11E Marta Mack-Washington, University of Kentucky
“*When Twitter Fingers Come Home to Roost: Ayesha Curry and Misogynoir in Sport*”

In the final moments of Game 6 of the 2016 NBA Finals, Ayesha Curry, wife of Golden State Warrior Steph Curry, tweeted a disparaging comment about the officiating. ESPN Sports Commentator, Stephen A. Smith responded to Curry’s tweet by cautioning her to “watch herself” before placing her husband in a compromising situation. Smith’s initial and subsequent comments about Curry’s tweets are indicative of discourses that intersect and perpetuate the politics of Black respectability and how Black women experience anti-blackness through misogynoir in sport. Using a Black Feminist theoretical lens -- specifically, for how it theorizes the suppression of Black women’s voices by controlling their images — this paper critiques Smith’s comments for the ways that he mobilizes patriarchal ideologies through misogynoir, and Black respectability to police the boundaries of black femininity and womanhood. The analysis also relies on insights taken from Afro-Pessimism; particularly, for how it elucidates Black women’s habitual relegation to the realm of the unthought (Wilderson & Hartman, 2003). Taken together, Afro-Pessimism and Black Feminist Thought offer ways of speaking about why Black women have been unable to speak from their unique subject positions without fear of retaliation.

11E Daniel (Yu-Kuei) Sun, Towson University
“*Negotiating Gender, Environmentalism, and National Pride: Yani Tseng, Golf, and Taiwanese Nationalism*”

The 2011 Sunrise LPGA Taiwan Championship, held in Taoyuan, Taiwan, was a significant event for many Taiwanese. It was not only Taiwan’s first LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) tournament, but it also featured many high-profile women golfers in the world, including the top-ranked Yani Tseng. Tseng, a Taiwanese and already a household name in the country, did not disappoint her home crowd. She dominated the course and won her seventh LPGA championship of the year, reaffirming her status as a “light of Taiwan.” This paper examines the cultural meanings revolving around Tseng before, during, and after this 2011 LPGA tournament. I argue the national hype over this tournament and Tseng not only illustrated LPGA’s hegemonic status as a powerful global sporting agency, but it also articulated a number of issues such as national identity, gender, sexuality, class, and environmentalism in this specific context. While the celebration of Tseng was another obvious testament to Taiwanese nationalism, her identity as a woman golfer would require further discursive negotiation to conform to the typical “light of Taiwan” narrative. Furthermore, the nationalistic celebration of Tseng overshadowed the environmental issues related to golf as it successfully erased golf’s tainted image in Taiwan.

11E Nikolas Dickerson, University of Lincoln, UK
“*Unicorns, Booty, and Trombones: The New Day and the Re-articulation of Black Masculinity within Professional Wrestling*”

According to Roland Barthes (1957), the job of the wrestler is not to win, but instead it is expected that the wrestler will perform the gestures expected of them. In a world, where morality is supposed to be carried out in the ring there are heroes and villains. Every wrestler knows their part and carries out this act through their in and out of ring performances. Within the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) industry, racial minorities have occupied the role of both hero and villain. However, when it comes to the racial
image of their character, many racial minorities are pushed to play characters that are caricatures of their racial identity, such as the voodoo priest Papa Shango or the black supremacist Kama Mustafa. This presentation will trace the genealogy, of the racial performance, of black male wrestlers in order to make sense of the contemporary African American trio, the New Day. This presentation will use the theoretical concept of signifying to argue, that the in and out of ring performances of the New Day work to rearticulate new meanings of heterosexual black masculinity within the world of professional wrestling.

11E Nancy E. Spencer, Bowling Green State University
“Critiquing the ‘Coattails Theory’ in Professional Women’s Tennis”

Since 2001, Indian Wells was associated with a racist incident involving Venus and Serena Williams (Douglas, 2005; Spencer, 2004, 2010). As a result, the Williams’ sisters boycotted the tournament until 2015 when Serena returned. After witnessing a positive reception for her sister, Venus returned to Indian Wells in 2016. That should have brought closure to an ugly chapter about racism in women’s tennis. Instead, Tournament Director/CEO Raymond Moore suggested that the women were ‘riding the coattails’ of the men’s tour and that the ‘lady players’ should go down on their knees every day to thank God that Roger (Federer) and Rafa (Nadal) were carrying the tour (Gibbs, 2016). Though some tennis commentators and former players responded swiftly to Moore’s sexist remarks, silence from the governing body of men’s tennis (ATP) and comments by No. 1 male Novak Djokovic revealed that sexism and racism continue to plague women’s tennis. This paper employs intersectionality (Collins, 1990, 2015) to explore the discourses surrounding Moore’s comments and how they reveal sexism and racism in professional women’s tennis. In keeping with the theme of this conference, I ask how my/our work can engage publicly with such blatant evidence of sexism and racism.