Grayson Allen
Image Repair Tactics

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores Duke basketball player Grayson Allen's attempts to repair his image after he allegedly tripped several opposing players in 2016. After each incident, Grayson was berated by the media and the public. This study analyzes his efforts to rebuild his reputation and win back fans through the strategies of bolstering, mortification, minimization and corrective action.

INTRODUCTION

Grayson Allen gained national attention when he led Duke to win the 2015 NCAA National Championship. The next year he was selected as the preseason ACC Player of the Year. But on Feb. 8, 2016, in a game against Louisville University, Allen's reputation went into question when he allegedly tripped an opposing player. Then, on Feb. 26, Allen tripped Xavier Rathan-Mayes of Florida State University. The media covered the story extensively and Allen became a heavily disliked player in college basketball. He apologized in a video with ESPN and promised he had matured. But then, after several months had passed, in a game against Elon University on Dec. 21, Allen tripped a third player, destroying his already fragile image.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1. How did the media's portrayal of Grayson Allen change over the course of these incidents?

Q2. Did this portrayal impact the public's opinion of Allen?

Q3. What tactics did Allen use in his apology videos?

Q4. How did Allen use social media to repair his image after the crises?

METHODOLOGY

This study includes an analysis of both of Allen's attempts to repair his image. To demonstrate the change in media portrayal of Allen, ESPN and CBS Sports articles chronicling the incidents were analyzed. Then, tweets from general users were collected to show public opinion of Allen. The videos of Allen's apologies were then assessed based on his use of image repair tactics. Finally, 286 Twitter posts and 54 Instagram posts were reviewed to determine how Allen used his social media to bolster his reputation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our literature review includes previous studies on the image repair tactics of Lance Armstrong, Michael Phelps, Serena Williams, Terrell Owens, Michael Vick, Johnny Manziel, Reggie Bush, Brett Favre and Tom Brady. Each of these cases presents an analysis of the athlete's crisis and attempts at image restoration. The literature review provides a basis for understanding image repair theory in the context of athletics, which can then be applied to our study of Grayson Allen.

INITIAL FINDINGS

Grayson Allen's first attempt to repair his image utilized bolstering through his social media and mortification through traditional media in interviews with reporters. This might have been effective if he hadn't committed the same mistake for the third time, after just apologizing for his actions and assuring the public he had matured. Now, in addition to his earlier strategies that he has continued, Allen is attempting to minimize the situation by making fun of his mistakes and promising corrective action. The visible sincerity of his second apology has helped improve his reputation, but his repeated actions may have damaged it beyond repair.

IMAGE REPAIR TACTICS

	TACTIC	PLATFORM	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
PHASE 1&2	Bolstering	Social Media	Used Twitter and Instagram to improve reputation by focusing on his religious commitment, team loyalty and charitable outreach	Grayson @GraysonJAllen · 21 Dec 2016 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17 373 739 2.3K
	Mortification	Traditional	Gave apologies and took responsibility for actions after both the second and third incidents	Duke's Grayson Allen ready to get his reputation back
PHASE 2	Minimization	Apparel	Wore a "Don't Trip" hat to make light of his indiscretions, eliciting mixed responses from the public and media	
	Corrective Action	Traditional Media	Promised to try to be better after third incident	"I don't plan on doing it again, but I made another mistake, and I have to try to be better again just like I've tried to be better in past years"