Nine for IX Film Discussion Guide: Branded

Key Concepts:

● Sport Marketing & Promotion

● Sport Sponsorship & Endorsement

● Elite Female Athletes

● Objectification

● Homophobia

● Social Construction Of Gender

● Sport Media Coverage

● Power

● Male Dominance

● Nationalism

● Capitalism

● Hegemony

Discussion Questions: Answer and place on your weebly page

1. What role did Billie Jean King have in gaining sponsorship for women’s tennis and paving the way for endorsement and sponsorship opportunities for women’s sport? /5

2. Chris Evert Lloyd, the first female tennis player and athlete to cross the $1 million dollar endorsement mark says in the film, “Like or not, the feminine women athletes were the only ones who got the endorsements.” Why is this statement problematic for female athletes? /5

3. Many individuals interviewed in Branded talked about themselves or female athletes that have/had “the total package” such as Lolo Jones, Chris Evert, Anna Kournikova, Danica Patrick and Gabby Reece. What do you think is meant by this descriptor in terms of gender, race, class, disability, and sexual orientation? Can all female athletes have the “the total package” and what are the implications of this for women who don’t fit this narrow ideal? Use examples from the film to back up your contention. /5

4. Is it fair to blame women athletes for not drawing as many fans as their male counterparts and not having more “buzz”, “interest” or “mass appeal” as a few individuals stated in the film? Why or why not? What is the role of media in creating interest? /5

5. In the film Brandi Chastain was interviewed about her famous “sports bra” incident which occurred when she successfully made the final penalty kick to win the 1999 World Cup and ripped off her shirt exposing her muscled body and sports bra. She stated in the film people talked more about the bra, than the game. Why do you think the primary focus became Chastain’s sports bra? Chastain also said celebrating is about women owning and accepting and feeling good about their achievements and there are not enough stages for young girls to see women have those moments. Why do we so seldomly see female athletes and women’s sport on TV or those stages? What message does this communicate to young girls? Use social theory to explain this phenomena. /5

6. In the film former pro beach volleyball star Gabrielle “Gabby” Reece felt that people get nervous when women exert their own agency and exploit themselves by capitalizing on her looks to make a living or to attract attention. Do you agree or disagree with Reece? Analyze her statement along with the statement made by former sports editor Sandra Rosenbush “it’s a White male world and we’re just living in it”? /5

7. Gabby Reece in the film strongly states “I don’t think selling sex is ever going to be outdated...breasts are never going to be out.” Do you agree with her statement? Does this statement hold true for everyone? Who benefits and who does not benefit when women are routinely asked to portray themselves in sexualized ways? How might selling sex or “breasts” help increase interest in and respect for women’s sport? /5

8. According to the filmmakers, the premise of the film is about branding female athletes. Who is ultimately responsible for branding female athletes and women’s sport? In the film, Olympic gymnast Mary Lou Retton stated in the process of her branding that she “lost [her] voice for a long time”. Using your sociological imagination (ability to see different perspectives in how individual behaviors, values and choices are influenced by society and the social world around them) and what you heard in the film to discuss to what degree female athletes have a choice about how they are branded? How has the Internet and digital media changed the marketing and promoting of women’s sport? /5

9. Use hegemony theory to analyze the film and the statement made at the end of the film that selling sex is a cultural issue and “that’s just the way it is.” /5

10. The filmmaker asks an interesting question in the film: Have things gotten better for women in sports since Title IX? How did the interviewees answer that question? What, if anything, has gotten better? What, if anything, has gotten worse? (To dive deeper see Additional Readings: Cooky & LaVoi, 2012) /5

11. Can you think of examples in other sports where the Key Concepts listed at the beginning of this guide are present? /5

Total /55