Sports Fans Essay, Research Paper

Psycologists often look to find patterns of behavior among similar peoplein similar circumstances. One such study is that of the psycological effect of sports teams and their fans. In a study atMurry State University, Daniel L. Wann and Thomas J. Dolan tried to prove that fans that had a high associationwith their favorite team would be biassed in their evaluation of the past, preasent, and future preformances. Wann andThomas’ study set out to prove that students at Murry State that had a high assosiation with their basketballteam, when asked about their records in previous seasons would estimate more than actually were won. Also, ifthe students were asked about their predictions for the team in the present year, they would be a lot higherthan they probably could acheive. Finally they would have them make predictions of their preformances of the future,and see if there was any pattern among those people. To accomplish this, Wann and Dolan used 106 sublects. Fourtyfour were male and sixty two were female, student volunteers, whom took part in the study for extra credit. At thetime of this test the Murry State basketball team was first in their conference with a 4-1 record. The study consistedof a packet with many different questions in it that would help rate the people. The first page rated the personsidentifiability with the team. It consisted of seven questions, each with a rating of 1 – 8 in association. The final two pagesof the packet were the subjects assesment of the team. The subjects were asked questions like:how many games hadthe team won the previous year(The answer was 17); How many wins will they have this season (the answerto that ended up being 18); and how many wins do you see for the next season. The subjects then answered four selfratings on what they beleived was a) poor and outstanding, b) preforming well above or below expectations, c) bador good teams, and d)teams with little or great ability. The students then were asked how they beleive the currentteam would end the season (ie. NCAA Champ., Conf. Winner, etc.), and asked to rate these possibilities. Wannand Dolan found that their Hypothesis was right and that sports fans that had a higher affiliation with the team, weremore likely to padd the records of the team. They found that students tended to think the team fared better in previousseasons, and their predictions for the preasent and future were extremely overblown. In an article later Wannfollows that their evaluation not only was true for teams with winning programs, but also with teams that have losingrecords also. Wann preformed this study to contradict a report by Hirt and Rials that differed in oppinion from hisoriginal study and said it was a biassed evaluation. IN his second study, Wann found that the same effect wastrue for dedicated fans of a losing team. They tended to do the same as the other fans did. Psycologists love to studythe effects of certain things on people. not many have looked at the effect of sports on the fans. Though all peopleview things different ways, certain types of people, like those spectators with strong affiliation to a sport team, tendto have similar outlooks and bias on their preformance. “

” Wann, Daniel L and Thomas J Dolan(1994). Influence of Spectators’ Identification on Evaluation of the Past,Preasent,and Future Preformance of a SportsTeam. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 78. 547-552 Wann, Daniel L. (1994). Biased Evaluation of Highly IdentifiedSports Spectators: A Responce to Hirt and Ryalls. Perceptual and Motor Skill, 79. 105-106.