

The Newspaper as a Vehicle for Fan Participation in Fiji Rugby Union

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Abstract

Through the analysis of “Letters to the Editor” in The Fiji Times, this study aimed to uncover the opinions of fans on the management of Fiji Rugby Union (FRU). The study found the importance of letter writers’ opinions in advocating visionary-driven strategic and policy postures that are continually being assessed and benchmarked with other unions. Findings also encapsulated matters related to coach and team selection, reward systems, purposeful marketing – particularly of women’s rugby – and a proactive financial environment that are focused towards improved FRU team performances. Rugby Union being the national sport of Fiji, fans consistently demand improved and winning performances from its team. A gold medal at the Rio Olympics was the pinnacle of fans’ aspirations in Rugby sevens. In the fifteens code, with increasing numbers of Fijian professional rugby players, fans also expect higher performances than they do now. The study also found the debate and argument about keeping the Fjian flair of rugby and its cibi, the pre-game war dance, both crucial to giving the team its trademark.

Keywords: Fan participation; Fiji Rugby Union; Vision; Strategic Planning; *Cibi*; Women’s Rugby

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