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# The Advertising Exposure Value of Tyrann Mathieu to LSU

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THE ADVERTISING EXPOSURE VALUE OF  
TYRANN MATHIEU TO LSU

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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In

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by  
Chad M. Nolan  
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## **ABSTRACT**

When LSU football players put on their uniforms and make their way on to the playing field, they become instant advertisements for Louisiana State University (LSU). When games are televised on national television, viewers are exposed to a number of different advertisements. Stadiums display corporate sponsorships and other naming rights, while television commercials serve as running advertisements. With an understanding that many aspects of the game are scripted with advertisements, this paper seeks to quantify the value of Tyrann Mathieu, a student-athlete on the LSU Football team during the 2011 football season. Though Mathieu did not receive the compensation given to professional athlete endorsers, he did provide a great deal of advertising exposure for Louisiana State University. Additionally, this paper will provide an understanding of the importance of celebrity athletes in advertising and why companies are paying for their endorsements.

This research will provide a background on Tyrann Mathieu and his importance as a collegiate football player. It will seek to provide an understanding the importance of a celebrity and the value that a celebrity's personal brand can provide an organization or company. Also, the research will analyze the importance of positive publicity when seeking endorsement deals, specifically, for athletes, and the implications that negative publicity can bring. The text will provide details on the methods in which the research was conducted as well as the many limitations of my study. The results will be displayed in a chart describing the details of my findings. Finally, the essay will conclude the research by analyzing with the

results, while addressing limitations. Additionally, recommendations will work to provide strategies for Tyrann Mathieu, as well as other athletes in his position

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Collegiate and professional football players can serve as platforms for advertisements. At the collegiate level, athletes advertise two products: their University and their team's equipment manufacturers. Each university has a specific color combination. At Louisiana State University (LSU), the traditional helmet is gold with a purple and white stripe running down the center of the helmet. Each side of the helmet has LSU text as well as a tiger logo. The home jerseys are white with the purple numbers on each side and the player's last name printed in purple on the back side. The pants match the helmet with a similar gold color. Additionally, LSU has an equipment sponsorship with Nike, which makes it one of the school's most widely used and visible brands. The standard football uniform will display eight Nike "swooshes." There is one swoosh on the jersey, one on the pant, one on each sock and two on each shoe. Players who opt to wear chin strap covers, arm bands, leg bands or gloves can double the amount of Nike swooshes on their uniform.

On certain Saturday's each fall semester, the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana State University becomes home to over ninety-two thousand (LSU's Tiger Stadium) students, alumni, and other fans as they gather to celebrate the pageantry of LSU Football. There is no shortage of passion and school pride from the fans when opposing schools come to play in Tiger Stadium. The student-athletes who play the game are part of a rich history of elite athletes whose legacies continue to grow. Hundreds have worn the uniform but few have received the honors and accolades that were bestowed upon Tyrann Mathieu in 2011.

Mathieu is arguably one of the greatest defensive backs to ever wear the purple and gold of LSU Football. As a sophomore, he became the first defensive back since Charles Woodson of Michigan in 1997 to be invited to New York for the Heisman Trophy Ceremony; an award which annually recognizes the most outstanding player in college football (Heisman Memorial Trophy) (Branch, 2011). He was awarded many post-season honors, including the Chuck Bednarik Award which is awarded to the nation's best defensive player each year. Fans and media nicknamed him "The Honey Badger" as a comparison to a popular video from YouTube in which the narrator claimed that the honey badger "takes what he wants (czg123)." Tyrann Mathieu has an innate ability to force fumbles and create big plays through his aggressive and fearless attitude on the field. The Honey Badger nickname, coupled with his ability to create highlight worthy plays earned him a remarkable amount of attention from sports and news media on the national stage. However, Mathieu's time in the spotlight was brief as his trouble off the field resulted in his dismissal from the LSU Football team prior to the 2012 season for disciplinary reasons (Rohan, 2012) (Gordon, 2012). His release came after multiple warnings and a one game suspension in 2011 (Smith E. , 2011). Following Mathieu's release from the team there was speculation that he may return for the 2013 season. However, the speculation was quickly ruled out, as Mathieu declared for the NFL Draft in November of 2012 (Copeland, 2012).

### **Role as a Celebrity**

**Definitions.** Celebrity was originally defined as a condition of being much talked about or having notoriety. However, following the graphic revolution, the word has transitioned its meaning to a famous or well-publicized person (Boorstin, 1992).

According to Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, author of *Starstruck*, being a celebrity requires a collective obsession regarding things about a person that are unrelated to and unexplained by that individual's talent. The public's interest centers on their personal lives and has very little to do with their work or skill (Currid-Halkett, 2011). When Tyrann Mathieu stepped onto the field, at any given time, there were ten other players wearing the same uniform. What separates Tyrann Mathieu from the other players? His inherent ability to create big plays earned him a great deal of attention from the media even though he was not the only player who made highlight worthy plays.

**Becoming a Celebrity.** Celebrity is possible in all niches of society. One may attain celebrity status on many different levels. For the purposes of this paper, celebrity will be considered as one who is capable of making national sporting news headlines. All forms of celebrity exhibit some form of exclusiveness: most mainstream celebrities get their foot in the door by first being associated with popular culture in their industry (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Some are talented, but their physical appearance and presence alone are of interest to the public (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Kim Kardashian and Paris Hilton are great examples as each of them are known for their lavish lifestyles, yet have done nothing worthy of the attention they garner. For these types of celebrities, the public's interest centers on their personal lives and has very little to do with his or her work or skill (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Some aspiring celebrities struggle to get noticed and are unable to become part of the member-only celebrity groups that remain highly exclusive and unavailable to the general public. (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Attaining and retaining celebrity status is partly achieved by the events they attend and their social network (Currid-Halkett, 2011).

Once the status of celebrity is attained, celebrities have to continue to work to stay in the spotlight. Some have to work more than others. According to Carlson and Donovan, “the social meanings associated with a celebrity that make him or her appealing as an endorser are heavily influenced by the source of their celebrity status.” They go on to say, “The role in which an athlete derives his or her public meanings is synonymous with the source of the athlete’s endorsement power.” The source of this endorsement power comes from an athlete’s sport affiliation, which serves as the public vehicle that allows consumers to become familiar with the athlete as a celebrity (Carlson & Donovan, 2008). Derek Jeter’s celebrity status, for example, comes from his public presence as a baseball player. He uses the New York Yankees as his sport affiliation, which is his public vehicle to stardom. In other words, the media must think that an individual is worth their while, which is why many athletes spend thousands of dollars per month on their publicists (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Unlike their Hollywood counterparts, celebrity athletes rarely use publicists. Their agents serve as publicists, and their exposure is measured by their performance on the field and visibility they gain while doing so. To assist in remaining relevant, celebrities must be involved with a celebrity network. These networks are influential because their status is perpetuated, and they provide access points to important people who can elevate an aspiring star’s career (Boorstin, 1992). They are not random, but are connected simply by virtue of being a celebrity (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Celebrity networks have to stay tight in order to maintain exclusiveness and desirability. (Currid-Halkett, 2011). The most effective way for one to access and remain at the core of a celebrity network is to get his or herself photographed and written about as much as possible. Hollywood celebrities often do this by attending premier events, charities or other functions in which their social status

can be elevated. Typically, athletes achieve celebrity status by their play on the field, though some have become better known for their life outside of sports. A celebrity's ability to perpetuate their status is dependent on their ability to remain a part of the celebrity network, which is why their antics get photographed and written about in the first place and ultimately how we, as consumers, remain fascinated with their lives (Currid-Halkett, 2011).

**Modern Celebrity.** The modern appetite for celebrity is far greater than ever, and businesses have created a yearning for more (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Much of this can be attributed to the advent of the Internet and other popular forms of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The modern celebrity has become bigger and more exaggerated through our desire to access their lives in an "everyday" perspective. It is the "un-Hollywood" type of moments that have created an infatuation with certain celebrities and has assisted in making many celebrities grow their appeal (Currid-Halkett, 2011).

Daniel Boorstin, author of *The Image (1962)*, blames this phenomenon on pseudo-events. Pseudo comes from the Greek word meaning false, or intended to deceive. According to Boorstin, a pseudo-event must meet the following criteria:

1. It is not spontaneous, but comes about because some-one has planned, plated or incited it. Typically, it is not a train wreck or an earthquake, but an interview.
2. It is planted primarily (not always exclusively) for the immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced. Therefore, its occurrence is arranged for the convenience of the reporting or reproducing media. The question, "Is it real?" is less important than, "Is it newsworthy?"

3. Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous. Its interest arises largely from this very ambiguity. Did the statement really mean what it said? Without some of this ambiguity a pseudo-event cannot be very interesting.

4. Usually it is intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Ex. A hotel's thirtieth-anniversary celebration, by stating, that the hotel is a distinguished institution actually makes it one. (Boorstin, 1992)

Boorstin claims that we are provided with synthetic facts which move us indirectly by providing the factual basis on which we are supposed to make up our minds. He argues that the modern celebrity is a result of a manufactured fame that we have effectively given to people and have been misled in viewing them as a celebrity (Boorstin, 1992). Moreover, in losing sight of the men and women who do not simply seem great because they are famous but who are famous because they are great, we have confused celebrities with heroes (Boorstin, 1992). Heroes have shown greatness and are made through their great deeds, whereas celebrities are made through our fascination and perceptions of their importance. The celebrity is the human pseudo-event (Boorstin, 1992). He is fabricated on purpose by the media to satisfy our exaggerated expectations of human greatness. He is made by all of us who willingly participate in his fame. To be known is to prove his personality leads him to becoming a celebrity (Boorstin, 1992).

In athletics, an individual's celebrity status may be mirrored in his salary, despite on-field performance. Soccer player David Beckham signed a \$250 million contract with the LA Galaxy in 2007, following one of the worst years of his career. From a fan's perspective, such a move may be interpreted with negative connotations, but the move was actually brilliant. Ticket sales rose from 16,000 to 29,000 when Beckham was on the roster and jumped to 37,000 on the games that he played (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Additionally, his

marriage to former Spice Girl and British model, Victoria Beckham, along with his worldwide fan base and celebrity friends, created a spectacle for the Galaxy. In baseball, the Yankees signed third baseman Alex Rodriguez to a \$275 million contract, which at the time was the most lucrative in the history of sports (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Though he was regarded as one of the best players in the game, his contribution was not based on talent alone (Currid-Halkett, 2011). During Rodriguez' first game, an additional 8,000 tickets were sold and the Yankees website gained 8.5 million hits (Currid-Halkett, 2011). His value alone was estimated to generate \$450 million in marginal product revenue to the Yankees over the length of his contract as well as increasing the value of the YES<sup>1</sup> Network by \$50-\$100 million over ten years (Carlson & Donovan, 2008). Moreover, Alex Rodriguez' bachelor lifestyle has put celebrities such as Kate Hudson and Madonna in Yankee Stadium on multiple occasions. Their presence includes tabloids and magazines which offer free advertising to the Yankees.

## **Branding**

**Personal Branding.** Branding can be defined as the promoting of a product or service by identifying it with a particular brand (Merriam-Webster). Daniel Lair, Katie Sullivan and George Cheney take it a step further by explaining branding as a programmatic approach to the selling of a product, service, organization, cause or person that is fashioned as a proactive response to the emerging desires of a target audience or market. In personal branding, the concepts of product development and promotion are used to market persons for entry into or transition within the labor market, the nominal in

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<sup>1</sup> YES Network holds the rights to all regionally broadcasted Yankees and Nets games (Berger & Arango, 2007).

which workers find paying work, employers find willing workers and wage rates are determined (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005) (Labor Markets). Since branding is being used to represent identities, branding as a strategy is being used as a flexible, often changing, response to a crowded market to those individuals seeking to break through the clutter (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). The sports market is cluttered with individuals seeking to set themselves apart from their peers. Personal branding offers a unique opportunity for individuals to create or recreate themselves (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). According to Lair, Sullivan and Cheney, personal branding carries the elevation of image over substance because the world of appearance is not only articulated and accepted, it is valorized (given validity) and held up as the only reasonable way to negotiate the contemporary world of work and professions. Moreover, branding an athlete can be a far more rigorous challenge for even the best brand managers. Athletes participating in team-sports can make that challenge even greater. In order for an individual to achieve megastar status amongst fans, he/she must soar far above his peers (Crockett, 2007). To do so, athletes must align themselves with a brand or cause, outside of the sports arena, which fans perceive as believable and can relate to.

Social media provides a commonly used form of personal branding. There are many possibilities of exposure with programs such as Facebook and Twitter. Successful employees working at large companies desperately need to create a “brand within a brand” (Hyatt, 2010). Social media changes the traditional form of communicating at the audience to communicating with the audience. Young adults and athletes should be equipped with the social media intelligence to publish and communicate in ways that will help them to learn and develop a positive online reputation (Wetsch, 2012). A personal brand should

highlight one's special strengths while at the same time not appearing too self-promotional (Hyatt, 2010). Using social media to achieve a personal brand requires one to appear as a team player which can add value to the current company (Hyatt, 2010). If done with a positive public perception in mind, the use of social media in online personal branding can benefit both the individual and the company.

There is research that suggests some of the negative effects of online personal branding. Recent statistics suggest that 95% of all companies will perform a social media search of a potential employee and 70% of employers admit to rejecting candidates based on the information they found on their search (Wetsch, 2012). Often times, viewers of social media will see the individual as a representative of their company. This can quickly damage both the reputation of the individual and the company. Technology has given the public the ability to record events online therefore making anything posted on the Internet a risk. Once a Tweet is posted on Twitter or a picture is uploaded to Facebook, it can be saved by screenshot from anywhere in the world. For athletes, Twitter has become one of the most popular ways to connect directly with fans. Larry Fitzgerald, wide receiver for the Arizona Cardinals, has used Twitter to build a positive brand for himself. Fitzgerald aligned himself with a good cause by announcing, via Twitter, that he would donate \$.25 to cancer for every follower he had. While this can help portray a positive role, it can also damage one's brand if an online post brings negative publicity.

**Rebuilding Personal Brand.** It is not uncommon for athletes to be involved with some sort of negative publicity. Most often, we see professional athletes in the spotlight following their transgressions. In recent years, athlete transgressions have become front-

page material across many platforms. Additionally, celebrity news topics which previously covered in magazines and on entertainment networks have now moved into national news headlines. News of Tiger Woods's extramarital affairs overshadowed much of the coverage of President Obama's healthcare plan (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Other transgressions such as violence, performance enhancing drug use and driving under the influence of alcohol have become a common theme amongst athletes. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), 22.6% of athletes and, specifically, 26.7% of football players smoke marijuana (Alipour, We Smoked it All, 2012). These transgressions bring negative ramifications to all stakeholders associated with the athlete, including the athlete's personal brand (Agyemang, 2011). Though negative ramifications may transpire following a transgression, visibility may increase. Depending on what type of brand an athlete aspires to be, the publicity could be favorable or unfavorable. For example, professional golfer, John Daly is not known for his wins on the PGA Tour. Daly is known for the negative publicity that accompanies his transgressions outside the game of golf. Through his four marriages, drug and alcohol abuse and gambling problems, Daly has received a great deal of publicity, which has given him exposure that he, otherwise, would have missed out on. Though not seen as positive, this image has been good for Daly as he has secured sponsorships even through his mishaps.

Once a personal brand has been damaged, measures must be taken in order to repair the image. Several brand managers and advertising professionals have offered solutions which could be beneficial in one's attempt at rebranding. Dorie Clark, CEO of Clark Strategic Communications offered a five step process to rebranding:

1. Determine where you want to invest your energy and build the skills necessary for your new path. The newly acquired skills will assist in publicizing your new identity as well as providing the assumed credibility.
2. Craft a unique selling proposition and distinguish yourself by leveraging your points of difference. Decide your new selling point and find distinguishing characteristics, which can be used to your advantage.
3. Develop a narrative that describes your transition in terms of the value it offers others. Keep it consistent with your past, but focus on the value your prior experience brings.
4. Reintroduce yourself, using digital media and seizing opportunities to showcase your capabilities. If old perceptions of yourself are negative, address those perceptions and stress your new discipline.
5. Establish and promote your track record by securing your own Internet domain and producing unique intellectual quality. Make sure your brand offers something of value. Make yourself heard through speaking engagements, articles or workshops amongst your peers (Clark, 2012).

While Dorie's method may work for the average American employee, it does not give full consideration of rebranding strategies following a transgression. Kwame Agyemang took his suggestions a step further by focusing specifically on negative publicity of athletes. He describes two types of negative publicity; performance-related and values-related.

Agyemang focused his attention on the values-related negative publicity because of its broad impact amongst athletes. His suggested steps to recovery are as follows:

1. Returning back to what made the person a hot commodity from the beginning. The most crucial step in revamping a brand and athletes must come back when they feel fit to win regularly, or compete at their highest level.
2. Make a public appearance. Athletes should appear on syndicated talk shows to vocally express their regret for their actions. This permits the audience to judge whether or not the athlete is remorseful and begins the process of winning back fans<sup>2</sup>.
3. Seek assistance for a problem. Athletes wishing to rectify their brand should seek help in order to improve their personal wellbeing. It not only serves to the purpose of rehabilitating but offers a depiction of wanting to fix their situation.
4. Align oneself with a good cause. Through these organizations, athletes can verbally express their regrets.
5. The final step for recovery is for the athlete to make a donation to the charity in which they align themselves with. These donations may be able to persuade public opinion and assist in rebranding the individual (Agyemang, 2011).

## **Athlete Endorsements**

**History of Endorsements.** At the professional level, athletes endorse products more often than any other celebrity category (Carlson & Donovan, 2008) (Elberse & Verleun, 2012). In fact, twenty percent of all advertisements feature a celebrity and sixty percent of celebrity endorsed advertisements feature an athlete (Carlson & Donovan, 2008). As a student-athlete, Mathieu is not paid for his endorsement of LSU. Under

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<sup>2</sup> Making a public appearance would not be necessary for an athlete who was not well known. For the purposes of this project, a public appearance is important. Tyrann Mathieu was the focus of national media attention, therefore Dr. Agyemang's recommendations are relevant to this paper.

regulations of the NCAA, any benefit beyond his approved scholarship and living expenses would leave him ineligible to compete (NCAA Academic and Membership Affairs Staff, 2012).

The relationship between the firm and athlete endorser typically has a positive pay-off for both parties. According to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, “celebrity endorsements are a time-honored marketing tool.” At The Wharton School, they had a theory that borrowing a celebrity’s star power will create brand awareness and interest in a product or service. The theory was confirmed in the Journal of Advertising when a study confirmed that athlete endorsed brands produced a 4% growth in revenue. In the case of an athlete getting into trouble, the brand may suffer as well. The proliferation of media outlets has made it nearly impossible for indiscretions to go unnoticed which can quickly damage the brand (Lake, Reece, & Rifon, 2010).

Some professional athletes earn more money annually from advertising and endorsements than they do for their play, though performance on the field cannot be overlooked as many firms are offering bonus payments for major victories (Elberse & Verleun, 2012). In 2010, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and LeBron James earned seven times as much from endorsements as from playing their sport (Plank, 2012) (Elberse & Verleun, 2012). Known to many as the greatest basketball player of all time, Michael Jordan can be credited with taking Nike to an elite level. In less than fifteen years, Jordan helped take Nike from a \$900 million company to a \$9.19 billion company (Currid-Halkett, 2011). Jordan turned his star power into a commodity and has created an entire market for his products (Currid-Halkett, 2011). More recently, Nike signed LeBron James to a deal which resulted in a .75% stock

increase, overnight (Fizel, McNeil, & Smaby, 2008). Tiger Woods has topped the list of the highest paid golfers and athletes for more than a decade (Badenhausen, 2012). Due to recent transgressions, he has slightly declined but remains amongst the highest paid. Like Jordan, Woods was also given his own branch of Nike in which he has created a golf apparel and accessory empire.

**Implications in Athlete Endorsements.** There are thousands of athletes in the US, but only a select few are worthy of becoming product endorsers. Athletes are effective endorsers only when fans aspire to be like them or hope to be associated with their image (Carlson & Donovan, 2008). Given the importance of choosing the right endorser, Barbara Kahn, director of the Jay H. Baker Retailing Center at Wharton, offers a two-step approach for choosing the right endorser. First, she suggests picking a celebrity that will evoke positive emotions in the target market. Secondly, a company needs to find someone who is a “good fit or has some expertise with your product” in order to give credibility to their endorsement (Wharton School of Business University of Pennsylvania, 2013).

In football, the most likely product endorsers are players from skilled positions. There are more quarterbacks and running backs in magazines and other media than offensive lineman. This is due to the typical fans’ ability to relate and find their endorsements relevant. In keeping their endorsements relevant, athletes must endorse products that the consumer finds believable. Peyton Manning, an NFL quarterback, typically endorses brands that work closely with the NFL, such as Gatorade and Papa Johns (Crupi, 2012). Meanwhile, Tom Brady, another elite quarterback has aligned himself with brands such as Stetson and Ugg (Crupi, 2012). Though Manning would not be a right the right fit for Stetson or Ugg, it

works for Tom Brady. Brady married a super model and is known for his lifestyle off the field. Companies have to work hard in order to align the right celebrity with the right causes and products and they do not always get it right. When Weight Watchers signed a \$4 million deal with Jessica Simpson, they thought they had the perfect spokesperson. She used Twitter to announce her second pregnancy just a few short weeks later. With her weight loss plans on hold, Weight Watchers became the subject of mass ridicule from consumers. Though it did not permanently damage Weight Watchers, the company did experience short-term negative consequences.

Additionally, celebrity endorsement on social networks such as Twitter can be really important to a company. Celebrities such as Justin Bieber have 34.5 million followers and Oprah Winfrey has 16.6 million followers. Meanwhile, some of the bigger companies such as Starbucks only have 3.4 million followers. Gap, the national clothing brand, only has 177,000 followers on Twitter. For a company, it makes sense to use a celebrity endorser if they want to reach the maximum amount of consumers. For companies that choose to use celebrity endorsements, Americus Reed, professor of marketing at Wharton, advises that the company prepare for potential bad behavior from their spokesperson. Proper planning could help the company in getting “ahead of the story” before it goes viral.

## **METHODS**

In order to quantify Tyrann Mathieu's advertising exposure value to Louisiana State University during the 2011 football season; twelve games were identified, which would be researched. LSU played fourteen total football games in 2011, twelve of which were nationally televised on ABC, CBS, ESPN and ESPN2. The remaining two games were played on Tiger Vision, a local pay-per-view station in Baton Rouge, and the other on ESPNU. For the purposes of this project, only the nationally televised games were examined, as they allowed the maximum exposure while keeping an average advertising rate. Additionally, since advertising rates are not made public; this project used a formula that predicted advertising rates based on viewership.

### **Obtaining Data**

In order to collect data from each broadcast, a recorded DVD was obtained from Sports Properties. Each disk contained the game broadcast from the respective networks, which included commercials and halftime. Once the DVD was, it was copied onto a computer using Dartfish Pro, a powerful video analyzing software, which was used and made available by LSU's Track and Field office. Dartfish allows videos to be "tagged" at various intervals as low as 1/60 of a second. For the purposes of this project, tags were used on Tyrann Mathieu at speeds as low as 1/8 per second.

Before a tag could be placed, a criterion in which Tyrann Mathieu could be considered an advertiser for Louisiana State University was created. In order for a tag to begin, at least one of the following criteria had to be met:

1. The number “7” and/or “LSU” are clearly displayed. The display is applicable on the front, back and sleeves of the jersey and also applied to either side of the helmet (each player’s number is also located on the back of his helmet)
2. The camera focused solely on Tyrann Mathieu in a manner that clearly identified him. This applied to focusing on him before and in between plays, in replays, standing on the sideline or sitting on the bench.
3. The names “Tyrann Mathieu” or “Mathieu” appeared on the screen with his face or jersey being recognizably viewable.
4. The words “Honey Badger” appearing on the screen with Tyrann Mathieu’s face viewable. This also applied to replays.
5. Any other instance in which Tyrann Mathieu was the focal point of the camera while wearing the traditional LSU Purple and Gold.

Once created, a tag would stay active until the criterion was no longer met and would then be made inactive. Each tag would begin with the initial display of the criterion and would conclude at the end of displayed criterion, down to the eighth second. Once an entire game had been viewed, the tags were added together and the final results were collected. The sum total from each game was rounded to the nearest whole number. All results were placed in a graph that would display the results for the entire season, game by game.

### **Examining Data**

Game by game results were quantified by using a formula based on average advertising rates that were provided by Joyce Julius, a marketing company that performs similar marketing analysis. According to an employee from Joyce Julius, it takes an average of \$15

to reach 1000 people in advertising. In order to quantify the data, each game was examined individually. The total number of viewers was divided by 1,000 and multiplied by 15, which gave me the average commercial rate per game. The total commercial rate was then divided by 30 to give the value of each second in a thirty-second commercial advertisement. Finally, the one-second rate was multiplied by the total number of seconds in which Tyrann was shown per game to quantify his total advertising exposure value. The sum of each individual game was then added to decide Tyrann Mathieu's total advertising exposure value in 2011. Figure one shows the total findings as well listing the averages for each category.

There were several limitations throughout this project that may have hindered the results. The DVD's obtained were not recorded in high definition and were scaled down to fit the thirteen inch monitor that this project was performed on. Therefore, one can assumed that the typical viewer of these games watched the game in either high definition or on a television larger than thirteen inches, often times the combination of both. Moreover, there was, at the least, a noticeable loss in quality when the DVD was copied on to the computer using the Dartfish software.

The advertising rate of \$93,700 that was taken from the Wall Street Journal in 2011 was a given average on advertising costs and cannot be assumed as accurate. Thirty-second advertising spot usually exceeded \$100,000. Additionally, advertising rates can change for each quarter of gameplay, sometimes decreasing as the game goes on. Historically, Tyrann Mathieu would be more valuable on television in the first quarter than in the fourth quarter. In recent years, studies have shown that is not always true. In situations where a

close game is being played, additional viewers may tune in to make the fourth quarter more often than the first, thus increasing the value of a fourth quarter advertisement. The 2013 Super Bowl advertising rates were said to average between \$3.7 million and \$3.8 million with no set price (Steiberg, 2013). According to Nielsen, during the 2010 Super Bowl between the New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts, the most watched advertisement aired in the fourth quarter. The fourth quarter Doritos advertisement aired at 9:30pm and had 116.2 million viewers, which was a greater average than the total game itself. Nielsen ratings from the 2011 Super Bowl showed that the most watched in game advertisement came in the fourth quarter during a close game between the Green Bay Packers and the Pittsburgh Steelers. (Steiberg, 2013) Moreover, Nielsen discovered that the fourteen most watched advertisements came in the third and fourth quarters.

Additionally, Tyrann Mathieu was suspended for the game versus Auburn. The game was broadcasted by CBS at their weekly 2:30 pm television spot, which is considered the Southeastern Conference's Game of the Week. Based on the total season average, LSU potentially lost \$1,575,757 of exposure during Mathieu's absence. In taking this study a step further, when comparing his absence against the other games broadcasted by CBS, LSU lost \$2,018,725 of potential advertising exposure from Tyrann Mathieu. His suspension was listed as a violation of team rules, but media outlets around the country blamed it on his use of synthetic marijuana. That sort of negative publicity could be considered damaging to both LSU and Tyrann Mathieu. Following the suspension, LSU had a bye week, a week in which no game is played. The following two games in which Mathieu returned from suspension marked two of his three lowest camera exposure all season. The monetary

value during his return at the Alabama game did not fully reflect his lack of camera time as it was the second highest viewed game of the year.

The most considerable limitation in the research was the outcome of the game itself.

Tyrann Mathieu was a defensive back that often played as the nickel back, the third cornerback on the depth chart, replacing one. This formation was most often used when the opposing offense would use formations that involved three or more wide receivers. Being the third cornerback on the depth chart, Mathieu spent a portion each game on the sideline, where his playing time was determined by the opposing offense. Additionally, playing time was also dependent on the outcome of the game. In games where LSU secured victory early, the coaching staff would bench the starters and while giving second-string players a chance to play. Therefore, the games in which Tyrann Mathieu was more limited in playing time might have affected the exposure he could have possibly gained.

## **Results**

The findings of the research suggest Tyrann Mathieu offered Louisiana State University \$15,757,568 of total advertising exposure during nationally broadcasted games in 2011. His value throughout the season averaged \$1,575,757 per game. Mathieu was shown an average of fifty-three times per game at an average 5.65 seconds per view. To better understand his importance, an analysis was conducted on the value of his visibility each time he was shown on television. When the average one-second rate of \$4,279 is multiplied by 5.65 seconds we find that each time Mathieu was shown he gained \$24,176.35 of advertising exposure to Louisiana State University.

With the exception of the two regular season games played on ESPN and ESPN2, and not including Auburn, the number of viewers and the monetary value of each continued to rise throughout the season. The unusually high number of viewers for the Alabama game can be considered an exception. When LSU went to Tuscaloosa to play Alabama in 2011, it was considered the biggest game of the regular season throughout college football. It featured a regular season matchup of the consensus number one and number two teams. It was broadcasted by CBS during a prime time, at 7:00 p.m. CST. The winner would go on to represent the Western Division in the SEC Championship game.

The results show Mathieu's highest visibility value during games broadcast by CBS. It appears that way since CBS often had the rights to broadcast the game of the week and during 2011, it heavily favored LSU. Games on ABC could be rated slightly lower than CBS, while ESPN and ESPN2 broadcasts could be considered the least favorable. The obvious exception would be the BCS National Championship game since it the national championship of Division I college football.

2011 LSU Football Games Broadcasted by ABC, CBS, or ESPN							
Game	Time (s)	Tags	Average Time Per View	Viewers	Estimated Commercial Rate	Ad. Rate per Second	Total Monetary Value
	236	45	5.2	3,605,000	\$54,075	\$1,803	\$425,508
	127	31	4.1	2,050,000	\$30,750	\$1,025	\$130,175
	290	58	5	3,186,000	\$47,790	\$1,593	\$461,970
	216	35	6.2	4,912,000	\$73,680	\$2,456	\$530,496
	359	64	5.6	4,470,000	\$67,050	\$2,235	\$802,365
	DNP	DNP	DNP	5,624,000	\$84,360	\$2,812	DNP
	152	35	4.6	20,011,000	\$300,165	\$10,006	\$1,520,912
	166	32	5.2	3,600,000	\$54,000	\$1,800	\$298,800
	466	63	7.4	10,444,000	\$156,660	\$5,222	\$2,433,452
	800	105	7.6	12,016,000	\$180,240	\$6,008	\$4,806,400
	359	64	5.6	24,200,000	\$363,000	\$12,110	\$4,347,490
<b>Total</b>	<b>3171</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>94,118,000</b>	<b>\$1,411,770</b>	<b>\$47,069</b>	<b>\$15,757,568</b>
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>8,556,182</b>	<b>\$128,343</b>	<b>\$4,279</b>	<b>\$1,575,757</b>
Joyce Julius employee stated that it takes \$15 to reach 1,000 people							
Estimated Commercial Advertising Rate (30 second commercial)= Total Viewers/1,000 x 15.							
Rate Per Second = Commercial Rate / 30							
Total Money = Rate per second x # of seconds shown							
	<b>University of Oregon</b>				Game Played on ABC		
	<b>Mississippi State University</b>				Game played on ESPN		
	<b>University of West Virginia</b>				Game Played on ABC		
	<b>University of Florida</b>				Game Played on CBS		
	<b>University of Tennessee</b>				Game Played on CBS		
	<b>Auburn University</b>				Game Played on CBS		
	<b>University of Alabama</b>				Game Played on CBS		
	<b>University of Mississippi</b>				Game Played on ESPN		
	<b>University of Arkansas</b>				Game Played on CBS		
	<b>University of Georgia</b>				SEC Championship - CBS		
	<b>University of Alabama</b>				BCS National Championship - ESPN		

Figure 1 – Summary of Findings with Regard to Television Exposure

## CONCLUSION

The LSU Tigers went into the 2012 season with their sights and expectations set on another appearance in the Southeastern Conference and National Championship games. They were coming off a 13-1 season, which was arguably the greatest in school history. The earliest preseason polls had LSU ranked number one, in front of Alabama, who beat them in the 2011 BCS (Bowl Championship Series) National Championship game. The early preseason hype not only brought attention to LSU, but it used Mathieu as the face of the football team. Following the unexpected release of Tyrann Mathieu, LSU dropped two spots in the polls to number three. Though he was a defensive back, Mathieu's departure was important enough that the polls would drop the entire team two spots in the rankings. The decline in rankings could be expected if Mathieu was a quarterback, but this is virtually unheard of for the loss of a single defensive player.

The emergence of the "Honey Badger," Tyrann Mathieu, as a national phenomenon will not soon be forgotten, or repeated. Tyrann Mathieu was a once-in-a-generation player. His ability to change the momentum and eventual outcome of a game within a single play was undeniably fascinating. Mathieu's aggressive personality quickly captivated fans and the media alike. He brought LSU a great deal of exposure that will not be repeated in the near future. Unfortunately, the absence of Mathieu in 2012 likely cost LSU millions of dollars and brand exposure for the university.

The emergence of Tyrann Mathieu as a football star within the LSU community quickly made him a local celebrity. His status as a celebrity was verified by Elizabeth Currid-Halkett's book, *Starstruck*. He met all of her criterion in which she described celebrities.

Mathieu used his status as a football player to create his own persona. He also used LSU Football as his sport affiliation that made him famous. The benefits were mutual, as Mathieu was much more than a football player to LSU. He was the Honey Badger and the fearless leader of the defense. Additionally, he was the face of Forbes' most valuable SEC team and fourth most valuable college football program overall (Smith C. , 2011).

The LSU community has long held members of the LSU Football team with high regards. To the community, football players are members of an elite group in which like status is nearly unattainable. Since celebrity status is attributed to the events they attend and their social network, Tyrann Mathieu could be considered a celebrity based on the fact that he often played with and against other highly regarded individuals on national television. His teammates that he hung out with off the field, his social network, were also members of the same elite society.

Like many other celebrities, Mathieu had to continue working to stay in the spotlight. He started the 2011 season with a forced fumble, which he returned for a touchdown on ABC. That catapulted him into the national spotlight, but he did not stop there. Twelve games later, in the SEC Championship Game against the University of Georgia, he returned one punt for a touchdown while also nearly returning another and recovering a fumble, both of which setup scores for the offense. In week one of the season, he earned SEC Defensive Player of the Week honors and continued his high level of play through championship week, where he was named Most Valuable Player of the SEC Championship game.

Mathieu's playmaking abilities often led him to being one of the media's favorite subjects. His ability to stay in the headlines on further perpetuated his celebrity status. Through the

use of his personal Twitter account, Mathieu was able to give fans and media alike, a perspective of his thoughts and life outside of the game of football. Social media is important for the modern celebrity and Mathieu excelled at it. Though not always positive, Tyrann Mathieu was able to keep himself in the national spotlight in games in which his performance was average. His tweets, often about how good he was, were shown to millions as they were displayed on CBS broadcasts. These pseudo-events became prime discussion subject for in-game commentators. While commentators were discussing Mathieu's comments, cameras would focus on him, thus keeping him in the spotlight, regardless of how well he was playing at that time.

The use of Twitter not only assisted in making Tyrann Mathieu a celebrity, it helped him reinforce his own brand. Originally built on the field, Tyrann Mathieu was the fearless defensive player who had a knack for taking the ball away from opposing offenses. In terms of football players, Mathieu was not a large individual but his physical build never stopped him from making great plays. The Honey Badger nickname solidified his personal brand as the overly confident individual who could not be stopped, regardless of his opponent's size or speed. Through Twitter, Mathieu relayed his fearless thoughts and confidence to the thousands of people that followed him. This solidified the public persona of Tyrann Mathieu as a fearless leader and the Honey Badger.

## **Recommendations**

Following the release of Tyrann Mathieu from the LSU Football team, the Honey Badger brand took a major hit. The media quickly assisted in expanding the news nation-wide in the days following his release. The release was the result of another failed drug test, which

had haunted Mathieu during the 2011 season. The same publications that brought Tyrann Mathieu to fame nearly destroyed his image. For Tyrann Mathieu, it was important to begin rebuilding his tarnished image as quickly as possible. Suggestions provided by Dorie Clark and Kwamie Agyemang are critical in his brand revitalization. As Mathieu prepares for the next stage in his career, the NFL, scouts will begin looking at his character. Mathieu must rebuild his brand with a more positive image in order to sell himself as a changed man. With the NFL draft quickly approaching, Mathieu has taken some steps in order to rebuild his image, but the work is not complete. Mathieu should begin speaking to high school football recruits around the country about marijuana use and its effect on athletes. In doing so, Mathieu would not only admit his mistakes, but would be providing a public service by sharing his experiences and offering advice to the youth who may be facing similar situations. Under Armour and the United States Army both hold nationally televised high school football all-star games. These would be great platforms for Mathieu to offer his services. Additionally, Tyrann Mathieu needs to make a big impact in the NFL in order to show that he still has what it takes. He will be entering the 2013 NFL draft after sitting out for an entire season. Returning to what made Mathieu famous in the first place is his best hope at truly revitalizing his tarnished image. Additionally, it would be beneficial for Tyrann Mathieu to find a brand to endorse that the consumer would find believable. He should look to promote a brand like Under Armour that strives on promotions from elite athletes. He should, simultaneously, begin promoting an established anti-drug or drug awareness foundation.

In order to fully examine Tyrann Mathieu's value to Louisiana State University, further research must be conducted. This project offered several variables and limitations that

limited the results of my work. Further research should continue in re-examining each game individually. The new examinations should separate each game by quarter and note the score at the end of each quarter. I advise that further research take into account the total number of defensive plays and how many of them Tyrann Mathieu was on the field for. One of the greatest factors in limiting results in this project was the course of the game itself. By taking into other variables into account throughout the game, we may begin to see where Mathieu did or did not reach his full potential. Additionally, replays should be counted separately so that a comparison could be made against live camera views. Replays featuring Mathieu were more prevalent in games that he had a major impact on, thus increasing his value. Future research should also consider given a high value to replays over live camera views because replays are often slowed down, allowing individual players to be the focus of the broadcasts.

Future research must go beyond in-game, national television broadcasts. As one of the five finalists for the Heisman Trophy in 2011, Mathieu had the opportunity to participate in the annual ceremony in New York City. The ceremony is broadcast by ESPN, to a national audience and features segments of interviews and highlights of each nominee. While my research did not consider this event, I believe that its impact would be significant when considering his exposure value.

Furthermore, future research must consider print and Internet media to fully quantify Tyrann Mathieu's exposure value. Newspapers, magazine and other forms of printed media should be considered on both the local and national scale. Mathieu had been featured on the cover of national publications with enormous circulations while wearing the LSU

purple and gold. In addition, countless Internet articles featured him along with wearing his LSU uniform, again donning the purple and gold. Just recently, Texas A&M University partnered with Joyce Julius to assess the value of their Heisman winning quarterback, Johnny Manziel. Their research examined all of the aforementioned media and found that Manziel generated \$37 million in revenue for Texas A&M University in 2012. In an age of deficits amongst collegiate athletic programs and decreased funding, individual players who generate such a substantial amount of revenue should be valued at a higher priority. Their impact is far too meaningful for athletics programs and university's alike to overlook. Universities should partner with their athletic departments to maximize a positive exposure for all stakeholders involved, which would be mutually beneficial.

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## VITA

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