The Digital Formations series is part of the Peter Lang Media and Communication list. Every volume is peer reviewed and meets the highest quality standards for content and production.
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Twitter and Sports
Football Fandom in Emerging and Established Markets

Twitter and other social media have become increasingly important tools for maintaining the relationships between fans and their idols across a range of activities, from politics and the arts to celebrity and sports culture. Twitter, Inc. itself has initiated several strategic approaches, especially to entertainment and sporting organisations; late in 2012, for example, a Twitter, Inc. delegation toured Australia in order to develop formal relationships with a number of key sporting bodies covering popular sports such as Australian Rules Football, A-League football (soccer), and V8 touring car racing, as well as to strengthen its connections with key Australian broadcasters and news organisations (Jackson & Christensen, 2012). Similarly, there has been a concerted effort between Twitter Germany and the German Bundesliga clubs and football association to coor-
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dinate the presence of German football on Twitter ahead of the 2012–2013 season: the Twitter accounts of almost all first-division teams now bear the official Twitter verification mark, and a system of ‘official’ hashtags for tweeting about individual games (combining the abbreviations of the two teams, e.g. #H96FCB) has also been instituted (Twitter auf Deutsch, 2012).

Such attempts to formalise, professionalise, and commercialise Twitter-based activities around certain sports are aimed, in the first place, at enticing sportspeople, clubs, and sporting bodies to participate in the platform more actively, from Twitter, Inc.’s perspective presumably in the hope that this will also serve to attract a greater number of fans to sign on to Twitter. As in the examples above, however, they often come well after committed fans have already discovered the platform for themselves, and have developed their own presences, conventions (such as hashtags), and dedicated accounts (in tribute to clubs and sportspeople). This may place clubs and fans, professionals and their followers, on a collision course. In turn, this both mirrors the conflicts between professional sports and traditional fandom which have already played out in a variety of other contexts (e.g., over TV broadcasting arrangements) over past decades; and the conflict between Twitter and its users which has arisen several times as Twitter has sought to formalise user-created conventions for using the platform (such as hashtags or retweets) in its further development of the underlying technology (cf. Halavais, Chapter 3 in this volume).

This chapter examines how these tensions between professional sporting bodies and their fans play out on Twitter in the context of three national football leagues at various stages of their development. Football (soccer) has grown into an enormous market: in 2009–2010, English Premier League (EPL) clubs generated nearly £2.7 billion in collective revenue; German Bundesliga clubs reached about €1.6 billion; and the entire European football market grew to €16.3 billion (Deloitte, 2011). Football clubs may now consider the Internet as a marketing tool much as other companies do (Kriemadis, Terzoudis, & Kartakoulis, 2010; McCarthy, Pioch, Rowley, & Ashworth, 2011), and Twitter now plays a part in the marketing mix.

But at the same time, sports fans, with their particular culture of fandom, cannot be compared with the customers of ‘normal’ brands; German football fans, for example, take a rebellious and subversive stance towards the commercialisation of ‘their’ teams (Merkel, 2012). Only recently has research examined how football fans make use of different online channels, for example to establish social identity (Gibbons & Dixon, 2010) and communities (Krovel, 2012), to create “a virtual stage for their subcultural practice and performance” (Merkel,
Twitter research has mainly studied sports tweets for the purpose of developing automatic techniques for event or named entity recognition (Choudhury & Breslin, 2011; Nichols, Mahmud, & Drews, 2012)—but has not yet provided many insights into the relationship between clubs and their fans. A closer examination of the interactions between fans and clubs on Twitter is necessary to both identify the opportunities for sports marketing on Twitter, and to stake out the limits which apply to the marketisation and commercialisation of voluntary fan activities on the platform. Observations from this research may also be transferable to other areas in which Twitter’s attempts to commercialise its services come into conflict with its users’ interests, as well as to sports marketing initiatives across other media channels.

This chapter examines the interactions between first-division football clubs and their fans in Australia, Germany, and England. We tracked fan interactions with the official accounts of the teams participating in the EPL, Germany’s 1. Bundesliga, and the Australian A-League throughout the 2011–2012 seasons of each competition by capturing the tweets from and to (in the form of @replies or retweets) these accounts. Indeed, the process of identifying the accounts themselves already revealed significant differences in how the various leagues and individual clubs approached Twitter as a medium for communicating with their fans, and how well different clubs have established their Twitter presence. This comparative analysis provides a rich perspective on the different approaches to Twitter use in football fandom which are evident across such diverse markets.

Both the EPL and the Bundesliga are extremely well-established football leagues, but have different levels of global prominence. The EPL, featuring many of the best players from around the world, attracts a significant international following. The Bundesliga is also well-known and successful on an international level, but remains focused more strongly on its domestic market, building on a very loyal local fan base. The Australian A-League, in contrast, sits very much towards the other end of the spectrum. Having only started in 2005–2006, it is still an emerging competition, and a fledgling football market, with the long-term viability of several lower-placed teams in the league remaining doubtful. In just seven seasons of the league (to 2012), three club franchises have folded. That said, its fan base is growing, especially amongst young fans and their parents, as it is seen as a less violent form of sport than the other football codes (Rugby Union, Rugby League, and Australian Rules Football) played in Australia, and its popularity has been boosted by the national team’s qualification for successive World Cups in 2006 and 2010. 
Such differences in the domestic and international outlook, from precarious existence to international dominance, also result in significantly different motivations for using Twitter as a means to reach out to and engage with football fans (while the fans may also have different motivations for using Twitter for sports-related communication). These differences, in turn, emerge clearly in the patterns of Twitter use which we trace here. Overall, we find that A-League clubs generally manage to enlist their fans in promoting the code by increasing its visibility on Twitter; that Bundesliga teams have taken a slower and less consistent approach to Twitter to date, sometimes clashing directly with already established fan conventions for using Twitter; and that activities around EPL clubs diverge considerably depending on the relative domestic and international standing of individual teams.

**FOOTBALL CLUBS ON TWITTER**

We begin by tracing the evolution of the different clubs’ presences on Twitter during the 2011–2012 season, starting with the most recent of the three leagues, the Australian A-League. At the beginning of the season, in mid-2011, all ten A-League clubs had established their official Twitter accounts; one club, Adelaide United, changed its Twitter handle from @AUFC_Official to @adelutd_fc during the season. By the end of June, these accounts had managed to attract between 650 (for the regional club Newcastle Jets) and 4,800 (for the metropolitan Melbourne Victory) followers; over the course of the season, such follower figures more than doubled for most of the clubs concerned (Figure 20.1).

Perhaps helping to boost the visibility of these official club accounts—and, of course, the visibility of the league as a whole—Football Federation Australia (FFA, the sport’s governing body) officially designated match-specific hashtags for the 2011–2012 season. This allows fans to more easily find and follow online conversations regarding matches, and to follow real-time updates if access to the pay-TV matchday broadcasts is unavailable. This initiative by the FFA can also be seen as a trial run for a similar framework introduced in Germany in the following year, as discussed above.

The situation in the two European leagues is noticeably more complicated. In the Bundesliga, Twitter accounts for a substantial number of clubs had already been established, but it remained difficult to ascertain whether these accounts were officially sanctioned by the clubs, or had been set up by individual fans or supporter groups. This was most notable for leading club Bayern München, whose @BayMuenchen account had been set up by the club’s PR
department, but sent only 39 tweets during the entire season, while a separate @fcbayern_news account actively tweeted news reports from the club’s official Website and YouTube channel, but did so without official sanction from the club. (An official @fcbayern account has been instituted ahead of the 2012–2013 season, replacing @BayMuenchen.) Similar patterns apply for a number of other clubs as well—half of the 18 first-division clubs in the Bundesliga created new Twitter accounts during the season, renamed existing accounts to more obvious handles, or even took over originally fan-created accounts; some fan accounts which used variations on an official club name as their handle were suspended by Twitter during the season, possibly at the behest of the club (the story of one such suspension is told, by the fan who had operated the @s04 account, in Nettooor, 2011).

This considerable flux in account names and approaches to tweeting about their activities points to the German clubs’ relatively late entry to Twitter (well after fans had already created their own infrastructure for tracking the latest Bundesliga news), and is in line with the generally comparatively slow adoption of Twitter in Germany (Meyer, 2012). It is only towards the end of the 2011–2012 season that the majority of clubs—with the exception of record Bundesliga title-holder Bayern München—had established an active presence on Twitter.
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In spite of the confusion which these changes in accounts and account names will have caused over the course of the 2011–2012 season, the follower numbers for the accounts of Bundesliga clubs also grew during this time, as Figure 20.2 shows. Given their considerably greater domestic fan base and international exposure, at least for the leading Bundesliga clubs these numbers are substantially larger than those for A-League clubs, of course.

Finally, the situation for EPL clubs appears somewhat more stable than that for Bundesliga teams. Here, too, some further adjustments to the Twitter presence of various clubs are evident, but most clubs had already set up official accounts (if not necessarily ‘verified by Twitter’) by the start of the 2011–2012 season; indeed, many accounts contain the term official in the account name—as in @OfficialQPR or @SpursOfficial. The most significant absence from the EPL Twitter line-up, however, is that of one of its most prominent teams: Manchester United. An @MUFootballClub account has existed on Twitter since July 2011, and claims in its profile description that it is “The official Twitter page of Manchester United Football Club”, but—at the time of writing—has yet to send a single tweet to its 13,000 followers. As with Bayern München, this absence of an official account provides a space for fan-generated alternatives to establish themselves; in the case of Manchester United, for example, a

Figure 20.2: Follower Numbers of Bundesliga Clubs during Season 2011–2012.
* @HerthaBSC and @RoteTeufel Were Only Tracked from February 2012
Figure 20.3: Follower Numbers of Top 5 English Premier League Clubs during Season 2011–2012

Figure 20.4: Follower Numbers of English Premier League Clubs (Top 5 Clubs Excluded) during Season 2011–2012
@manutd_fc account has sent over 6,000 tweets and has attracted over 180,000 followers, but appears simply to automatically tweet relevant headlines from the Arabic section of the manutd.com website.

This lack of Twitter presence is surprising for one of the biggest brands in world sports, and curiously mirrors the absence of the leading German club, Bayern München. On Twitter, three of the top five most-followed EPL players are current or former Manchester United players (Twitter UK Blog, 2012), indicating that there is no lack of public interest. At the same time, Manchester United players have been involved in scandals over injudicious tweets, and manager Sir Alex Ferguson has been quoted as saying “Twitter; I do not understand it . . . I don't know why anybody can be bothered with it” (Ladyman, 2012). Perhaps this explains the club’s social media reluctance.

Follower patterns for EPL clubs also point to an even greater bifurcation in fan attention between the leading teams and the rest of the league than was already visible for the Bundesliga clubs in Figure 20.2. Consequently, we have split our graph of follower numbers into two figures. Figure 20.3 shows the top five clubs; Figure 20.4 covers the remaining EPL clubs, to facilitate comparison with the Bundesliga follower numbers. Overall, EPL clubs enjoy the largest, and still rapidly growing, Twitter audience of the three leagues. This clearly is a function of the status of the EPL as a globally marketed and broadcast league. But mirroring criticisms about the level of competition in the league itself (only five teams have won the premiership in 21 years of competition, with Manchester United winning 13 times), follower numbers are similarly dominated by three of the traditional 'Big 4': Arsenal, Liverpool, and Chelsea, with Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur the only other genuine competitors.

This divergence in the three leagues’ online presences is in keeping with the different contexts in which they operate. In their need to become competitive against the three other, more widely televised ‘football’ codes in a country with a strong Twitter adoption rate (ABC News, 2010), it makes sense for A-League clubs to have been early adopters on Twitter; through their efforts, they appear to have successfully engaged and enlisted fans in the campaign to build a sustainable base for football in Australia. Both sides are interested in growing the code, and both sides are—for now—pushing in the same direction.

The German Bundesliga, on the other hand, is a well-established competition that is widely broadcast on free-to-air and pay-TV, while Twitter adoption in Germany remains comparatively low (Meyer, 2012) and clubs have been slow to explore this space as a further channel for sports communication. Here, enterprising fans were left to create their own fan spaces on the platform, which
now conflict, to some extent, with a more coordinated, professional approach to Twitter. Attracting official club accounts may be seen by Twitter, Inc. as a useful marketing tool, but as with other top-down Twitter initiatives, such formalisation has the potential to break more organically grown, user-initiated structures (cf. Halavais, Chapter 3 in this volume).

The EPL, finally, presents a more complicated picture, as it constitutes—more so than the Bundesliga or A-League—an intersection of domestic and international interests. For the handful of clubs which have a major worldwide following, Twitter provides a useful channel to connect with these international fans, whose domestic media may not cover the EPL in detail. For the rest of the league, their communicative orientation is more akin to their Bundesliga counterparts, except that the English clubs’ Twitter presences are already well-established, without overriding grown fan ecosystems.

**APPROACHES TO FAN INTERACTION**

In addition to such broad distinctions across the three leagues, more specific differences in how accounts are maintained in day-to-day club activity and interaction with fans also provide important insights into how the various clubs position their Twitter accounts within the context of their overall public relations efforts. Of particular interest in this context is whether clubs restrict themselves simply to posting the latest news and information (especially in the form of URLs pointing to further information), or whether they also directly @reply to comments and questions from their followers, and even retweet other users’ messages.

Figure 20.5 shows these patterns for the clubs which participated in the 2011–2012 A-League season (however, @adelutd_fc was only created in October 2011). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the accounts belonging to 2011 and 2012 champions Brisbane Roar, and 2011 and 2012 runners-up Central Coast Mariners and Perth Glory were especially active over the course of the season; major metropolitan clubs Sydney FC and Melbourne Heart also posted well above 2,000 tweets over this time frame. Notably, however, there are also substantial differences in tweeting styles: while the three most active clubs largely posted original tweets, some fifty per cent of the tweets by @MelbourneHeart and @PerthGloryFC consisted of @replies to or retweets of other Twitter users. This can be seen as a conscious attempt to generate and maintain a Twitter ‘buzz’ around these accounts, thereby positioning fans as part of an ‘inner circle’ connecting them to other fans, and encouraging them to attend live matches or otherwise continue
to support the club (additional, in-depth analysis of tweets can reveal which messages generated the greatest levels of club and/or fan engagement). Overall, however, with the exception of the newly-created Adelaide United account and the @GoGCU account of the financially troubled Gold Coast United, A-League tweeting styles are relatively uniform across all clubs.

The situation in the German Bundesliga is considerably more complex. Figure 20.6 provides an overview of the major club accounts both before and after the various changes during the season: it includes multiple accounts for several teams, due to the various account suspensions and renamings, as well as the general confusion over their status as ‘official’.

Overall, Bundesliga clubs used Twitter considerably less than their Australian counterparts: while most Australian clubs came close to posting at least 1,500 tweets over the course of the season, the majority of Bundesliga clubs failed to reach even 1,000 tweets, even if tweets posted from various alternative accounts are combined. In total, for example, the two accounts of 2011 and 2012 champions Borussia Dortmund (@BVBDeutsch and @BVB) still posted fewer than 600 tweets throughout the season—less than one fifth of the more than 3,000 tweets posted by their Australian counterparts Brisbane Roar. Additionally, the vast majority of the tweets posted by German club accounts were original tweets—the clubs used Twitter almost exclusively as a means to disseminate information, not to engage with fans through @replies or even to retweet their messages. For many clubs, Twitter is not a ‘social’ platform at all, as the vast

![Figure 20.5: A-League Clubs' Tweeting Styles](image-url)
majority of their tweets contained URLs—another sign of their focus on purely top-down information dissemination.

The major exception to this rule is the @fckoeln account of FC Köln. Though still largely focussed on original tweets, Köln did respond to (and even retweet) its fans more often than any other Bundesliga club, and it participated on Twitter at a rate which far surpassed any other team in the Bundesliga or A-League. It also instituted special Twitter activities: for example, @fckoeln hosted interview sessions with club officials on Twitter. Using the hashtag #fragfc (“ask FC”), fans could talk to manager Stale Solbakken, for instance, with responses posted through the @fckoeln account. Later in the season, @fckoeln also published real-time updates during matches. Such activity may be in keeping with FC Köln’s struggle to remain in the first division, as an attempt to maintain the loyalty of the fan base and ensure their turnout in the stadium; it may also simply reflect a very different understanding of Twitter as a medium for sports communication.

Finally, Twitter activity patterns in the English Premier League vary considerably across clubs (Figure 20.7); at some 3,000 tweets over the course of the season, the average level of Twitter activity exceeds that of A-League clubs (around 2,000 tweets), however, and several clubs managed well over 4,000 tweets during the season. Notably, as with Köln in the Bundesliga, the most active on Twitter are generally not amongst the leading EPL clubs: with the exception of eventual Premiers Manchester City (@MCFC), teams such as @NorwichCityFC, Sunderland (@SAFCofficial), and Wolverhampton (@OfficialWolves) performed
comparatively poorly during the season, with Wolverhampton suffering relegation. In the EPL as in the Bundesliga, then, eventually relegated teams proved most active on Twitter, while in the A-League, the 2011–2012 champions led the Twitter activity table.

Overall, however, in their tweeting styles EPL clubs resemble Bundesliga more than A-League clubs, as far as their interactions with fans are concerned: while there are some notable exceptions—by far the largest component of Wolverhampton’s tweets are @replies—the majority of EPL clubs’ tweets are original tweets, followed by retweets. Again, a substantial number of tweets also contain URLs, pointing to a communicative preference for information dissemination rather than fan engagement.

**FAN RESPONSES**

Such attempts by the clubs to reach out to their fans and followers tell only one side of the story, of course: fan reactions to the clubs’ Twitter activities must also be considered—indeed, a three-way relationship between the size of established fan bases, sporting performance on the field, and (social) media performance by the club is likely to determine club-fan interactions on Twitter. For the A-League, it is evident that the number of @mentions of the clubs’ accounts, and the number of retweets of the clubs’ messages, do not match these accounts’
activities particularly closely (Figure 20.8): while the @brisbaneroar account of the repeat champions leads both rankings, and other highly active accounts (@SydneyFC and @MelbourneHeart) also received a substantial amount of fan attention, the highly active @CCMariners account of 2011 championship runners-up Central Coast Mariners does not generate the level of fan responses which would be expected; by contrast, the far more limited activity of Melbourne Victory’s @gomvfc account is sufficient to propel the club into second place in the fan activity rankings.

It is notable in this context that the accounts receiving the most @mentions and retweets in Australia are those of the clubs based in Australia’s three major metropoles: Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. By contrast, the accounts of regional clubs such as Central Coast Mariners (based in Gosford, north of Sydney), Newcastle Jets, and even of clubs based in smaller state capitals, such as Adelaide United and Perth Glory FC, receive comparatively less fan interaction—even where, in the case of @CCMariners or @PerthGloryFC, the clubs played in A-League Grand Finals in 2011 and 2012, respectively. What audience interaction patterns seem to indicate, then, is a mixture of the relative success of the clubs during the year (2011/12 champions Brisbane Roar still lead, despite the fact that Brisbane is the smallest of the three major metropoles in Australia), and of general (Twitter) demographics in the country.

Additionally, it is evident that audience interaction with the accounts is mainly through @mentions rather than through retweets of the accounts’
messages. This points strongly to the fact that there is a substantial amount of fan activity around the clubs on Twitter (@brisbaneroar received some 28,600 @mentions and retweets over the course of the season), into which fans attempt to include the official club account by mentioning it, but that the clubs’ official Twitter activities themselves—their own tweets—are not yet central to such expressions of fandom.

The situation in the Bundesliga is considerably different once again. Here, the majority of clubs struggled to reach more than 1,000 @mentions and retweets during the season—well below even the least visible A-League accounts (Figure 20.9). Only a handful of clubs stand out significantly from the rest, and also receive a notable amount of retweets. This is remarkable for the @BVB and @s04 accounts, which were only set up during the season itself, while @fckoeln’s highly active outreach efforts explain its placing. Indeed, Dortmund’s less memorable Twitter handle @BVB Dortmund09 received some 3,000 @mentions and retweets, while the switch to the more straightforward @BVB in December saw that number increase by a factor of five. Similarly, Schalke 04’s embrace of @s04, and the suspension of the @FCSchalke04 fan account, also appear to have focussed fan energy on the official account. By contrast, the unofficial and eventually suspended @BayerLeverkusen account generated almost as much fan engagement as the official, unintuitively named @bayer04fussball account—memorable Twitter handles and active use of club accounts clearly mattered in Germany.
Overall, however, the lack of mentions for the vast majority of club accounts points to the conclusion that fan activity around football clubs in Germany does not, in the main, happen on Twitter so far (especially if compared to the massive fan interest as expressed in audience turnouts, fan club activities, and media coverage); it remains to be seen whether Twitter Germany’s campaign to get clubs tweeting during the 2012–2013 season can change this situation.

Fan interactions with English Premier League clubs, finally, reflect the much broader audience for this competition, but also a very uneven distribution of attention (Figure 20.10). Here, the average number of mentions and retweets received by most club accounts is well above 30,000 over the course of the season, with several clubs surpassing that mark by a substantial margin: 2012 champions Manchester City (@MCFC), Liverpool (@LFC), Arsenal (@arsenal), and eventual 2012 UEFA Champions League winners Chelsea (@chelseafc) each attracted several hundred thousand tweets from fans—indeed, Chelsea received some 675,000 mentions and nearly 300,000 retweets during this time. As noted above, the obvious exception on this list of leading EPL clubs is Manchester United, which did not operate an official Twitter account; the two unofficial accounts for the club received just over 20,000 tweets.

The four leading EPL clubs on Twitter also received substantially more retweets than the minor clubs; this points to the existence of a two-tier structure within the English Premier League itself, reflecting a distinction between those EPL clubs which are globally recognised, and which regularly participate in major international competitions, and those whose focus remains mainly on the domestic league. While the minor teams’ domestic Twitter fan base still

![Figure 20.10: Responses to EPL Clubs’ Accounts (Vertical Axis Truncated at 300,000 Tweets for Readability)](image-url)
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exceeds that of comparable Bundesliga clubs by an order of magnitude—pointing again to the slower, more limited take-up of Twitter in Germany, as well as to potential language barriers between German accounts and international fans—it necessarily pales against the substantial international following which successful clubs such as Chelsea or Manchester City have attracted.

CONCLUSION: TWITTER AND SPORTS FANDOM

The comparison between the three national contexts is telling, and demonstrates how a range of factors influence the ways Twitter is used to engage with fans. In Australia, Twitter has been used in a concerted manner, with many levels of the sport attempting quite overtly to leverage the social network’s possibilities for the promotion of the A-League to a larger audience. This is driven by necessity, as the sport works to establish itself in a marketplace already crowded with other ‘football’ codes. The long-term stability (and financial viability) of the A-League depends on effective marketing; engaging with fans on Twitter is just one component of that effort. That outreach effort, however, has been successful: fan mentions of A-League clubs’ accounts substantially surpass those of most Bundesliga clubs, and (per capita of the population) even compare well against those EPL clubs which compete mainly at a domestic level.

The situation in the European leagues—where clubs (and the leagues themselves) have existed for several decades and have managed to build support for generations, and where this code of football is the most popular form of sport by some margin—is quite different. English Premier League clubs divide into two categories: internationally recognised brands, whose visibility on Twitter is assured by the substantial activities of a global fan base; and domestic-grade teams, whose Twitter accounts speak mainly to a more localised fan base. Here, active outreach via Twitter can make a difference: much like @fckoeln in the Bundesliga, Wolverhampton, the most active Twitter user in the EPL, also received the second most @mentions of all the clubs within this second tier of EPL teams, even in spite of its poor sporting performance. Overall, however, it is likely that for the EPL clubs, the platform is only one part of a wider marketing mix: an addition to mainstream activities, but far from central to their efforts.

Finally, in Germany, the 2011–2012 season saw a relatively sluggish and seemingly ad hoc use of Twitter: at best, most clubs made some exploratory steps into the social media arena. With many clubs using the service merely in a broadcast mode, their interest in using Twitter as a new avenue for fan interaction was clearly limited during the season. Here, then, it is Twitter, Inc.
Twitter and Sports

itself which appears most interested in expanding the clubs’ presence on the platform, as part of its efforts to gain a stronger foothold in the German social media market; the success of its Bundesliga promotions during the 2012–2013 season remains to be seen.

It is worth emphasising that our analysis in this chapter clearly represents a sports marketing perspective. Even where the clubs themselves do little to encourage tweeting about football, it is likely that there will still be considerable fan activity on Twitter around clubs, players, competitions, and matches (for EPL and Bundesliga especially also involving international audiences). Such wider sports fandom may be studied most effectively by tracing activities around the keywords and hashtags associated with major competitions (e.g., #Brazil2014), players (e.g., Rooney, Robben), or clubs (e.g., Manchester United, Bayern München), rather than by assessing the performance of the official Twitter accounts of the clubs. What the present chapter illuminates, then, are the specific activities of, and fan responses to, the clubs’ official accounts on Twitter. The considerably more complex story of how domestic and global football fandom unfolds in more general terms, and of how such fandom intersects with the sports marketing efforts of clubs, leagues, and Twitter, Inc. itself, has yet to be told.

REFERENCES


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