

A Year in the Life of a Sport Geographer: Using Weekly Media Maps (Geography with Goudge) as a Form of Community Outreach.

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America is often perceived as a sporting nation. Perhaps no other cultural component has played a bigger role in shaping today's perception of America than sports. In particular, college and professional sports often receive considerably more media coverage than so many other aspects of culture. The author has spent a career investigating the spatial analysis of sport. Sport and geography share a common spatial bond. Boundaries, delineation, demarcation, territorial control, spatial interaction, distance decay, etc. are essential elements of both. The role sport plays in the American way of life is inescapable. How many ESPN channels are there? Thus, academic investigation into the cultural geography of sport, sport landscape and sports impact on society is a data-rich subfield that poses unlimited possibilities. College and professional athletics provide a significant focus for such investigations. 'Geography with Goudge', a weekly media (newspaper & radio website) map focusing on the geography of sport is an example of an attempt at public communication or what the author calls 'Community Outreach'. Goudge characterizes, "Public communication as 'serious business', meaning that the consequences of effective or poor communication should not be taken lightly". The purpose of this project was to examine the impact 'Geography with Goudge' has had in terms of making geography available to all. Examples of the outreach along with attempts to measure its degree of impact (effectiveness) are discussed. These include viewership data, social media implications, readership impacts (testimonials) and other measures. Suggestions for engaging in community outreach are also included.

Keywords: college sports, community outreach, player production, program success, regionalism, sport geography