



# The Challenges and Strategies of Competitive Sports Communication in the New Media Era

## ——Taking a tennis self-media account as an example

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**Abstract.** Currently, the practice of new media in competitive sports communication is extensive and has brought about a significant impact, particularly the disruption of traditional sports communication models by self-media platforms. This includes the specific effects of new media on competitive sports communication, the characteristics of content on self-media platforms, and the challenges they face. Combining quantitative analysis and qualitative interviews, this study uses a self-media account focused on tennis player A on the Weibo platform as a sample (this account published 86 pieces of content from March 17, 2024, to May 22, 2024, gathered 157 followers, and achieved a total view count of over 500,000). By analyzing the content data published by this account and conducting in-depth interviews with the creators H and J, the study explores their founding motives, content selection, and operational difficulties. It also reveals issues such as information fragmentation and authenticity in new media communication, as well as the challenges faced by self-media in platform selection and content review. Especially in terms of information review and platform publication restrictions, self-media creators face significant challenges that need to be addressed by strengthening platform regulation and content review.

**Keywords:** Competitive Sports, Communication Challenges, Account Analysis, Solutions

## 1 Introduction

In the new media era, competitive sports communication has undergone significant changes. Data from the Forward Industry Research Institute's "2021 China Sports Media Industry Market Size, Competitive Landscape, and Development Trends" report indicates that sports new media is experiencing rapid growth with multidimensional interaction. Therefore, scholars often focus on the differences between traditional media and new media regarding their impact on competitive sports.

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Firstly, the integration of traditional and emerging media has diversified information acquisition channels. Traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers were once the primary channels for sports news dissemination[1]. However, with the development of the internet and digital technology, sports news is no longer confined to a single medium. New media platforms like Weibo, WeChat public accounts, TikTok, and Kuaishou have gradually joined the ranks of sports news dissemination, offering audiences richer and more diverse platforms[2]. These platforms not only provide real-time event information but also present sports news through various forms such as live video streaming, short videos, pictures, and text. Examples include analytical commentary, behind-the-scenes footage, talk shows, and virtual reality experiences. The emergence of this content provides users with a wide array of choices, significantly enhancing the attractiveness and readability of information[3]. Additionally, the interactivity of new media platforms attracts audiences with different interests and preferences to competitive sports communication. Audiences are not only recipients of information but also disseminators and participants. Features such as comment sections, bullet comments, likes, and shares increase user engagement and participation [2]. However, the new media era also highlights issues of information fragmentation and overload, posing challenges to the authenticity and accuracy of information. Media institutions need to strengthen information review and gatekeeping to ensure the authenticity and authority of disseminated content[4].

Besides these aspects, this paper also focuses on the less-explored field of self-media, analyzing the data of published information and examining the views on competitive sports communication in new media from a self-media operational perspective.

## 2 Research Introduction

This study focuses on the practice and real issues of new media in competitive sports communication, with particular attention to the challenges and problems faced by self-media in this process. The research analyzes a self-media account on the Weibo platform dedicated to a tennis player (hereinafter referred to as "the account"). The account was established on March 17, 2024, and by May 22, 2024, it had published a total of 86 posts, gathered 157 followers, received 2,658 interactions (likes, comments, and shares), and achieved over 500,000 views. Although the account has been established for a short time, the quality of its posts is high, and it has a relatively high number of "viral" articles. This study conducts an in-depth analysis of the account and engages in in-depth interviews with the account creators H and J (hereinafter referred to as "H" or "J"). The discussion covers the founding motivations and inspirations behind the account, its characteristics, and the problems faced during its operation.

### 3 Research Findings

The account has established a total of eight topics: Media Records, Coach Interviews, Player Stories with A, Schedule Reports, PTPA News, Team News, Data Observation, and Player Introductions (as shown in figure 1).

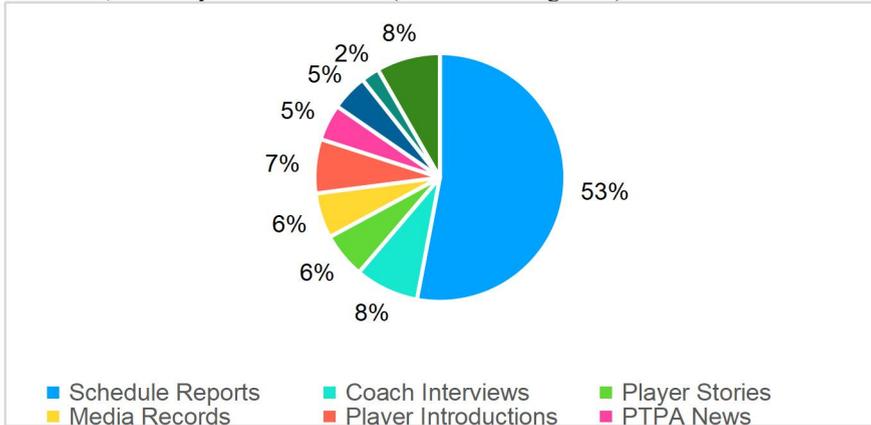


Fig. 1. The data of the account

The "Schedule Reports" category has the highest posting frequency, with all content being concise and direct match reports, totaling 45 posts and accounting for 53% of the total posts. The total view count exceeds 130,000. The "Coach Interviews" category has 7 posts, accounting for 8% of the total. This content includes both videos and text, featuring professional analyses from the perspectives of various notable athletes and coaches. The "Player Stories" category has 5 posts, accounting for 6%. This section focuses on other notable athletes and hot topics like match-fixing, which have been reposted by other bloggers. Other articles also include various athletes. The highest single post view count in this category exceeds 43,000, showing excellent interaction and view counts. The "Media Records" category has 5 posts, accounting for 7% of the total posts, with a total view count exceeding 300,000. The highest single post view count is 136,000. This category includes hot topics such as other notable athletes, behind-the-scenes details, comparisons with other players, and actions by A, which have been reposted by major Weibo influencers.

The "Player Introductions" category has 6 posts, accounting for 7%, with a total view count exceeding 11,000. The "Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA) News" category has 4 posts, accounting for 5%, with a total view count exceeding 40,000. The highest single post view count exceeds 30,000. This category includes hot topics like "PTPA committee member changes" and "PTPA being recognized by world authoritative organizations." The "Data Observation" category has 4 posts, accounting for 5%, with a total view count exceeding 40,000. The highest single post view count exceeds 38,000. This category includes comparisons with other notable athletes and hot topics. The "Team News" category has 2 posts, accounting for 2%, with a total view count of 18,000. And there are other 7 posts that have no categories,

accounting for 8%, with a total view count of 120,000. The highest single post view count is 38,000, featuring content about A's participation in the Laureus World Sports Awards.

The overall view and interaction rates of the "Coach Interviews," "PTPA News," "Team News," and "Data Observation" categories are high, indicating a strong audience interest and recognition of professional and authoritative content. The "Player Stories" and "Media Records" categories also have high overall view and interaction rates, with content mostly related to other notable athletes and controversial or in-depth events, showing active audience participation and interest in hot topics and gossip. The "Schedule Reports" category occupies the majority of the account's content but has relatively low view and interaction counts, suggesting that user interest and engagement in daily schedules are relatively low, possibly due to the prevalence of similar information from other accounts. The "Player Introductions" category has poor performance, indicating limited audience interest in basic player introductions and data. Meanwhile, users show more interest in content related to A. The "Other Content" category's view and interaction data are also impressive, with content mainly about A's major activities, reflecting the audience's rich interest in off-court activities. Also the observations on video content data reveal that the length of the video does not significantly impact view counts; content selection is more important.

## 4 Discussion

### (a) Characteristics of Information on Similar Weibo Self-Media Accounts

In the new media environment, the lowered threshold for information dissemination allows anyone to become a publisher, leading to an abundance of unverified information and increasing the risk of spreading false information [4]. The creation of this account stemmed from the two creators' deep admiration for tennis player A and their desire to share A's spirit and achievements with a broader audience, which made them particularly cautious about the quality and authority of the content they publish. Upon further investigation, they discovered that many of A's fans had very limited sources of information, mainly relying on second-hand information (i.e., content repurposed from other platforms), some of which was inaccurate. Thus, the establishment of this account aimed to provide more reliable information for other fans (H). To ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information, they meticulously verify each source and indicate it in their posts (J). Additionally, the creators' primary goal is for more people to see the information that has been overlooked. They choose to publish even content that might go against the mainstream, believing that those who appreciate it will notice the information. Their initial intention was to widely and effectively disseminate A's information comprehensively (H).

### (b) Content Selection and Characteristics

In terms of content, this account primarily features long-form articles. The creators prefer to make the information concrete and detailed, hoping that more people will focus on practical content rather than just fragmented information. For example, in the "Coach Interviews" section, while many bloggers also repost this content, most only choose to publish partial content, whereas this account chooses to repost the entire content and break it down into smaller parts for detailed explanation. The creators emphasize: "High-quality content is also our pursuit" (J). "We reject sensationalist or gossip content for marketing" (H). Indeed, contemporary new media platforms often face this issue, where the speed of information updates is so rapid that audiences find it difficult to fully understand the entirety of the facts. This fragmentation of information not only undermines the integrity and continuity of the information but also makes it easy for the audience to be misled by surface-level information, lacking a deep understanding of events [4].

Additionally, another characteristic of the content reposted by this account is the commitment to "human translation whenever possible." The creators believe that the atmosphere and tone when a person speaks are unique. Although AI translation can simulate emotions, it cannot capture the complexity and unpredictability of human emotions. Depending on the content type, they decide whether the translation should be more colloquial or more formal. For instance, A's interviews at forums are serious and important topics, so they choose to translate them in a formal tone. However, when translating coach interviews or content from events, which are more casual, they sometimes make parts of the translation more colloquial to make it more concise and better suited to the video pace (H).

#### (c) Selection and Characteristics of Self-Media Communication Platforms

When it comes to platform selection, different platforms have different characteristics. For instance, highly visual platforms like Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) are fast-consumption platforms with high traffic, suitable for short, concise, and sensational content. Often, high view counts can be achieved through clickbait titles. For example, images or short videos paired with eye-catching captions can drive traffic, but this is not well-suited to their content. Therefore, they chose the Weibo platform, which supports the publication of long-form articles and videos (J).

The creators also mentioned a particularly troubling issue: sometimes, when posting on Weibo, the platform will arbitrarily flag content as violating guidelines without providing a reason, leaving them unsure how to modify the content. Even attempts to contact Weibo customer service for detailed violation information have been unsuccessful. This has resulted in their carefully crafted content being unable to reach a broad audience, and in some cases, being removed without notice, causing them considerable frustration and anger (J).

#### (d) Audience Attention and Information Capturing Ability

The limited ability of the audience to capture key information is a relatively serious issue. Due to the fast-food nature of information consumption, as self-media authors, they distill key information and simplify content to attract the audience. However, this goes against the original intent of the account. Therefore, the creators have been contemplating whether they can use new approaches to publish the same content in ways that suit the focal points of different platforms (H). One of their methods to

address this problem is by "creating thematic and series content." The creators noted that considering most people have busy lives and limited patience, long videos often require finding time to watch or are simply ignored. Therefore, they adopt a two-pronged strategy: on one hand, they keep video lengths to around three minutes, and on the other hand, they provide text versions and subtitles, allowing the audience to watch anytime, anywhere (J). Additionally, breaking down long videos into smaller segments and publishing them by theme makes the content easier to digest, more systematic, and refined, which facilitates audience understanding. While adhering to basic principles, the creators strive to present the content in a way that is most beneficial to A and maximizes dissemination (H).

#### (e) The Special Ethical Norms of Sports Communication

Currently, many popular Weibo accounts repost content with numerous flaws: incomplete information, overly subjective viewpoints, and a focus on sensational gossip to attract traffic. This results in fans being unaware of important related information or being misled (J). This phenomenon is very common nowadays, and the excessive commercialization of content severely impacts the value balance of competitive sports. Many self-media accounts, in pursuit of clicks and commercial benefits, tend to publish sensational and provocative content, even at the cost of exaggerating facts or spreading false information. This approach not only damages the credibility of sports journalism but also leads to a trust crisis among the audience towards sports reporting. To address this issue, media organizations need to strengthen content review and management to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the information[4]. Additionally, they should guide self-media platforms to establish robust content publishing mechanisms[5]. Furthermore, competitive sports communication on self-media platforms also faces insufficient platform and channel regulation. Therefore, it is necessary to establish stricter regulatory mechanisms and enhance supervision and management of self-media platforms to ensure that information publication and dissemination comply with relevant laws and regulations [4].

## 5 Conclusion

With the development of the internet, the dissemination of sports news is no longer confined to traditional media. The rise of new media platforms such as Weibo and TikTok has provided users with rich and diverse sports content. However, the advent of self-media has lowered the threshold for information dissemination, allowing anyone to become an information publisher, which increases the risk of spreading false information. This study uses a combination of quantitative analysis and interviews, focusing on a self-media account on the Weibo platform dedicated to tennis player A. By analyzing the content and data published by this account, the study identifies its communication characteristics and impacts. For instance, content with low interaction rates is often due to the wide availability of similar information on other platforms, leading to dispersed user attention. In contrast, reports on

professional and trending events garner high attention, indicating a strong audience demand for professional analysis and in-depth reporting.

Moreover, through in-depth interviews with the account creators, the study explores their founding motives, content selection, and operational difficulties. This reveals issues such as information fragmentation and authenticity in new media communication. Self-media creators face numerous challenges in content selection, translation, platform choice, and especially in information review and platform publishing restrictions.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that self-media creators adhere to high-quality standards in content production, rigorously verify information sources, and ensure the authenticity and authority of the content. Additionally, creators should explore multi-platform publishing strategies, leveraging the strengths of different platforms and optimizing content according to the needs of different audiences. For example, short videos and visually rich content can be published on highly visual platforms, while in-depth reports can be posted on platforms that support long-form articles.

In terms of platform regulation, stricter content review mechanisms need to be established to prevent the spread of false information and protect the users' right to know. Self-media creators can also improve their communication with platforms to understand the specific requirements of content review, thus avoiding unintentional violations.

In summary, this study not only reveals the current state and issues of competitive sports communication in the new media era but also proposes feasible solutions. In the future, as technology advances and platform regulation improves, self-media will play an increasingly important role in sports communication, providing users with richer and more reliable sports information.

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