its Trans-Tasman influence to obtain prime scheduling slots, he negotiated with Australian netball to shift their game times a bit earlier so it coincided more effectively with New Zealand primetime. Such a shift was not an issue for Australia as the ABC rarely broadcast tests live, usually deferring them to 10 pm. Under Knowles’ stewardship, netball continued to build its audience and financially justified its privileged position. This was reinforced by a largely uncritical media who emerged from the gender consciousness-raising 1980s wishing to be seen as supporters of women’s sport. This did not mean that the battle for equality had been won. It had just moved up a notch in comparison to Australia and other netball nations. However, print media was still lagging behind - evidenced from the content analysis research of McGregor (1994), McGregor and Melville (1995), McGregor and Fountaine (1997 1999). In short, netball’s higher visibility on television did not equate to gains for other female sports.

46 Knowles used the impressive ratings from the Milo test series in 1989 and the 1990 Commonwealth Games to justify the signing of the primetime contract.
This was a unique and relatively secure position for a female sport but in netball circles there was a growing sense of entitlement to negotiate a better deal as the tight television contracts were felt to be discriminatory. There was a supposition, rightly or wrongly, that the broadcaster was taking the sport for granted and had become complacent in their ownership of the code. There were still no strong bidders for rights in the marketplace. Interest from the pay broadcaster SKY was unwelcome as the sport and major sponsors such as Fisher and Paykel, felt the need to remain on a free to air channel in contact with the sport’s grass roots constituency (Douglas 2001). To challenge the broadcaster’s perceived arrogance and complacency, netball needed resounding evidence that they were worth more. They knew they needed a startling ratings result, the cold hard currency of rights negotiation, to take to the next contract renewal negotiations. The ratings success of the repackaged national league into the franchise based Coca-Cola Cup competition in 1998 was a good starting point but they needed more. The 1999 World Championships, hosted in Christchurch, promised to deliver the necessary ratings bonanza.

‘Let’s go Girls’ – the Coca-Cola Cup seeks a new television audience

In 1997, NNZ released the first of their ambitious Future Directions statements. This resulted in a revamp of the existing regional competition into the semi-professional Coca-Cola Cup national league. This was netball’s watered down equivalent of the three nations Super 12 franchise-based rugby competition. It was aimed at significantly increasing spectator, media and sponsor support, as well as strengthening the development bases and standard of elite players (Dougherty 2004). It was also hoped that this new competition, played over seven consecutive weekends, would initiate professional payment for coaches and players. The ten franchises throughout the country were launched with considerable hoopla sporting snappy new livery and for many members of the public, somewhat puzzling American-style team names - Western Flyers, CMTV Cometz,- which made regional identification difficult. The most successful franchise, Invercargill’s Southern Sting, backed by the wealthy Invercargill Licensing Trust, became an “unprecedented cultural phenomenon” (Thompson 2003 259). Capitalising on the fervent support of the team, Invercargill with a population of 53,000, built the largest sports stadium in the country (Butcher 2000) to provide a home base and host international tests. It is an ear and earth shattering experience to be part of the netball crowd at Stadium Southland and a challenge for the OB audio engineers as the

47 Shania Twain’s ‘Man, I feel like a Woman’ became a standard anthem for the Northern Force Coca-Cola (and later the National Bank) Cup team which matched the sassy new image created by the made-for television competition.

48 IFNA had banned coaches and players receiving professional payment up until 1996 (Future Directions 1997)
audio limiters barely contain the extreme levels of distortion (Bhana 2003). In the 2002 final, the stadium’s address system was cranked up so loud to match the output of the Southland faithful that TVNZ complained it created an “unsafe working environment for the television crew and commentators” (Dougherty 2004 145).

In her survey of women and sport in New Zealand Shona Thompson (2003) accurately assesses the Coca-Cola Cup as being extremely successful in boosting the sport’s profile. Despite this she cautioned that the competition and unprecedented rights contract with TVNZ should be used as proof of women’s equality. In the first few years, many of the franchises struggled to raise the necessary $70,000 through regional sponsorship and pay their annual $20,000 franchise fee to Cup Co 49. In reality, Coca-Cola secured the naming rights for a very low level of investment (Snell 2000) which placed further financial pressure on all parties. The remuneration for the players was minimal. Players earned a sign-on fee of between $150-250, a game fee of $50 per game and bonus payments for semi-finals and finals. The most a player could receive, if they were also a member of the New Zealand training squad, was $1,450 if their team won all their games. A non-New Zealand training squad member could earn $1,350 (Dougherty 2004). This was not vaguely comparable to player payments made possible by television rights income in the rugby Super 12 competition and understandably the majority of netballers still held down part time or full time employment. On top of their employment and training commitments, the players were still expected to perform as fully professional athletes (Thompson 2003) and meet public, sponsor and media commitments. Despite these difficulties, the revamped competition did strike a responsive chord with the public and became particularly strong in regional areas such as Southland. Thompson believes that in some provincial areas there was a significant cultural shift which tapped into “traditional regional community identification with sports teams in ways that rugby has been accused of abandoning” (258) only a few years after the professionalisation of the national sport.

The signing of the new Coca-Cola Cup contract with TVNZ coincided with moving netball away from its strong viewer base on TV ONE to seek the 18-25 youth demographic on TV-2. Coca-Cola and later Vodafone, sponsor for the 1999 World Championships, were instrumental in encouraging this channel association, as it aligned with their youth orientated marketing strategies (Kirk-Smith 2001). Initially, this migration of select sporting properties away from TV ONE was part of a competitive strategy to contain TV3’s growing appeal with the youth demographic. Also there were wider in-house concerns. TVNZ was operating under constant rumours of asset stripping

49 Cup Co is the registered company, wholly owned by NNZ which administers the Coca-Cola Cup competition (NNZ 1998)
by the Government in the deregulated broadcasting market. A sale offer of either of TVNZ’s channels, or the ripe plum of the transmission provider BCL, would have drawn considerable international interest and would have crippled the broadcaster’s financially lucrative complementary two-channel system. Under the guidance of another Australian programmer Mike Lattin, the hitherto clearly delineated branding between the two channels was somewhat muddied with the hope that it would make it less possible to strip one channel off for sale (Telfer 2007). Netball, along with other traditional TV ONE fare such as British drama, moved across to TV-2 and to capture the highly valued youth demographic the presentation of netball was given a youthful make-over to appeal to its new audience.

The Event Management Guidelines for the 1998 Coca-Cola Cup promoted the move to TV-2 as having “different brand values than the more austere TV1 (sic)” and that new collaboration had resulted in some innovations to help “jazz up” their coverage (NNZ Event Management Guidelines 1998 40). TVNZ agreed to extend the time slot to two hours to give more time for player interviews and other pre-recorded material inserted into the live broadcast. NNZ guaranteed broadcaster access to the captain, players, coaches and referees and agreed to station a handheld camera outside the dressing room before the match, during half-time and immediately after the game. Access was also granted to the training session before each match when key players and the coach would be available for interviews. As many players were unused to being interviewed, TVNZ guaranteed that they would only be asked positive questions and would have the right of refusal. However, NNZ was very keen that all players should participate and TVNZ had contracted former Silver Fern April Ieremia to ensure that the players would be “talking with someone who knows the sport and will make the players feel comfortable” (40).

In exchange for greater access to players and administrators, NNZ requested TVNZ include a time clock on the on-going score bug, experiment with a wagon wheel graphic for the shooters as used in cricket, to make better use of game statistics such as shots at goal, intercepts and turnovers. The main request was for more end-on cameras and more frequent coverage of off-ball play (41). The two NNZ umpires, Joan Hodson and Janice McKerchar were made available to TVNZ to make Whistle Stop – a VT insert which was the netball equivalent of rugby’s Jeff the Ref. Segments featuring Hodson and McKerchar were dropped into the extended coverage of the games to refresh the general television audience on the netball rules. This was designed in particular to accommodate new male viewers, who were more likely to be confused and sometimes annoyed by the amount of whistle and stoppages in the game. Each team was required to have a list of songs “in

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50 The continuous on-screen score graphic, usually displayed in the top or bottom left hand corner of the screen. Now more commonly known as a score tick.
keeping with their team identity” (41) and the lead post-match song was to be Gloria Estefan’s ‘Reach’, written for the 1996 Olympics. The stadium music selection directed targeted the 18 to 25 mainly female demographic and included Cyndi Lauper, Madonna, MC Hammer, OMC, Donna Summer, Duran Duran, Jimmy Barnes and The Spice Girls. Not the usual TV ONE audience preference!

The move to TV-2 and the youthful hype marketed through the brand association with the new channel was not seen as a positive move by some of the more experienced guardians of the game. Julie Coney (Townsend) who was now part of the TVNZ commentary team, felt that the move across the channel divide tended to undermine the status that the sport had worked so hard to achieve and was in danger of trivialising itself for short term commercial gain:

> When it was on Channel 2 I just think it made a mockery of women’s sport and it really annoyed me…I just think that netball needed to be seen as a top athlete’s sport, it deserved to be there with, with the other sports and treated the same as that. And all of a sudden it was put on 2 and it became, as I say it was then going to a different audience and so it had to have different hype and just the bits up front [the presentation] became sort of giggly and scatty. I don’t think we were treating the sport as a…top sport and the females as athletes. I think it was made a mockery of almost. - it wasn’t but it was close to that and I hated that, I hated all the giggly stuff. I wanted it to be this is the sport and we’ve got some fantastic athletes and let’s show them as that, instead of giggly, scatty girls (Coney 2001).

Professional presentation was the central concern for Coney as she was not convinced that seeking the young female market should be the only goal:

> Oh I don’t think it changed the actual game so much, you know, the actual, as the game was being played, but all the lead-in and the interviews at the end and just the whole mix of the programme. I mean as far as, I mean I tried to keep it as professional as I could and would always treat it that way. And even at the start, like I mean April would say, “Oh, we’ll have a bit of a joke about this.” And I’d think, No, well that’s not me, I’m sorry. I mean I’m not, I’m not a funny person. I can be funny when I want to be but I don’t think this is the place to be funny and joking about it. I’m a comments person; I’ve got to be seen to have credibility.

> And that’s what I felt it lacked, credibility, that’s probably the word I was looking for… whereas when it’s on One it’s seen as, … this is our top sport that gets on TV1, that’s the sports channel as well… We lost the sports audience going on to 2. On 2 we might have got a new audience of young teenage women but we lost the men. How many fathers would sit down and turn on Channel 2 to watch netball? But I’d guarantee they watched it when it was on Channel One (Coney 2001).

**Case Study 1999 World Netball Championships**

Following an extraordinarily turbulent period in media sports during the first nine months of 1999, New Zealand netball had an exceptional opportunity to demonstrate what it had to offer. When it took its position in centre court for the Netball World Championships, it stepped into a tense situation heightened by battles between broadcasters and by the public’s need to recover some of the lost ideals associated with amateur sport. It was a long shot for a women’s sport to perform that function within the national consciousness
– a niche owned by rugby and to a lesser extent cricket and occasionally yachting. In netball circles there was awareness that media interest was increasing and optimism that the time was right for the Silver Ferns to topple Australia’s impressive record\textsuperscript{51} and secure a world title – a goal that kept eluding the All Blacks.\textsuperscript{52}

In a move that was the envy of the representatives of all other nations attending the Championships, TVNZ put together a package that contained an unprecedented 31 hours of live television coverage and a further eight hours of delayed coverage (39 hours total). Ten hours of the live coverage was screened in peak viewing time, between 6:00-10:30 at night (the optimum advertising window). The semi-final between New Zealand and Jamaica and the New Zealand final with Australia were screened on Friday and Saturday nights respectively. The game coverage on TV-2 was backed by items on TV ONE and TV3 in the main news, sports news and magazine news programs (\textit{Breakfast, Midday, Holmes}) sporadically for the four months leading up to the tournament and then every day during the competition. These were a combination of live coverage, courtside links, pre-recorded VT items, scoreboard updates and a noteworthy series of VT items prepared for TV3 by reporter Maryanne Twentyman on location in Africa. In comparison to the television game coverage in New Zealand TVNZ’s international sales from the World Championships only provided:

- Australia - 16 hours Network 10, including 10 hours live;
- South Africa – 6 hours on SABC, including highlights and delayed coverage;
- UK – 4 hours ‘live’ on BBC, plus highlights;
- Jamaica – approximately 4 hours of highlights on JTV;
- World – finals highlights on TW1

\textit{(NNZ Report on 10th World Netball Championships 2000)}.

\textbf{Claiming column space and airtime}

Although the print media were saturated with the lead-up to the impending Rugby World Cup, they nevertheless devoted considerable column space to the tournament as it built towards the final. Articles and opinion pieces during the tournament tended to run parallel, in subject matter and angle, to the television news coverage but frequently they provided slightly more in-depth comment than the once over lightly sound bites. Almost all the named sports journalists writing about netball in the major metropolitan

\textsuperscript{51} Australia had won six titles to New Zealand’s two in the course of the nine World Championships since 1963.

\textsuperscript{52} The All Blacks failed to regain the Rugby World Cup in 1991 and 1995 and were soon to fail again in 1999.
newspapers were male. There were, however, male and female television reporters on both channels and the live links were done by Mary Durham for TVNZ and Maryanne Twentyman for TV3. During actual game coverage, April Ieremia and commentators Julie Coney and Jo Coleman – all former netballers, the first two with international experience - were further backed up by the expert commentary team of Australian international Anne Sergeant and former-Silver Fern Tanya Cox. The print media, though providing some of the more informed analysis of the game, lacked the talents of former internationals for expert opinion pieces.

Pre-tournament television coverage occasionally broke the standard mould of ‘lead up to an event’ stories. The majority relied heavily on photo-opportunity moments at the airport or training camp, formula crystal-ball-gazing interviews and more recent historical footage, particularly of New Zealand/Australia clashes and New Zealand’s shock loss to South Africa in the semi-finals of the Birmingham World Championships in 1995. Primetime rewards for the sponsors were news stories revealing the new Ferns’ uniforms and the announcement of the winning chant by the Kaitaia Kohanga Reo. The latter item associated the sport, the competition, the broadcaster and the sponsor Vodafone with a feel-good story from one of the most under-developed regions in the country. The coverage by TVNZ up to this point was no more than routine, with little variation from stock story lines. What was missing was any serious discussion of the sport itself. There could have been an informed debate regarding the need for netball to be a global game, or history of the game’s colonial legacy showing how the skill of the Australasian teams had moved beyond that of the coloniser, England. If these two topics were too serious for sports news or breakfast television, then a lively analysis by past players on the different styles of netball played by the Anglo, Caribbean and Pacific nations (supplemented by archival footage available to TVNZ) could have produced some stimulating lead-up discussion for both the casual and the knowledgeable viewer. After all, coverage of men’s rugby had already established such a pattern. Throughout all the television news coverage, the impact of Pacific Island teams and individual players was largely overlooked. There were no profiles on Vanuatu, Niue, the Cook Islands, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and only fleeting mention of Fiji, the Pacific Island team with the most outstanding improvement before and during the championships.

There was almost total marginalisation of the Asian competitors - Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia - who had hosted and competed in netball at the last Commonwealth Games. The exception to the unimaginative and formulaic coverage were the three African VT items on Malawi, Botswana and Zambia screened on TV3, produced by free-
lance journalist Maryanne Twentyman with funding from an independent source.\footnote{NNZ funded Twentyman to travel to Africa and produce these profiles but wished this arrangement to be confidential as the pieces were to be screened on TV3. The host broadcaster, TVNZ declined to fund these background stories of netball minnows (Twentyman 1999).} Twentyman went to Africa to gather footage before the start of the Championships. She felt the wealth of stories on offer was likely to receive insufficient recognition and there was an opportunity for colour pieces to be done that would ignite public interest in the rich variety of cultures coming together in Christchurch. Such items would provide insights into the lives of women playing netball in the various countries and help to explain to the casual viewer the obviously huge gap between the Anglo and black players of netball in the Commonwealth (Twentyman 1999).

Once the competition was underway, the team that generated the most media interest was Jamaica. Their vigorous on-ball and off-ball play and their feisty courtside interviews and press conferences gave an increased public awareness of the passion associated with the way women play this game at the elite level. All games involving Jamaica attracted increased gate attendance and television viewership as it became clear that they were possible contenders to upset the Australian/New Zealand stranglehold. The vigorous debate in the media regarding their physical style of play, highlighted the contrast to the type of play with which New Zealanders were more familiar.

**The all-important ratings**

The semi-final on Friday October 1 between New Zealand and Jamaica, although traditionally a low viewing night, was a ratings grabber, capturing 57% of channel share for the evening and averaging an overall (5+) ratings figure of 22 over the 2 hours of build-up, game coverage and post-match interviews (AC Nielsen 1999). In the last quarter of the game as the lead see-sawed and the chance for the Silver Ferns to be in the final came under threat, the ratings reached 26, pulling most of the available audience from TV ONE and TV3, with men as well as women featuring strongly in the adult demographics. The Friday night game had everything for the experienced netball player and the new viewer. It was not necessary to know the rules to see that the players were stretching the capabilities of some of the umpires and the physical contest over the ball in the air was the stuff on which televised sport thrives. For the public profile of the game and the commercial interests of TVNZ, this was a perfect curtain-raiser for the final between Australia and New Zealand the next night. Both print and television media focused on the promotion of the final and the anticipation of a close game - whatever the result. Past finals between New Zealand and Australia had nearly always been close, with three finals being decided by one goal. Anecdotal evidence and fervent outpourings in the Netball New Zealand internet chat room suggested that the night of the final was one
that many New Zealanders were planning their social lives around. This was appointment viewing, not to be missed.

At 10pm on Saturday 2 October 1999 with 4.5 seconds remaining on the clock, the Australian substitute Goal Attack, Sharelle McMahon, faultlessly netted the winning goal, double-checked the scoreboard and then threw herself onto a pile of thrashing Aussies in the middle of the court. The victorious Australian team was incredulous that the Silver Ferns54, technically the superior team on the day, had handed them back the World Championship title yet again. For the New Zealand television audience it was despair and deepest anguish. However for TVNZ it was a moment that could warm the cockles of the sternest accountant and possibly even claim ex-TVNZ programmer Ross Plapp back from the dark side of gender discrimination. The average viewing rating over the two hours of the final was a massive 30 points (70% of channel share) which equated to over one million New Zealand viewers (AC Neilsen 1999).

Figure 75: Sharelle McMahon Nets Australia’s Winning Goal in the Last 4.5 Seconds of the World Netball Championships Final, 1999

It was one of the highest-rating programmes in New Zealand television history, out-rating the Bledisloe Cup on July 24 the same year by 4 ratings points (with the rugby scoring only 873,000 estimated viewers compared to netball’s 1,002,000). The only competition

54Vodafone purchased naming rights to the Silver Ferns in 1999 (‘The Vodafone Silver Ferns’). For the purpose of consistency, the national team will continue be referred to as the ‘Silver Ferns’.
on the other channels that managed to nudge a rating over 5 was the teen flick on TV3, *Days of Thunder*. TV ONE was totally denuded of audience. The 55-plus viewers led the exodus, a massive 51% of that age group. The male and female viewing figures were close together in all age demographics but there were times when males out-rated females in the 25-54 age group. This confirmed the popular wisdom that men will watch any sport if it is quality sport, even if played by women - especially if the game is between New Zealand and Australia - and definitely if there is a chance that New Zealand might win. The last 15 minute quarter contained all the elements of major drama when it appeared a Ferns’ victory was within grasp and the ratings soared into television history.

**Camera placement**

*Figure 76: Camera Placement, NZ/Australia Final, Netball World Championships 1999*

In one of the most comprehensive technical set-ups for netball to date, nine cameras were used to cover the court and bench action. There was an additional miniaturised camera fixed to the right-side goal post. An unmanned fixed camera (Cam 11), high in the stand to the right of Cams 1 and 2, gathered a long shot diagonally through the court high above the crowd. This Beauty Shot provided contextual background for the layering of graphics information at the end of the quarters. There were a couple of significant changes from the placement used in the Milo series at the start of the decade. The two courtside cameras (previously 3 and 4) are moved around behind the goal circles becoming cams 4 and 5. Cam 5 is located in the first row of seating and remains stationary, only shooting off the tripod throughout the game. Cam 3 is now placed centre courtside under the two high master cameras. This becomes the main ‘personality’ camera and covers the central action from ground level. It complements the elevated master shot coverage from Cams 1...
and 2 and gathers reaction shots of the Goal Shoot or Goal Attack as they turn from a shot at goal. It is also used for cutaways of the crowd opposite and injury breaks until the handheld cameras covering the benches can be turned to shoot the non-playing action on court (the only time they are able to shoot across the axis of action). A steadicam is substituted for Cam 4 instead of shooting off a tripod. The steadicam runs the sideline from the start of the goal third and along the back of the circle. The fluid tracking and tilting facility of the steadicam rig captures the physical nature of the contest under the goal and adds a visually significant dynamic to the OB mix. This camera configuration is the template for all modern coverage of the game and is designed with a much greater understanding of the flow and technicalities of the game.

Figure 77: Camera Positions, NZ/Australia Final, Netball World Championships 1999

Cam 1: HA WS master shot, centre
Cam 2: HA, MS master shot, centre
Cam 3: courtside centre. Personality camera
Cam 4: steadicam – courtside left, goal third and circle

Steadicam was introduced into NZ in late the 1980s. Because of its expense, it was primarily used for shooting television commercials on film, and television drama, but it could also be cabled into an OB set-up. Steadicam didn’t start to be used for any sport until the late 1990s and was first used in netball for the 1999 World Championships. The steadicam and operator are hired on a free-lance contract basis which is an additional above-line cost for OB production (Coates 2003).
Cam 5: courtside right behind goal (tripod)

Cam 6: Handheld. NZ team bench (right)

Cam 7: Handheld. Australia team bench (left)

Cam 8: HA end-on (left)

Cam 9: HA end-on, level with top of goal (right)

Cam 10: miniaturised remote. Fixed to goal post (left) under ring
The drama captured by the bench cameras

Committing two cameras to cover both team benches added a much-needed dimension to the off-ball narrative. Bench cutaways offer stronger storytelling options than general crowd shots as they gather a reaction from players, coaches and officials. They exude excruciating tension. These are the participants who really understand the subtleties of what is happening out on the court so their reactions are dramatically revealing for the audience. There is frequent intercutting between the two coaches: New Zealand’s Yvonne Willering, whose emotions are barely in check; and Australia’s outwardly calm Jill McIntosh who was renowned for her controlled game face. In the final minutes of the game, with the score tied, the contrast between close-ups on McIntosh and Willering adds to the explosive ticking clock narrative. After the final whistle the intercutting between the Australian victorious hysteria and the New Zealand camp’s stunned and then tearful disbelief is visual storytelling at its most effective. It captures the emotional extremes of the winner and loser narrative - universal to all competitive sport.

The bench camera operator is crouched on the floor in front of the players, back-on to the game in what is known to OB camera crew as the short straw position. Although the bench is their primary focus they can turn and cover the court during a stoppage or go behind the bench to grab shots of players warming up, indicating a possible substitution. This off-court narrative enables the director to cut in additional information for the commentators. At a crucial point in this game, McIntosh’s call to pull off the team captain and veteran Australian Goal Shoot Vicky Wilson and substitute rookie Sharelle McMahon wins the game for Australia. In preparation for this game-deciding call by the coach, the director intercuts between Wilson on court, McMahon in the warm-up zone and McIntosh on the bench. The range of perspective involves the viewer in the complexity of game tactics and includes the coach as a vital ingredient.
Once these additional cameras were dedicated to the team benches, there was a significant change in the scope of the storytelling. This was intensified by the compact nature of the netball court and the bench layout where all the key participants are clearly in view. In comparison, the rugby coaching team are sealed off in a glassed cubicle high in the stand. This allows very limited access reinforcing a notion of elitist segregation. This is a stark contrast to the colourful European football managers who prowl the sideline and their team bench in full camera view throughout the match. In American Football there are an extraordinary number of team officials on the sideline who jostle their way into the game narrative. Netball did not and still does not allow its coaches free range of the sideline like those in basketball whose histrionics and strategic gamesmanship are part of the total game hype. However, the 1999 World Championships was the beginning of integrating the netball coach into the televised game, albeit in a very contained manner. Confinement on the bench could be interpreted as a lingering influence of netball’s tradition of compliant femininity but the new style coverage made them a crucial participant in the game.

The visual impact of steadicam

The substitution of the steadicam for a stationary goal-end camera instantly injects the visual dynamic of the tracking shot and energises the peripheral coverage of non-game and injury time. The unique flexibility of the steadicam rig enables smooth tracking shots, as the rig operator runs the sideline. This effortlessly follows the ball without the directional confines, expense and impracticality of a traditional track and dolly setup or the unevenness of a handheld camera. The shot from this camera is able to cross the 180 degree axis without appearing to reverse the line of action and confuse the viewers. Rather than be used just to cover the national anthem line up at the start of the match (one of the adaptations netball made in the late 1980s for television in preference to the traditional handshake and sporting cheers) the steadicam shows its worth in covering an impromptu haka performed by male family members of the Silver Ferns just before the start of the game. The steadicam tracks behind the men, shooting through the players standing on the court and links them with their wife, sibling or daughter for a few brief moments. The men are doing the haka just for them - not a face to face confrontation directed at the Australian team as at the start of an All Blacks test match. It is a very personal moment, exclusive of the opposition and a series of shots reveal the Silver Ferns’ obvious delight at being paid this honour by their menfolk. The mana of the team and the tribute paid to them by this emotional gesture of solidarity is intensified by the intimacy of the steadicam shots and the vérité style of shooting before moving into formal game coverage mode. The fast-response capability of the steadicam operator and rig means a director can rely on instant access to unpredictable moments of drama which are
storytelling gold. In this case it was an intimate moment of national and personal pride - very different from the way the haka is used for male national teams - but the spontaneous display of respect and aroha understood by every New Zealander.

Figure 78: Steadicam Coverage of Pre-game Haka

| Cam 3: Silver Ferns captain, Bernice Mene’s father, Mene Mene |
| Cam 4: steadicam, tracking haka behind corflutes |
| Cam 9: reaction shot, Silver Ferns on court responding to haka by family members |

Digital on-screen graphics (DOG) and slow-motion replays

By the late 1990s the more precise keying facility and special effects function of the Chyron\(^5\) character generators were able to provide well designed team graphics and constant on-screen information. This increased the scope and clarity of on-screen graphics such as the score bug which provided the score, quarter, countdown time clock and World Championship logo at the right hand top of the screen. This allowed for more consistent branding and advertising opportunities to be embedded into the game text. At the start and end of one of the infrequent replays, the inserted slow-motion footage is tumbled into full frame and out again, providing the naming sponsor with an opportunity for the commentators to reinforce their branding eg. “On the Vodafone replay…” At this stage a sponsor logo is not visually attached to the inpoint and outpoint of the replay.

Slow-motion replays are only used three times throughout the entire game and never during a passage of play. The most common opportunity is during injury time when the action leading up to the injury is provided for commentator analysis and also helps to maintain pace during game downtime. Only once is a replay inserted during the few seconds after a goal is scored and the ball is being returned to the centre. In this instance, the replay captures the reaction of coach, Yvonne Willering as the Silver Ferns score and

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\(^5\) In North America, Chyron were the main suppliers of digital character generators to the broadcasting industry and Aston in the UK. Although they were not the exclusive suppliers most character generators were known as Astons or Chyrons irrespective of their actual brand name. Chyron and Aston were both used in NZ with TVNZ using a Chyron in the 1990s.
nudge ahead of Australia by one goal. There would not have been time to cut away to this shot during the action in the circle. It is a matter of practice, skill and timing on the part of the director to include action replays into live coverage and it is understandable that within the confines of the technology in 1999, few were being used and only at controllable times in the game. There was a golden rule at TVNZ in the 1980s and 1990s, inherited from Northern Hemisphere OB directors, that you must never miss recording a goal to insert a replay - even in a high scoring or uneven game (Telfer 2007). In the late 1990s there was still considerable nervousness about missing any of the on-court action. It was felt that the speed of the game with such a high percentage of playing time in contrast to open field games with set plays and predictable dead ball downtime, prevented frequent use of replays (Coates 2003).

**Figure 79: Slow-motion Replay Sequence during Injury Time**

| Score bug: top left hand of frame. |
| Replay Inpoint: Transition graphic slow-motion replay tumbles up frame left |
| Replay: Cam 5 |
| NB: (crosses the 180 axis to give reverse perspective on action) |
Constructing the game narrative: the last minutes of the Australia/New Zealand final

The last minutes of the game, which rocketed the ratings, contained all the vital elements of good television that were historically associated with men’s highly competitive sport. There were finally sufficient cameras available to capture the action and the emotion on and off the court which electrified the final moments of the tight contest. As the game lurches from one end of the court to the other, with the score either tied or one team inching ahead, the director cuts between the two coaches and the team benches to intensify the climax. The majority of the action is still covered with the high angle master cameras, but Cams 4 and 5 at each end of the court tighten the visual framing. Cam 3 is constantly framing on the play makers in the goal circles, ready for them to turn and offer a reaction shot for the director. As Sharelle McMahon nets the winning goal, Cam 3 has her framed up and pans with her as she looks up to check the electronic scoreboard and runs down the court into the arms of her team mates. The other courtside cameras were ready to gather tighter shots and the steadicam and the bench cameras leave their sideline positions and close in on the action in each camp. The brief to these cameramen is to immediately get right amongst the post-game action and offer strong shots of the players while the other bench camera (Cam 6) turns to shoot the crowd reaction behind the benches.

This immediate post-game coverage provides an extraordinary level of emotional engagement for the television audience with an intense spotlight on the two teams at the end of a hard fought game; one in exhausted despair and the other in incredulous jubilation. Netball coverage can be very exposing at the end of a game as the players are corralled on court and cannot rapidly exit to the anonymity of the changing room. The rawness of the emotion is deeply evident and as painful as it was to witness at the time, it was an honest ‘we put everything we had out there on the court and it was not good enough’ moment that both television and print media were to intensely analyse for
months to come. The New Zealand commentators, who had no professional television training, were almost rendered speechless and resorted to stating the obvious as they tried to recover their composure, “Oh, good..ness..me, Australia have taken the title from New Zealand…and I’m stunned” (Coleman 1999), “I think we all are Jo. Who invented second place?” (Coney 1999). In the aftermath, some print journalists used this as an opportunity to pillory the women for being too emotional or poor losers. But in a wider sense it gifted the public with an insight into how much their sport and the title really meant to these female athletes representing their country, which ultimately won them a great deal of respect and admiration.

**Figure 80: Last 60” of NZ/Australia final**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Game action:</strong></th>
<th>with score tied NZ miss a shot at goal. Australia grab rebound then nearly lose possession at the top of their circle, pass to McMahon who scores in the last seconds to win the title.</th>
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<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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Gary Whannel (2002), in a discussion of media narrativity, identifies sport as an organised and ritualised activity that has the capacity to construct a mythic moment of golden memory within time and place. Whannel acknowledges that historically, these moments have mostly been male achievements which become part of male sporting cultural capital. It is noteworthy that, although the moment of the World Championship netball final was more tragic than golden, it did feed into a wider mythic tradition regarding New Zealand’s sporting clashes with Australia. Rather than being totally
eclipsed by the All Blacks’ failure a few weeks later to achieve a place in the final at the Rugby World Cup, it continued to be included in public soul-searching on the state of national sport.

For some media commentators the attention surrounding a women’s sport was unwelcome. Warwick Roger in the *Evening Post* observed “that we got ourselves into such a frenzy over the netball is once again evidence of our national insecurity, of our need to be good at something – anything – no matter how inconsequential it is” (*Evening Post* 1999). Richard Boock, the *NZ Herald* netball reporter for the Championships, in his wrap-up of the tournament; ‘Netball Misses the Bigger Goal’, describes netball as a “bizarre little game” (*NZ Herald* 1999). Such devaluation of women’s sport in the media is nothing new. What was noteworthy was the fact that it had come to be included in mainstream debate about representative performance and national identity. Such attention had been almost totally absent four years earlier when the Silver Ferns, with a performance similar to that of the 1999 All Blacks, failed to make the final at the Birmingham World Championships in 1995.

**Negotiating the ‘fish hooks’ of a new contract**

After the World Championships, Netball New Zealand’s contract with TVNZ was due for renewal and by the end of 1999 had not been signed by Alistair Snell, the outgoing CEO. This contract would have given TVNZ rights ownership for a “further eight years right of renewal” (McMeeken 2001) for the same fee as the 1995 contract (approximately $250,000 per year) with no right of renegotiation or annual increments (ibid). The support shown to netball by TVNZ over a long period of time was not in question and freely acknowledged as being significant for a women’s sport. However there was renewed determination to renegotiate a better rights deal by new NNZ CEO Shelley McMeeken and the NNZ Board headed by businessman Nelson Cull. Cull was brought onto the board because of his extensive experience in contract negotiations. The new management team felt that the terms of the unsigned contract were no longer acceptable or adequate to secure the future growth of the sport:

> I saw that [the contract] as a total give-away. And when you think about how much support, say rugby gets in this country, how much rugby gets paid in this country and you know, the number I think that television pays the New Zealand Rugby Union is plus $30 million a year… and here we were having a sport that was played possibly by the greatest number of participants of any sport in New Zealand - netball. It was truly a female sport and therefore that was seen by many people as an obstacle. And we were selling it for this price! (Cull 2001)

The difficulty for netball was to create a more equal negotiating environment with the broadcaster. They wished to change the traditional position where they were made to feel grateful for whatever the broadcaster felt it could spare.
I soon got told by people [TVNZ] that you needed to understand that netball suffered from a lack of global coverage and therefore no television channel is going to pay you a very big price because they had nobody to sell it to. And that we were lucky, I think was the words it was described to me, to get anything because most female sports in New Zealand got nothing. And that we should consider ourselves very lucky to be earning this sort of money. And so the whole relationship was sort of we felt lucky, television sort of had the upper hand and they drove the bargains and we basically fell into place (Cull 2001).

It was felt that this was a suitable moment to capitalise on the gains that the sport had made in presenting itself in a more professional manner and returning value, for a relatively low level of investment, to the broadcaster. Another element was the need to recognise netball’s role in the changing patterns of traditional television viewership and in the control of the female market over the spending of the discretionary dollar. The NNZ negotiating team made much of the purchasing power of women in the area of lifestyle products and sports apparel, which had already been made internationally apparent earlier that same year with the success of the Women’s Soccer World Cup. This had drawn a global television audience of 40 million (Campbell 1999) and made an emphatic statement about the commercial worth of women’s team sport and the power of marketing women’s sports clothing via Brandi Chastain’s famous shirtless moment which made the covers of *Sports Illustrated* (19 July 1999) and *Newsweek* (19 July 1999).

![Figure 81: Brandi Chastain’s Front Cover Exposure, Women’s Soccer World Cup, 1999](Wikimedia Commons)

To gain more leverage in their TVNZ negotiation, NNZ went to SKY and TV3 who were both interested in acquiring rights to netball coverage. The SKY chief Executive, American Nate Smith, “waxed lyrically about the opportunities to change the sport to make it more television focused ...[he] saw that we should adapt the sport and adapt the competition for television” (Cull 2001):

We were playing a tactical game...and we didn’t really care who we were going to play with. We were saying to people that we were pretty unconcerned about
whether we lost free-to-air or not, [but] we were actually very concerned…some of the board members were so strong about that…they would have actually foregone a lot of the financial opportunities to stay free-to-air.

I’m absolutely certain that if Sky had come up with an offer that was too hard to refuse we would have grabbed it, because we had to, in my judgement; change the dynamics of the relationship. We couldn’t always be seen as someone, can I say this? Sucking the hind tit! Because I think that we were always seen as someone who were always going to have to take what we were given. And so we had to show them that we not only...had a good sport, we were a commercially astute Board and Executive and that we knew our value and we were going to somehow bring that to account (Cull 2001).

From this somewhat confrontational position, with lawyers engaged by both parties, the negotiations continued over the next two years. Eventually a new contract was signed which was double the pre-1999 rights fee. However, the biggest stumbling block was the right of renewal for which TVNZ demanded absolute rights if they were forced to pay a higher annual fee. Nelson Cull felt that TVNZ “had come to recognise netball as an attractive television sport and attractive in earning income” but despite this awareness, it was still evident that TVNZ had lingering “mental limitations” (2001) regarding the worth of the sport. Aware of TVNZ’s difficult position at the time with the recent loss of rugby and a political climate where the government were “trying to turn the television into this [commercial] animal” (Cull 2001), netball management felt the moment was right to take the initiative. During the protracted negotiations with TVNZ led by Head of Television, Shaun Brown, Cull recognised that “you could see that our negotiations were a major distraction and one that he really would rather have done without” which made NNZ more determined to seize the moment:

We weren’t cowering before them because that’s the behaviour that they expected from us. They expected us to say, “Oh look, yeah okay, we’ll back off”. But we hit them hard right up till the end and in the end we got a contract that we signed for I think $500,000 a year, which was 100% up from where we were. And it’s got some add-ons for Year 2 and we gave them an extra year. So we signed for three years, $500,000 a year and $500,000 it goes to $550,000 and I think stops at $550,000. But they also have to pay us for free-to-air television rights if they on-sell them to Telstra Saturn or anyone else and they had to agree to some prime television spots.

…it was I think a watershed day for netball because we stood up and were counted as a sport that you had to take some notice of. And that at some point in time the game was going to get its value, otherwise you’re all going to be locked into the past all the time.

I think that they actually quite admired us for it in the end though. I mean I think they were probably a bit annoyed but you got a sense that they respected us more at the end of it…but I think we sold the game short at $500,000 (Cull 2001).

Cull’s disappointment was that he and the NNZ Board felt they had failed in their goal of securing a contract for $1 million, which they believed was a more accurate evaluation of the game as a television property. However NNZ also felt that a set of important principles had been established which forced TVNZ management to reassess their attitude
of complacent ownership of the sport. Within the grand scale of sport rights negotiations it was only a quiet sea change but a sea change nevertheless.

**One giant step for netball, one small step for womankind**

The tough-talking rights negotiations which continued on into the new millennium were not founded on just the one instance of broadcasting success at the World Championships in 1999. In the same way, the improved quality of the television coverage was not a spontaneous leap forward for a one-off event but the cumulative experience of a higher frequency of game coverage affording time and budget to experiment with OB camera configuration and fine tune all aspects of netball’s primetime televisual package. In comparison, the Australian Sports Commission findings in a report on the media coverage and portrayal of women’s sport in Australia (*An Illusory Image* 1997) was urging Australian broadcasters to be more “technically imaginative” (29) when broadcasting women’s sport and to be aware that camera angles which work for a men’s football match may not work as well for a women’s netball match” (ibid). It concludes that this aspect needed to be addressed in order to “alter the culture of the way the public currently views women’s sport” (ibid). This change within broadcasting culture was already occurring in New Zealand and on the brink of another major step forward. The strengthening partnership between TVNZ and NNZ, particularly at the production level was reflected in more imaginative and complex coverage of elite netball games and the viewership had proven to follow.

There was now a significant commitment by the broadcaster to invest in the game in recognition of the value of the audience and sponsor associations. To justify this investment, netball had more than met the broadcaster halfway. Throughout the 1990s, in response to TVNZ’s call for more frequency and a higher level of competition, netball had established or revamped both domestic and international competitions. New sponsors were drawn by the commercial opportunities the game offered and these justified the investment by the broadcaster. In the same year the Coca-Cola Cup was re-launched, Fisher and Paykel established the Fisher and Paykel Cup competition, capitalising on the high rating rewards of Trans-Tasman competition. To get to this enviable position there had to be accommodation on both sides and New Zealand netball, although feeling locked in a world of compromise, had achieved a new status. Compliant femininity may have shaped the foundation years of the sport but this attitude would not be allowed to lead it into the new century.
Chapter 8: Post script: The end of the affair and a new beginning?

If we can replicate even half of what happens in New Zealand in terms of media coverage, the sport in Australia will just take off... if we miss this chance we've had it to be honest with you...We have to lift our game in Australia and learn from the Kiwis on this one. We don't mind giving you a lesson on the court but off it we have to take those lessons from you.

(Kate Palmer, Chief Executive, Netball Australia. Launch of the Trans-Tasman ANZ Championships. Sunday Star-Times, 18 March 2007)

Figure 82: Director’s Suite, OB1, Netball World Championships, 2007

The retreat from free-to-air

At the start of the new millennium, TVNZ were adding value to their investment in netball’s international and elite domestic competitions. As this thesis has documented, the improved frequency and quality of the representation of netball on free-to-air television was inextricably intertwined with the forty-year history of TVNZ’s broadcast sport. Despite the traditional dominance of male sports codes, the 1999 Netball World Championships had proved that live netball on free-to-air television had the capacity to attract a similar level of viewer loyalty as rugby union. However, the movement of sport
away from traditional public broadcasters and across the pay wall to satellite services and the increasing pressure from other digital providers was well underway in New Zealand. Scherer and Sam (2012) note that the increasing absence of sport on TVNZ since 1996 marks a “significant retreat” (109) from the role of the public broadcaster and that this retreat did not happen without protest (see also Bain 1996; Hope 2002). It is worth reiterating that the deregulatory ideology which has shaped the broadcasting marketplace since 1989 created a fiscally untenable environment for TVNZ to retain ownership of its major sports properties. With a lack of will to create protective legislation and the failure of the Labour Government-imposed TVNZ Charter (2003-2009) to acknowledge and protect major sporting events, first tier sport on free-to-air television was in flight (Hope 2002). Netball remained the last in the stable, long after rugby league, rugby union and cricket had crossed the pay wall divide but it was by no means certain that it could afford to stay there for much longer.

David Rowe (2004) constructs a rational argument for not seeing these changes to traditional viewing patterns negatively but rather to understand them within the changing environment of delivery systems and viewer preference. The role, however, of the traditional free-to-air broadcaster was irrevocably changing and netball needed a higher level of investment if it was to continue to develop. It also had the on-going financial pressure of needing to present a fully professional product to its audience from within a semi-professional infrastructure. The game needed to adopt a fresh approach, to brand itself as a sport for the future rather than one conservatively looking back. It was obvious that a fresh approach was more likely to come from a broadcaster who was producing high levels of televised sport on a weekly basis rather than one with a diminishing capacity to produce both quantity and quality sport. However, this was never going to be an easy decision and netball was well aware of the uniqueness of its niche within the national imaginary (Anderson 1991) created through its long term partnership with TVNZ. It had much to lose if a significant section of its viewership was less able or willing to purchase their way across the pay wall to follow the sport. There was no guarantee that the female audience for netball would emulate the grudging migration of predominantly male viewers fifteen years earlier who felt they had no choice but to pay to watch rugby.

**Netball’s extended and digitally enhanced image**

Technically speaking, the quality of netball coverage at the start of the new millennium was significantly improved. The technical capacity of the OB vans, cameras and audio had moved up another notch as high-specification digital production equipment became
more cost effective. Hot head remote\textsuperscript{57} cameras now covered the team benches and eliminated the inhibiting presence of the camera operator, crouching at knee height on the floor, jammed in between the players and the corflutes. The high angle, master shot digital cameras now had a 87x zoom lens which gave a super slow-motion capacity, sharper picture resolution and extended depth of field. In previous decades, only two or three cameras were ISO\textsuperscript{58} which meant a limited replay capability. ISO capability on most or all cameras meant replay options now provided instant slow-motion replay action from multiple perspectives.

**Figure 83: EVS Suite and EVS Control Unit, On Site Broadcasting OB Truck, 2007**

EVS control unit

EVS Suite
Each camera feed has a separate monitor. Shots of particular players or dramatic moments of play are clipped into tagged bins, creating a precisely timed replay or montage sequence. These can be called for by the director or commentator to insert for analysis at a breakdown around TVC breaks or played under a credit sequence.

(\textsuperscript{Henley})

The EVS\textsuperscript{59} unit, a small but vital piece of new digital editing technology, assisted this instant replay capacity. Montage sequences constructed during the game could be inserted during play, an injury timeout or a game break. The director now had considerably more choice of replay sequence selection and a montage of replays to be

\textsuperscript{57}A hot head remote camera attachment allows 360 degree coverage, simultaneous pan and tilt and instant focus and zoom function controlled by one operator. It is cable free and can be operated via a digital or radio link.

\textsuperscript{58}ISO (isolated) cameras in a multi-camera set up have their own recorder which can be instantly replayed. The ISO images are usually used for replay shots which give a different perspective on a central action or incident.

\textsuperscript{59}EVS is a brand name used generically in New Zealand for a Digital Disc Recorder (DDR). A suite of DDR machines means images can be recorded and replayed at the same time. They can be used to record super slow-motion, split screen or two inputs and two outputs (Owens 2007).
standing by for on-screen analysis. One section of the main OB truck was now an EVS replay suite with an EVS director and two or three EVS operators. This technology greatly intensified the feeling of immediacy of the live coverage and deepened the visually analytical dimension for the commentators and the audience. In the early years of the decade, EVS technology had to be hired by TVNZ from Australia on a game-by-game basis and operated as an extra in the cine van. By 2007, EVS technology was standard in On Site Broadcasting\(^60\) (OSB) vans and not an extra expense to be factored into the host broadcaster’s budget. This technology, more than any other, increased the capacity for replays. The EVS constructed montage sequences significantly hyped-up the visual and physical impact of the game and recap sequences during extended coverage.

The first step across the pay wall – netball’s final frontier?

In 1997, SKY TV had extensive talks with All Australia Netball, Australian commercial broadcasters, NNZ and TVNZ to try and establish a made-for-television Trans-Tasman Netball tournament to run out of the winter sport clutter between September and December. This was SKY’s first significant attempt to use netball to grow its female viewership as well as pragmatically purchase a major local sport at a lower price to offset subscriber drop-off during the summer ‘churn’. It was pitched as a cut through competition which would have more impact than the main domestic competitions in both countries although New Zealand were more interested in the venture than Australia. SKY sought to use its influence to forge a new commercial partner for Australian netball away from the limitations imposed by the public service broadcaster, ABC (McKendrick 2000). However the proposal was a little ahead of its time. Australian Netball was reluctant and a partnership between free-to-air and pay television in New Zealand was still a little way off being a comfortable or financially necessary arrangement. Nevertheless, it was a strong signal that SKY was standing in the wings, ready to pitch again when the time became right.

In late 2006, NNZ and Netball Australia made a joint approach to SKY with a proposal which created the current ANZ Trans-Tasman Netball League\(^61\). There was still another year to go on the National Bank Cup domestic contract with TVNZ which needed to be addressed in order to combine the domestic competitions of both countries. This was the opening that Head of SKY Sport, Kevin Cameron, had been waiting for. TVNZ was not

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\(^60\) From 2001 On Site Broadcasting (NZ) supplied facilities for outside broadcast and events coverage. In 2010 it became a subsidiary of SKY TV.

\(^61\) The ANZ Championship was launched in 2008 with ten teams (five from Australia and five from New Zealand). It succeeded two national leagues: Australia’s Commonwealth Bank Trophy (1997-2007) and New Zealand’s National Bank Cup (1998-2007). The initial Australian broadcaster was Fox and then went to Network Ten (TEN and ONE) and SKY Sport in New Zealand. The 2009 season attracted 11.4 million television viewers (www.anz-championship.com/).
in a position to match SKY’s OB and technical capacity, although NNZ still wanted them to be involved. This necessitated a broadcasting partnership to be brokered around a competition which was seen to be of considerable value for New Zealand’s pay broadcaster:

“We [SKY] loved it. TVNZ was certainly interested, but once again we were able to commit to what was 69 games live, here and Australia and TVNZ could obviously not be able to do that, with all the restrictions that they have with all the other programmes. So we needed to get the co-operation from TVNZ to essentially overcome that particular hurdle and Netball NZ did. [They] came to a commercial arrangement with TVNZ if you like, compensated for the fact that SKY was going to be the principal broadcaster. But Netball NZ was still very keen for TVNZ to have an interest and the free-to-air rights and so, through some fairly intensive negotiations that is how that evolved - upon the understanding that [they keep] what they do have and we are again prepared to step back from having a serious go at the International test matches. TVNZ retained them but we said that we would like to have replay rights of the exact deal of what we have for the Trans-Tasman, [that] we have for the International events, so it is the same deal in reverse. So that was the deal (Cameron 2008).

It was not so straightforward in Australia and it was SKY television pushing the proposal, rather than the influence of Australian and New Zealand Netball, which clinched a three-year contract with Foxtel\(^62\), albeit one with an out-clause at the end of the first year\(^63\).

That took a bit of doing as well - complex, but it was really just a matter of encouraging them [Foxtel] to get involved, because to be honest they did have their doubts. They are pretty kind of male sport focused over there to be honest... Tony Sinclair, he’s the Channel 9 director of production ... now he is at Fox and he is very, very experienced television broadcaster and he sees the great potential of building an audience that they don’t have. They don’t have a female audience virtually. We have a lot more I think but we are certainly trying to build ours in that area and the netball will help tremendously in doing that and he sees the potential over there with the regular exposure so he is quite excited about it. So once they saw that value and like us they need content so here is 69 games, most of its live. They have got a few more scheduling problems because they have got rugby league, a huge volume of rugby league as we do but on top of that they have got rugby and on top of that they have got AFL so scheduling is more of a challenge for them. That's why they were keen to come in with us as well as it removes some of those problems for them (Kevin Cameron 2008).

As Australian anti-siphoning legislation only covers netball’s international fixtures, the new Trans-Tasman league as “essentially an extension of the domestic league” (Cameron 2008) was able to fly under the radar and contract a pay broadcaster. The ABC did not have the capacity or the inclination to commit to cover the 69 games of the tournament and had habitually undervalued the importance of the Commonwealth Bank Trophy competition (ibid).

\(^{62}\) Australian pay broadcaster Foxtel was launched in 1995 through a partnership between Telstra and News Corporation (20th Century Fox Media). Although pay television uptake and penetration was slower in Australia than New Zealand, Foxtel and the Fox Sport channel experienced a more rapid period of growth from 2007 (Cameron 2008).

\(^{63}\) At the end of the first year, New Zealand and Australia took a lower bid from Channel 10 to ensure that the ANZ Championship went back onto free-to-air in Australia in preference to the higher bid from Fox (Castle 2011).
When the new Trans-Tasman competition was announced to the public in early 2007, Kate Palmer, Chief Executive Netball Australia, noted that “if we can replicate even half of what happens in New Zealand in terms of media coverage, the sport in Australia will just take off... if we miss this chance we’ve had it to be honest with you” (Sunday Star-Times 18 March 2007). It is not often that New Zealand’s sporting arch rival admits that there is something that New Zealand can do better than them but Palmer, press release ‘promo speak’ aside, was open in her admiration of New Zealand netball’s relationship with television broadcasting: “We have to lift our game in Australia and learn from the Kiwis on this one. We don’t mind giving you a lesson on the court but off it we have to take those lessons from you” (ibid).

Netball World Championships (NWC) 2007

The upcoming Netball World Championships provided SKY with the perfect opportunity to showcase its intentions towards netball as the preferred broadcaster. Historically media rights for World Championships had never been a major revenue stream. Jamaican Molly Rhone, current President of IFNA, acknowledges on a world stage, “we hardly ever got TV sponsorship…TV companies didn’t feel there was a product that they would pay the rights for” (2007). Despite predictions by IFNA’s marketing adviser that the major revenue stream necessary to build a sport has to come from media rights, in 2007 the bulk of the funding was still coming from levies paid by the participating countries – New Zealand and Australia being one of the highest contributors because of their large player base and ability to pay (Rhone 2007).

Relocated to Auckland at short notice because of political unrest in Fiji, IFNA chose to bypass their historic relationship with TVNZ and approached SKY to be host broadcaster. Influenced in part by the recent pay television deal in the UK between BSkyB and All England Netball, IFNA wanted to experiment with pay television options. This offered a greater flexibility in scheduling and a breadth of coverage that had long been enjoyed by the major male sporting codes of rugby, league and cricket. The SKY bid, spearheaded by Kevin Cameron, was based on SKY’s ability to “show all the games live…that’s our marketing thrust, it’s the thing that gives us the difference” (2008). By 2007, SKY, in comparison to the free-to-air networks (TVNZ, TV3), was well geared to produce cost effective volume - in 2007 Sky television generated 240 outside broadcast days of sport with a projection of 340 hours for 2008 (Cameron 2008). No other New Zealand broadcaster was able or willing to commit to producing or financing that level of sport production. No longer able to maintain the exclusive rights to the only major sporting property left in its stable, or able to offer live coverage of all or even a limited number of games in the competition, TVNZ went into a facilities-share deal with SKY. In exchange, TVNZ received presentation and studio space at the venue and were able to
keep their focus on the Silver Ferns games through pool play and live coverage of the quarter, semi-finals and final. These games were also streamed on ‘TVNZ on Demand’ with a 90-minute delay. TVNZ took the game feed from the SKY host van, branded the coverage with their own presenters and inserted their own pre and post-match packages.

Figure 84: OB Production Enclosure, Trusts Stadium, Waitakere Auckland, NWC 2007

TVNZ OB truck (facilities share with SKY). The once proud ‘Our Nation Our Voice’ slogan is somewhat undercut by the dwarfing of TVNZ’s single OB van in the OSB/SKY production truck park.

OSB trucks contracted to SKY. ABC Australia also secured their live feed through OSB, linked to ABC Presentation in Sydney.

Spoilt for choice for the first time in netball’s broadcasting history, viewers could choose from live coverage on SKY, select live and delayed coverage on TVNZ, live coverage on radio or delayed coverage online via TVNZ on Demand. SKY’s contract included ownership of both television and new media rights but did not provide live or delayed internet streaming. Aware of a netball audience in countries that never broadcast the game such as the USA, IFNA were eager to gauge the popularity of streaming games on the internet. SKY granted them rights to screen games to international viewers outside the main netball playing countries with whom SKY had purchase agreements. Although this was very limited usage of the new delivery system, it does signal SKY’s awareness of assessing how its sporting products could engage with the rapidly evolving digital media marketplace. The potential for this new media to “dramatically alter the mediascape of sport” (Hutchins and Rowe 2009) made SKY both interested and nervous (Cameron 2007) considering the level of their new investment in the sport. Hence the tying up of rights through the dual television and internet contract and the relative underuse of the new media option at the tournament. Sky had no intention of allowing the television potential for this sporting event to be undercut by the comparatively inexpensive potential of internet delivery.
However, on the other side of the Tasman it was a different story. Ahead of the final rounds, the ABC announced its intention to delay the free-to-air coverage of the New Zealand/Australian final in NSW, Victoria, ACT and Tasmania to 9:25pm because of a clash with their 7pm news. Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Northern Territories would receive live coverage because of their different time zones. There was utter outrage from netball fans throughout Australia once this delay was known and Netball Australia tried to get the public to lobby local media, politicians and ABC management to have the decision changed. Despite this pressure the ABC was unmoved, as was their evening news bulletin. The sanctity of the 7pm news was endorsed by the belief that the ABC’s audiences “prefer not to have the regular schedule changed unless there is a compelling reason to do so” (ABC website 2007) and clearly a Netball World final was judged to be not that compelling. As a concession they did address the call to have the netball live on the ABC2 digital channel. Ironically in this instance, the ABC were prevented by anti-siphoning law from screening an event of national significance such as World Championship Netball on a pay channel so that the sport could be “accessed by the larger viewing population” (ABC website 2007).

It was a no-win situation, with the legislation to protect the interests of the grassroots viewer seemingly working against the public it was set up to protect. This would seem to feed into the argument, albeit championed by free marketeers and pay broadcasters, that anti-siphoning legislation limits investment back into sport and inhibits the development of the game and the players (Scherer and Sam 2012). Although this is more relevant to
the major commercialised male codes, it can be seen in respect of the under investment in Australian netball through legislation-controlled limited access to broadcasting revenue. There is some irony in the fact that the major mover to inject more revenue into New Zealand netball and open up the Australian commercial networks came through the pay broadcaster SKY and not the historical champion of the game, TVNZ.

Figure 86: ABC and TVNZ Commentary Positions

ABC commentary team and statistician  TVNZ commentary team. Internet streaming post, left foreground transmitting live feed from SKY

(Henley)

Setting a new benchmark for televising the game

The SKY Sport and the OB production team, contracted through OnSite Broadcasting, were determined to make a showcase of their coverage of the 2007 World Championships. There was also a natural desire to visually refresh the look of the game and make it synonymous with SKY making a clean break from the 47 years that netball had been under the stewardship of the state broadcaster. For head cameraman George Smith, who had over thirty years’ experience in OB sport, this was also a personal opportunity to add more visual complexity for the audience and provide more analytical scope for the commentators. However, ideal camera placement is never straightforward in a multipurpose venue and is often a matter of careful compromise:

To me netball is a long game and so, working on the principle that the best way to see the speed of the game, to analyse for where other players have to move into position and find the receiver, etc etc, or you know, the options of where the person has to take the ball back to. .. There is quite a difficult planning process because where Netball NZ wanted to place their stands, where the exiting seating was, even just to find the structure where Sky NZ had to front from - designing all that - right where should we go? What angles? We finished up being slightly more off-line than I would have liked (Smith 2007).

Smith is referring here to his placement of the two mid high angle cameras, shooting a three-quarter angle from each end of the court – not a position used by TVNZ. It was felt
that this would show the speed of the game through the court and the off-ball play, particularly in front of the path of the ball. The eventual position of the two three-quarter cameras was a slight compromise for Smith, but he still felt it worked well and enabled a much stronger long shot option than from the side-on cameras which always visually slowed the pace of the game. The coverage from these three-quarter positions was often used in the super slow-motion replays which offered the viewer a very different perspective from the more formulaic cutting during game play. The visual representation of pace was one of the central concerns for Smith. He not only wanted to increase the percentage of shots which more accurately conveyed the speed of the game, he also wanted to get closer to the eyeline of the players on court. The added proximity would give the audience a more intimate player perspective of the game. It would highlight the split-second decision making required of the participants in such a high speed, physical contest. This fresh inside-perspective is a product of new media and video games with the ability to get in close and track through the centre of action from a participant’s point of view.

I wanted camera angles up close to the eyeline of where the girls play their netball from, so you are actually shooting through, just above head height and the distance flattens out the angles so I had this thing in my head about how this would work and um, I think it’s been reasonably successful because as the play comes down, while the ball is in flight, in the background of the shot, because I don’t believe in wasting the background of the frame... as the ball flows through the air, if you look at the pictures you can see the subtleties of the players running in the background, repositioning themselves either to receive or get ready for defence or attack, so that’s from that point of view (Smith 2007).

To create this new look coverage, a twelve camera configuration was planned by head cameraman, George Smith. Unfortunately, the crane-mounted remote controlled Jimmy Jib camera could not be used to gather sweeping crowd shots and high angle views of play in the goal circle. The space required to site the crane control unit and three operators proved to be impractical at the Waitakere Trusts Stadium venue. Complications
over fire doors and temporary seating meant it had to be abandoned after the opening ceremony. In other New Zealand indoor venues, the Jimmy Jib is a standard part of the camera configuration for a big budget netball production. On the main court, ten cameras were used to cover the game and five used for the secondary court which covered the low-ranking pool games. The steadicam, which had an additional cost because of freelance hire of the unit and operator (Rhys Duncan), was substituted for Cam 4 down one end of the court for the more important pool games, the quarter, semi-finals and the final.

**Figure 88: Cam 4 Steadicam**

![Steadicam operator, Rhys Duncan (Henley)](image)

Eight cameras covered the main action on court, with five of the cameras elevated (Cams 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10) and three at court level. Camera 3 is fixed, but cams 4 and 5 at each end of the court were either steadicam, shot off the tripod or handheld. The remote hot head bench cameras (6 and 7), provided candid, close-up shots of the players and coaches during the game. The hardworking Cameras 4 and 5 (each with three or four positions to cover) gathered on and off-court action during the game, injury and half-time breaks and shoot off the tripod for continuity and commentator pieces to camera. The combination of cameras 3, 4 and 5 with the dynamic tracking capacity of the steadicam, get the
audience closer to the action and individual players and injects emotion into the visual storytelling:

I think that the change for us in this tournament is that we have got the capacity now to try and set up contests and have the ability for directors to intercut personalities more. By the time the goal gets scored it comes back to the centre pass again, be able to say there’s the scorer, that’s the feeder that’s the defence person doing their job, trying to get all that in before it comes back - to me that’s quite a challenge. That’s putting more cameras into positions where they can offer [all this] at the same time - the director has more options and that the change we were seeking from SKY’s style as opposed to TVNZ (Smith 2007).

The significance of the coverage of both the 2007 World Championships and the on-going ANZ Trans-Tasman competition lies not in the number of cameras and new broadcast technology shaping the images or the sophistication of interweaving game narratives but the attitude of the broadcaster and production crew towards the sport and the deepening knowledge of the game. Kevin Cameron makes no secret of the fact that SKY had “wanted netball for a long time” (2008) but not just as the last top tier sporting trophy to put in the boardroom cabinet. SKY saw it as a sport of national significance, despite its lack of global reach. They were willing to make an initial financial loss to purchase and develop the potential of the sport beyond what was possible for a free-to-air broadcaster constrained within a mixed programming format (ibid).

George Smith’s thinking behind his careful camera configuration for the 2007 World Championships is indicative of a deepening understanding and respect for the game and a strong drive to represent its subtleties and dynamics unfettered by the reductive masculinist assumptions of the past. For many years these assumptions had imposed a rudimentary recording of the game at a distance and inhibited the unique narrative threads peculiar to every sporting code which have the capacity to unlock deep cultural associations and engage audiences. The growing respect for the sport and investment of production expertise had not been absent from TVNZ and many of the free-lance SKY crew were the same personnel who had worked on netball OB’s for years. With the involvement of SKY the scope of the playing field had increased and the broadcaster indicated its willingness from the outset to champion the game and use its clout to increase its value on both sides of the Tasman. SKY’s commitment at the production level appears genuine but as positive as the fostering of this relationship appears to be, it should still be placed within the context of SKY’s dominant position within the deregulated New Zealand market. Courtship by a suitor with deep pockets may not necessarily equate to the same level of commitment once the wooing is done and there are no other bidders in the marketplace!
However, the broadcasting coverage was a New Zealand triumph.
(Henley)

The Decree Nisi

In February 2011, an unobtrusive media release on the Netball New Zealand website announced a four-year partnership between NNZ and SKY television, which was the largest commercial deal to be signed by a women’s sport in New Zealand. The limitation was that only approximately 60 percent of the country had SKY decoders in 2011 and a smaller proportion subscribed to the sports channels (Burgess NZ Herald 27 February 2011). After 51 years New Zealand netball finally severed its ties with the state broadcaster and stepped into a new broadcasting relationship. Prime TV\textsuperscript{64}, owned by SKY, became netball’s free-to-air broadcaster and Sky purchased the rights for all international and domestic netball through 2015\textsuperscript{65}. SKY’s Chief Executive, John Fellet,

\textsuperscript{64}SKY purchased Prime TV in 2006 for approximately $30 million from Prime Australia. According to SKY Chief Executive John Fellet, the purchase of the free-to-air broadcaster was an “important element in our involvement in televised sport in New Zealand” (undated press release, SKY website).

\textsuperscript{65}SKY already held the rights for the ANZ Championship, Lion Foundation Netball Championships, College Netball and screened the weekly netball magazine show, ‘On Court’. College Netball and the ‘On Court’ programmes were both SKY initiatives which would have been difficult to fund and programme for TVNZ.
indicated that SKY were committed to “ensure quality netball” to the widest possible fan base which included new delivery systems such as the broadband iSky and mobile options (NNZ website 22 February 2011). Netball NZ Chief Executive Raelene Castle’s official statement indicated that the greater flexibility of the Prime/Sky combination was felt to offer fans the “best options for live and delayed coverage” (ibid). Even though it would seem an easy decision with SKY’s bid at $2.3 million against TVNZ’s $700,000 (Cumming NZ Herald 25 June 2011) the behind-the-scenes view was more conflicted. Privately, Castle was disappointed that TVNZ did not fight harder to retain the sport:

It's a really sad day for us to lose TVNZ and I personally fought very hard to try and get TVNZ close to the line, but unfortunately they did not have the wherewithal, the financial backing ... The bit that we were really upset about [was] they didn’t have the passion to really want to keep us, so while there were some individuals within the organisation that did, but at the very senior level they did not see needing netball for them.

It's not just like having an affair and running off with SKY. TVNZ have died. From a sports perspective they've got nothing, nothing to offer us, there's no future there. It is like your partner has died. We have found a new partner and we have married them because they are going to be our future, so it wasn't even a choice (Castle 2011).

The 2011 NNZ Annual Report acknowledged that TVNZ “broke new ground in providing live coverage of domestic and international netball” and played a “pivotal role in making the Silver Ferns household names” (34). Accepting the SKY deal was not just a matter of increasing cash flow to fund the development of the sport. It had a great deal to do with the technical and production quality of the on-screen image of the game which NNZ were not prepared to compromise:

It's not just the money, but the fact that Sky have got the latest technology. They’ve got the most innovative crews in the way in which they present your game in the way that makes it look the best. They have 3D technology and will move to 3D technology. TVNZ’s gear was falling to bits and while individuals tried really hard, the level of investment they had in their sports programmes was nil, while SKY’s is massive. Everything they do, they do in HD (Castle 2011).

Anticipating the nationwide switch-over to a full digital platform in 2013, Netball New Zealand felt that now was the time to consolidate its position with SKY and take their audience across with them. Castle, as a marketer, feels that New Zealand netball is the only netball market mature enough to risk moving away from free-to-air and anticipates that the audience will come with them as they did with the rugby in 1996. SKY are also banking on more women making the decision to have SKY in their homes because of the Silver Ferns and the ANZ Championship. To meet this migration they are providing more interactive attractions for the household with add-ons such as virtual netball. Castle believes that Australia is about twelve years or more behind New Zealand. It will need to consolidate its position on commercial free-to-air for at least another decade before it could contemplate trying its luck again with a pay broadcaster. Castle and the Netball New Zealand Board believe that SKY is committed to a high level of investment in the
game and developing a compelling netball package which would never have been feasible for a free-to-air broadcaster:

They [SKY] see us as a very important part of the mix - I don’t have to fight with news and current affairs about time, I don’t have to fight with ‘Desperate Housewives’ or ‘Grey’s Anatomy’ or ‘Coronation Street’ with SKY like I did with TVNZ. They want us, we are hugely valuable to them, they go out of their way to do the extra things - they do the magazine style programme ['On Court'] once a week to support the games. It’s all those things that money can’t buy, so you can’t look at it in just an isolated financial perspective, it’s about the future.

The other thing that is going to make the most significant difference is when the whole TV platform goes to digital in 2013, Prime - everyone will be able to have it. Eighty percent of the population can get Prime now and we have a guaranteed 1 ½ hour time delay. That was one thing ultimately that TVNZ would not give us and the reason why we couldn’t have the free-to-air partnership with them. And SKY were very supportive of that, well, they were comfortable with us staying with TVNZ but TVNZ would not guarantee us an hour and a half delay because of ‘Desperate Housewives’ or whatever it was. They were saying it could be 11 o’clock at night after late news so we would end up in an ABC situation.

So now we have the money, we’ve got this amazing production ability to present our product in the hottest, newest, most innovative way and we have got that hot looking product guaranteed to be delivered on the hour and half later on Prime to 80% of population and in 2013 to 100% of the population (Castle 2011).

Following the loss of the netball to SKY, TVNZ’s sports production department was slashed in half, reducing the staff to four “because there is no longer enough live outside broadcast work to justify keeping on fulltime staff” (Kilgallon 2011). This reduction from a once 30-strong TVNZ sports production team was the end result of a gradual process of attrition which began when SKY won the broadcast rights to domestic cricket and rugby a decade earlier.

Victoria University media commentator Peter Thompson, quoted in Geoff Cumming’s NZ Herald article ‘Lack of rules means Sky is a law unto itself’ (25 June 2011), cites the SKY bid for the netball rights as an example of SKY being able to flex its financial muscle to ensure that there is no free-to-air competition in the next bidding. He believes this to be a clear example of market distortion which is very much against the public interest but which Cumming identifies as SKY “doing what comes naturally to a quasi-monopoly in a regulation-free environment” (ibid). Thompson concludes that there has to be acceptance (presumably at government level) that broadcasting is not “just about money” and that important “civic, democratic and cultural functions” (qtd. in Cumming 2011) have to be acknowledged. Where does this leave netball? Given the often described ‘wild west’ of New Zealand’s broadcasting market, should the sport have turned down the $1.6 million differential of the SKY bid to stay with its traditional broadcaster and wait for a radical sea change in government free market thinking? It would certainly have been an outstanding act of compliant femininity if netball had opted to stay with TVNZ in loyalty to their shared history and reject the money and the production benefits on offer from SKY. If Thompson is correct and SKY have taken a
financial hit to ensure netball has been effectively removed from the New Zealand rights bidding market, SKY’s bid for rights renewal in 2015 could well be significantly lower because of this king-hit already delivered to prospective free-to-air rivals. An additional complication is the lack of financial commitment from Australian broadcasting for the ANZ Trans-Tasman competition. It was understood that once the success of the ANZ Championship was established, Network 10 would begin to pay a rights fee but to date they have made no contribution (Johannsen Weekend Herald 9 June 2012). Unlike SKY, they only screen two live games on a Sunday afternoon with the remainder being delayed, much to the annoyance of Australian fans. The lack of investment in the game from Australian broadcasting is holding back the ability of the sport to turn fully professional and places considerable on-going financial obligations on SKY who bankroll the initiative. This situation has the capacity to undermine both prospective rights fees and contractual negotiations for New Zealand netball in the future.

**FastNet – but is it cricket?**

The highly commercial repackaging of cricket into the one day game and the evolution of the entertainment-hyped Twenty20 took time, but transformed the five-day test format into a hot television property for fans who did not know their silly mid-on from their leg break. The success of the Rugby 7s competition, which offsets some of the drawbacks for the 15’s to become a fully global sport, also hits the right mix of sport and entertainment for a wider viewing public. These are tantalising examples for sports marketers of a potentially revenue-rich shortcut to popularise new forms of traditional sports for global television and new media initiatives. In 2008, the marketing consultants for IFNA created a ‘netball on speed’ version of Twenty20 called FastNet. It was hoped that this revved-up version of the game, with its rolling substitutions, power plays and two-point shooting from outside the goal circle, would capture a new audience, more sponsorship and stimulate wider television coverage. It is easy to see how this elephant’s child could come out of a Northern Hemisphere perspective, where netball is still a marginal television product (Castle 2011). From NNZ’s point of view, it is a mistake for less mature netball markets to offer entertainment television when the long form of the game has yet to reach its potential. For Castle, the money and energy would be better spent on bringing some other Commonwealth countries or even North America up to elite competition level so the World Championships could be a highly competitive 6-8 team tournament instead of a two horse race between New Zealand and Australia. It is also hard to see the sustaining appeal of cutting a short, fast game of 60 minutes down to 24 and demanding shooters develop goal skills which are not part of the long game. The

66 Now called Fast5, following the 2012 rules and format revamp of the FastNet version to try and create marketing magic where “sport meets entertainment” (Castle 2012)
new forms of cricket and Rugby 7’s still maintain the traditional skills of their game but intensify their use within a tight time-clock format. FastNet would need separate local competitions to build a new skill set for players and foster the hoped for visual spectacle of the new game – possibly at the expense of the long form of the game. Similar criticisms were raised and proved to be unfounded about cricket’s short form manifestations but FastNet is not working in a like marketplace.

The televised coverage of the 2009 FastNet competition held in England demonstrated a dire lack of budget and television nous. The game was televised in a style which New Zealand left behind in the early 1980s. Even the layout and colour design of the stadium visually compromised the product with a very unappealing orange shooting circle and outer court surround. Paralleled with the pedestrian shot coverage, lack of and poor placement of cameras, slow cutting and very average commentary, an even greater visual travesty occurred at half-time. Cam 1 was locked off in a wide shot of the stadium and remained on-air as the commentators gamely tried to fill in the time with limp game analysis. From an English perspective, Rona Hunniset former media liaison for England Netball and Priya Samuels, International Sport Development Manager UK Sport, were deeply dismayed at the underwhelming impact of the new FastNet television series. Samuels was convinced that during the aforementioned half-time break the entire television production crew “went for a tea break and left the commentators to it” (2011). If this made-for-television’ initiative was designed to attract new levels of broadcasting interest, commercial sponsors and woo a new audience, it fell well short of the mark.

Figure 90: Half-time Fixed Camera Coverage, FastNet 2009

(TVNZ Archive)
From Raelene Castle’s point of view, who also agree with the critical underdevelopment of the product, the solution is to bring it ‘downunder’ for a SKY makeover. New Zealand and Australia will be working out a co-hosting arrangement and changes to the format over the next two years, with New Zealand staging the 2012 FastNet competition in Auckland. The aim for Castle, not one to turn down a marketing challenge, is to transform FastNet into the “Wellington 7s of Netball” (Bidwell 2011). SKY, who broadcast live coverage of all 19 games from the 2011 FastNet competition in Liverpool, must have blanched as they watched the footage come off the satellite. Turning FastNet into a slick, entertainment-orientated package is hopefully a challenge they are going to relish. It will determine whether there is the potential to grow a new audience for this shortened form of the game. It was always going to be a long shot to provide marketing magic in England but if the combined efforts of Netball Australia, NNZ and SKY can’t repackage and sell it to the New Zealand and Australian sporting public, then it will die the most public of ratings deaths.

**Conclusion: Local versus Global – Can Netball Survive?**

**Globalisation or bust?**

Barry Smart (2012) summarises the rapid growth of global sport linked within the capitalist economy as having “transformed the cultural economy of late modern sport” (262) as it grew beyond national and geographic boundaries. As part of this process, satellite television broadcasting and later internet and mobile streaming had a huge impact on the sporting world which “turned the planet into a virtual global sports village” (Halberstam 2001 262). Maguire (1994) identifies the global flow of the associated process of sportisation as fluid, diverse and unpredictable. The resultant commingling of cultures and sporting forms gave rise to characteristics of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ which Maguire theorises as creating a world of “diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties” (402). Although discussion of the globalisation of sport frequently omits an awareness of gender, Maguire is one who recognises that it has essentially been the “preserve of men” (411). Women’s sport and particularly those sports played almost exclusively by women, as is the case with netball, despite exhibiting some aspects of globalisation have historically have been marginalised or excluded from this process.

There is consensus in the sociology of sport which identifies resistance to the ‘diminishing contrasts’ associated with globalisation (Maguire 1994; Rowe 2003). The dependence on the “production of difference” (Rowe 2003 282) is a vital ingredient of the sporting local. Rowe argues that sport would not be effective or affective if it is stripped away from the anchor point of belonging through national identification. Alan Bairner’s (2001) case studies on North American sports demonstrate the tenacity of local sport
forms to be insulated from and even reject the processes of globalisation and in doing so intensify their link with national identity which Rupert Murdoch discovered when building his News Corporation schedules for Australian viewers (Andrews and Ritzer 2007). Despite the extent to which a modern television audience is well acquainted with the global market, broadcasters worldwide forget at their peril the importance of the local through which expressions of national identity is formed.

Roland Robertson’s (1992 1995) identification of the glocal which integrates aspects of the local and the global is useful to consider in the case of netball in preference to the process of globalisation where the local is completely overwhelmed by the global. Netball, the same as other major sporting codes in New Zealand, is driven and defined by commercial aspects of global uniformity such as corporatisation, spectacularisation and commodification (Andrews and Ritzer 2007). However despite the increased resources flowing into netball over the last couple of decades, it is still relatively under-commodified in comparison to the local male codes. It has historically battled criticism regarding its lack of global reach and without the buffer of a strong international market to draw on it is imperative for the survival of the sport that it continues to offer relevance and meaning to its local audience.

As long as the New Zealand school system continues to endorse netball as a major sport, the provincial and Trans-Tasman franchise competitions remain strong, regions are able to support their club competitions and indoor netball continues to offer strong social/recreational expectations – the game will continue to flourish. This position of dominance will continue to be reflected through broadcast media and reinforce the game as a dynamic and entertaining sports spectacle, understood and valued by a large percentage of the population. Should it no longer fulfil the athletic and recreational needs of the majority of young New Zealand women or the narrowness and predictability of Trans-Tasman and international competition begin to lose cultural relevance with its audience, it will find broadcasting a less willing partner. The on-going challenge will be to keep the game central within New Zealand culture, continue to refresh the major competitions, exploit new delivery systems to meet the expectations of its youth market and at the same time retain its traditional fan base. It is also dependent on the willingness for Australian broadcasting, and hopefully British television, to match the on-going broadcasting commitment to the sport in this country and invest in the on-going promotion of the game. Netball in New Zealand and SKY Television cannot do it on their own. This will be a high stakes balancing act but one which will determine if this culturally specific women-driven sport will survive into the future or become an increasingly irrelevant colonial artefact. If the current market and broadcasting driven initiatives fail to cement on-going public loyalty it will be gradually become devalued.
and, like the demise of top-level sport on free-to-air television, fall from the national consciousness.

**Missing Pieces and Further Research**

The ambitious scope of this study has enabled me to identify many under researched areas of study in the relationship between netball and broadcasting in New Zealand but its breadth has also precluded deeper analysis in some areas. There is still considerable work to be done on the depiction of women’s sport in New Zealand cinema newsreels linked to the emergence of a distinct sporting identity for New Zealand women. Such media orientated exploration of women’s sporting emancipation would add an audio-visual dimension to the culturally important work already in existence from historians such as Macdonald (1993a 1993b) and Simpson (2001). There is also scope to continue to build on the foundation I have provided of the institutional, technical and oral history of broadcast sport in New Zealand. In this thesis I have only been able to scratch the surface of the technical and creative contribution of New Zealand broadcasters and production crew whose expertise was honed through tight budgets but high ideals. This vital area of New Zealand broadcasting history needs to continue to be collected, analysed and preserved before it is lost. Silk and Amis (2000) argue the importance of understanding the interactions behind the production of a cultural text. I have endeavoured to underscore all discussion in this thesis with an awareness of the wide range on factors influencing the construction of netball television texts. However there is still more to be done on the contribution of craft pride in the production of these texts, drawing on the production focused analysis of Stoddart 1994, Silk, Slack and Amis (2000), Silk and Amis (2000), Silk (2001a; 2001b; 2003).

Assessing the impact merging of the Commonwealth Bank Trophy in Australia and New Zealand’s National Bank Cup into the current Trans-Tasman ANZ Netball Championship is another area of future study. Although I was only able to briefly cover a few aspects of this key competition, it is a crucial annual showcase of the new form of Australasian netball which is energising the way in which the game is being played and broadcast. The flow of expertise back to the Northern Hemisphere is not just with the import of predominantly English and Jamaica players but is also a showcase of a level of broadcasting commitment to a women’s sport with a proven track record of building a strong audience profile. This south/north flow, foreshadowed in 1989 when TVNZ assisted Scottish TV to cover the World Tournament in Glasgow (see chapter 6), offers a rich comparative study. Such studies of the reverse flow of colonisation are usually focused on the male sports of cricket or rugby with women’s sport rarely or never factored into the discourse of when the ‘Empire strikes back’. The comparative broadcasting backwater of English netball has never allowed its administration, players or
fans to suffer from what Maguire labels as the identity politics of “wilful nostalgia” (1994 409). Southern Hemisphere netball and its association with broadcast media has always seemed an unattainable ideal for English netball fans (Samuels 2007). The current climate of re-evaluation of women’s sport in the United Kingdom surrounding the 2012 London Olympics, may hopefully accelerate more rapid change in this area.

Although the central discourse in this thesis is of necessity focused on the relationship between netball and New Zealand broadcasting this approach can be used for an international comparative study. The most obvious would be a comparison with Nordic women’s handball initially drawing on research by Laine (1998), Lippe (1994; 2002), Agergaard (2008). The dominance of women’s handball in Denmark and Norway and particularly on Norwegian television would be a useful starting point although European women’s handball is still dominated by male coaches, referees and administrators (Lippe 1994).

Finally, my discussion of globalisation and the position of netball within the globalising processes forms only a small part of my conclusion and obviously lends itself to deeper consideration. Australian academic Deborah Stevenson (2002) draws attention to academic analysis of global sport trends which rarely acknowledges the gendered implications of the globalisation process. She argues that in the struggle to attract media coverage women and the sports they play have been historically marginalised and are therefore more likely to be filtered out of the globalisation process. Taking Stevenson’s assertions as a starting point, there is considerable value in theorising the way in which netball as a women’s sport in the Southern Hemisphere is able to engage in but also resist the integrative tendencies associated with globalisation.

Figure 91: From Single Camera Distance to High Definition, Multi-camera Intimacy

(TVNZ Archive)
**Concluding Statement**

Sport has always been a site of cultural struggle and as M. Ann Hall (1996) notes the history of women in sport is by definition a “history of cultural resistance” (101). As a sport constructed through a complex evolution of cultural and institutional factors that reinforced the view that women’s sport needed to be kept in its place, netball has always quietly relied on its strong backbone. Counter to gendered arguments of limited worth or accusations of global irrelevancy, netball has systematically played to its strengths, believing that the game was not only important for women, but for New Zealand culture and society in general. It always understood its own constituency but took time to persuade television of the rewards of crafting a mediated version for a waiting audience. Starved of its own visual history in the early decades, the zealous crusaders who ensured it became the national women’s sport were always aware that media engagement was essential to its survival. Throughout each decade, there were women leading the sport and believers within broadcasting who knew that the deep cultural affiliation of the game must have a commercial value. It was not just a commercial imperative. There was also the belief that to meet New Zealand society’s calls for the activities and aspirations of women to be held in higher regard, they could use netball to showcase the talents of women athletes. Netball needed television to achieve this goal but it wasn’t until television found it needed netball, beyond a public display of gender tokenism that the game was able to mature as a rich televisual product.

The central aim of this thesis has been to tell the interweaving stories of the maturation of broadcast sport in New Zealand with netball’s quest for quality, primetime recognition. Throughout these interweaving narratives there are significant moments in the history of both institutions, framed by the cultural and political context of the times, which created opportunities for the sport to make historic gains - or in netball terms, a moment when the game was able to break through the defensive zone of the cultural and political hegemony. Each gain encouraged broadcast management and production crews to foster a deeper technical and creative awareness of the sport and challenge the gender-biased assessment of its worth that characterised earlier decades. This runs parallel with the recognition that the netball viewing audience were of significant commercial value and knowledgeable and skilled consumers of the televised sport product.

The use of these two interweaving narratives to filter the development of outside broadcast sport through the lens of an exclusively women’s sport is internationally rare and uniquely revealing. It has also been important to record this unique aspect of New Zealand broadcasting oral history. It is not only netball that has suffered from a lack of archival care. It is somewhat extraordinary that sport, as a major television genre and one of the major technical and financial influences in New Zealand’s broadcasting history, is
so under researched and its oral history in danger of being lost. My attempt to put these narratives together questions the traditional unpacking of television history through the norm of the dominant hegemony. Slipping along in the subtext is that television production and playing netball are an important part of my personal history. It mattered to me as a teenager when television reinforced the unavoidable truth that the activities of women were always secondary to men. It really mattered in the 1970s and 1980s when we fought for television to recognise women as elite athletes respect our game and understand how to represent it visually - and it still matters to me now.

Figure 92: ‘The Harrison Hoist’, Mystics versus Vixens, 20 May 2012

A cross between basketball’s ‘alley-oop’ and a rugby lineout, Mystics defender Kayla Cullen hoists Anna Harrison above the goal ring to intercept a shot at goal. Not quite the revolutionary game changer it was hailed to represent in the week after its unveiling, it is nevertheless a metaphor for an innovative mentality required to keep the sport entertaining and progressive.

(Getty Images)
## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAWBBA</td>
<td>All Australia Women’s Basket Ball Association (1927-1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AANA</td>
<td>All Australia Netball Association (1970-1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCNZ</td>
<td>Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFNA</td>
<td>International Federation of Netball Associations (changed to INF: International Netball Federation in November 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZBC</td>
<td>New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZBS</td>
<td>New Zealand Broadcasting Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVNZ</td>
<td>Television New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Netball Australia (1993 – present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZBA</td>
<td>New Zealand Basketball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZNA</td>
<td>New Zealand Netball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNZ</td>
<td>Netball New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZOA</td>
<td>New Zealand on Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZRU</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Union</td>
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## Standard Television Industry Terms and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atmos</td>
<td>ambient location sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Cam</td>
<td>A fixed camera used to shoot wide angle “beauty shots”, often located on a stadium roof or high interior. Sometimes called a panorama camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comms</td>
<td>radio communication link between director, commentators and OB crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutaway</td>
<td>shot that interrupts a continuous action eg. cutting-away to a crowd shot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drop out</td>
<td>a momentary loss or damage to audio or video signal in videotape playback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot head</td>
<td>(hottie) remotely controlled camera pan/tilt head (often fixed to jib arm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>introduction to live broadcast or pre-recorded material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpoint</td>
<td>first image of a shot</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ISO (isolated camera) camera image sent to its own recorder in addition to main recording in multi-camera broadcast. ISO images used for replays and are essential for electronic umpire set-ups and scoring replays.

i/v interview

Key chroma key generation of graphic layer over broadcast image

OB Outside Broadcast. Multi-camera production from mobile control room (van)

Outpoint last image of a shot

Outro reporter or VO wrap at end of broadcast or VT item

PTC piece-to-camera or ‘standup’ by reporter directly to camera. Often used for intro and outro of live broadcast or VT items

VO voice over by reporter in the field or in the studio during transmission of item.

VT item video tape news item (term still used for pre-recorded and edited inserts)

**Standard framing and camera angles**

HA high angle

LA low angle

NA normal angle (eye level)

MS Master Shot: HA WS provides wide angle coverage of action area

WS wide shot

LS long shot

MS mid shot

MLS medium long shot

MS mid shot

MCU medium close-up

CU close-up

**NB:** Screen direction is taken from behind the camera eg cam left or cam right

Timings in minutes and seconds are written as 3’ (3 minutes) or 3.22” (3 minutes 22 seconds)
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Interview Type</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Montgomery, Peter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ord, Moira</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>10 Mar. 2011</td>
</tr>
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<td>Romanos, Joseph</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>18 Jan. 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuels, Priya</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>5 Jul. 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott, Michael</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>4 Sep. 2007</td>
</tr>
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<td>Service, Gavin</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>7 May. 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singleton, Lindsay</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>23 Apr. 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, George</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Personal interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snell, Alistair</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor, Anne</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>19 Mar. 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Personal interview</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson, Guy</td>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td>28 Nov. 2007</td>
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