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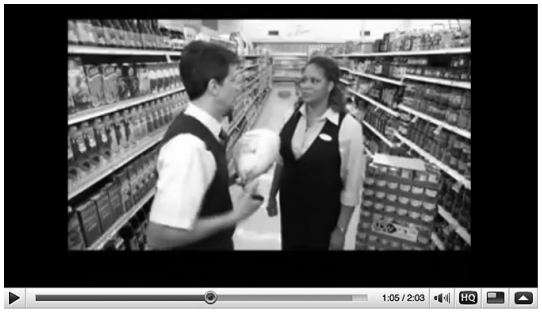
Markus Stauff

Sports on YouTube

While sports is an important topic on YouTube, it seems to be one among many others. The procedures of uploading and accessing videos lead to a heterogeneous agglomeration of topics and styles. Clicking and commenting relate and rank videos in ways that don't adhere to strict classifications of genres. "Sports" is one of fifteen default "categories" of YouTube, and although there are even some channels specializing in sports, they are not remotely as prominent as sports channels are on television (this applies to "most subscribed" as well as to "most viewed"). Videos that depict sports in one way or the other show all the typical forms and variations of other topics on YouTube and are linked to clips that don't deal with sports but show related emotions, gimmicks, ideologies or visual pleasures. Of course, there are innumerable clips that focus on the "sexy" (mostly female) bodies of athletes.[1] If such a clip is selected, the "Related Videos" overview lists videos of sports competitions (without focusing on "sexiness") and videos of "sexy bodies" (unrelated to sports). There are thousands of clips that show funny and bizarre examples of sporting life, from programs featuring bowling with a frozen turkey to "Funny Sports Bloopers" that show mishaps during actual sport competitions—be it amateur tennis or professional ice skating.[3] And there are also numbers of appropriations that change the meaning of professional sports footage through re-editing, image processing or comments.

The often mentioned features of YouTube, for example the de- and recontextualization of short clips, the individual appropriation, the coexistence of professional and amateur footage, and the attention seeking through "fun" and "sex" affect the depiction of sports as that of any other topic. This raises two interrelated and quite simple questions. If we look at other media—press, film, radio, television—sports has always been (in economic and aesthetic terms) an especially important topic for the development of these media, while the respective specifications of the different media shaped sports at the same time. In this article I want to discuss if and how sports—despite the described

indifference of YouTube—uses or accentuates features or aspects of YouTube that other topics don't. Complimentarily, I want to ask how the procedures of YouTube contribute to the public image of and communications about sports. The underlying assumption is that because of the historically well-established sports-media complex, the research of sport representations in a particular medium (and especially a "new" one like YouTube) can contribute to our understanding of the specificities of this medium as they relate to the specific representational features of sports in general.



35 "Turkey Bowling": Practicing sports in inappropriate surroundings

Sports is not understood here as a topic, but rather as a field of knowledge and communication that follows specific rules. My main argument is that the established modes and procedures in "media sports" are still retraceable on YouTube (and contribute some of their dynamics to it), but that the dynamics of YouTube somehow subvert the main procedures of media sports. Thus, sports on YouTube is in some aspects tied to other media but in others detached. Insofar as it is detached from other media content and defined dominantly by YouTube's own procedures and practices, sports becomes, interestingly enough, less and less sports—at least in a more narrow sense that will be elaborated upon below.

Media Sports: Comparison and Knowledge Production

In traditional mass media, sports has become one of the most common topics; sports is integrated into news (more systematically than other arrays of popular culture) and quiz and talk shows, and is a recurrent theme in fictional productions as well. References to sports come in any format and thus in any aesthetic mode the media has at its disposal. Nevertheless, there seems to be not only a specific and outstanding array for sports in many media, but also a very specific function of sports in the historical development of mass media. Newspapers and magazines have had sports pages since the end of the 19th century; radio and television have regular sports programs in addition to special live events. These special arrays of media sports have a significant look—be it the photographs of bodies in motion, the accumulation of statistics or the mix of slow-motion replay with graphic inserts—thus highlighting specific aspects of the media.[3]

It would be an exaggeration to say that sports has always been a decisive factor when establishing a new medium. Yet, it was regularly an early topic—for film, radio as well as television.[4] Sports, no doubt, contributed to formal and technical innovations and also to a kind of (self-)reflection of media. The reason for that is not only the sheer quantitative importance of sports in popular culture (and thus its relevance as a tool of attention economy), but also the specific structures of perception and modes of knowledge that are established by sports. Here, it becomes important to have a clear definition of what sports is. In common language, fitness culture, hiking with friends, and climbing a mountain on your own may all be called sports—and there are of course YouTube clips on all these activities listed under the heading or keyword "sports." Still, these heterogeneous activities don't provoke special treatment by the media or special formats and technological solutions. Only a more narrowly defined notion of sports, i.e. as organized, rule-guided, repeated competition, produces a significant form of media display, thus becoming an incentive for defining, reflecting and developing media further. This is not to say that hiking, aerobics or going swimming with some friends shouldn't count as sports; still, when researching the significance of media sports, making distinctions remains important. The way the word "sports" is used in contemporary society (especially since it has also become a major metaphor for talking about politics,

business and so on), somehow distracts from the fact that the kind of sports that was constituted by modern mass media as a particular (if also heterogeneous) field is not just another form of entertainment, but implies a specific use of media.

Such a distinction and insight into the specific conjunction of media and sports can be further clarified by looking at sports' origination and development in the 19th century. Tobias Werron argues that modern competitive sports is constituted by the public comparison of performances and thus is, from its beginning, a media sport.[5] The decisive difference between modern sports and older forms of games, of ritualistic competitions, of occasional or spontaneous contests lies in the very existence of a broad media audience beyond the audience in the stadium. It is this public communication about sports that leads to the integration of the single contest into a continuous comparison of performances, a significant trait of contemporary media sports. This originated in the second half of the 19th century, when the combination of telegraphy and mass-circulation newspapers not only provided reports on individual competitions and their results, but also related—on one page, in one table, in one article—competitions from different times and places to each other. The continuous flow of similar contests organized by the newly established leagues and the constant coverage of events are obviously dependent on one another. It is well known that the second half of the 19th century saw a standardization of rules and playing grounds that is closely connected to the serialized and hierarchical organization of competitions. Both aspects—standardization as well as serialization—only make sense because "the telegraph-press-alliance opened up the horizon for the invention and testing of such institutions [as leagues, records, world championships] and, by doing so, first initiated the trend towards standardized rules and new modes of competition which has remained at the heart of the sport system."[6]

While the contingent course of the individual event is still an important source of sports' attraction, this attraction is itself defined by the relation to non-present performances and achievements. This doesn't refer solely to the results (where a win can be worth more or less depending on the result of distant games involving competitors), but also to the way the result is achieved. Because the competitions are separated, it becomes imperative to compare not only the bare

results, but also the circumstances of the achievements and parts and aspects of performances to which results can be ascribed. If you want to compare two teams that have not yet played each other, it is not sufficient to know their previous results; rather, it is important to know where the results came from (a coach training his or her team, or a fan discussing the future chances of his or her team). If, then, modern sports is constituted partly by the communication about and especially the comparison of performances, the visibility of the performance and the possibility of attributing the results to isolated components are of special importance. Here again, it is media that produce sports by providing "criteria of observation and evaluation such as statistics, records, historical narratives, legends, etc., thereby widening and refining the scope of comparison."[7] As is always the case with knowledge production, the media technologies that are used define the objects of knowledge. This means that the narrative and statistical sophistication decides "how complex, universal and global a competitive culture can possibly become by reflecting performances and evaluating them."[8] Media are thus constitutive for modern sports because they define what can be recognized as a relevant aspect of a performance and an achievement.

Without going into further detail, it can be argued that media sports became a distinctive format, genre or mode of representation not only because of its economic success, but also because of different aesthetic characteristics. As modern sports is constituted by media that relate the distinct performances and make them comparable in detailed ways, media sports became outstanding in its use of the most heterogenic procedures—from statistics and slow motion to biographical information and ethnic ascriptions—to make the athletic achievements transparent and comparable. Media sports is, hence, specific in the way knowledge has to be produced again and again: some event—a competition—is not merely shown but dissected into its particular elements. In contrast to history or science programs on television, the goal of knowledge production in sports is to enable audiences to form their own opinions. Contrary to the common idea that media sports has over time become sort of a spectacle—if not a complete simulation—sports is in fact marked by a highly referential aspect: it not only shows external happenings but uses all the available tools to find out something about them. Media sports can be characterized by its intense procedures

of knowledge production that combine specialized information (like medical, technical and tactical data) with popular and commonly accessible modes of knowledge (such as speculations on psychological or personal reasons for a given performance).[9]

Accessing the Events: YouTube as Secondary Medium

The question is, then, how YouTube inserts itself into this dynamic. How does YouTube, for instance, contribute to and transform the comparison of performances? How does this desire of media sports to compare performances make use of (and thus transform) YouTube? Two significant features of YouTube are of special interest here: first, its highly intermedial and remediating character, and second, its principles of relating and comparing different items. While sports is always constituted by a whole constellation of different (and quite heterogenic) media, YouTube (still) exists as a reworking and reconnecting of prior products of different media. Sports is constituted by mediated (but in a way systemized and standardized) modes of comparison, but YouTube functions more as a machine that relates items (and makes them comparable) in multiple and often unexpected ways.

Being part of the constellation of media sports, YouTube works above all as a secondary resource, making accessible what is defined as relevant by other media. More than any other topic, sports structures a regular and direct production of and access to YouTube clips, while YouTube provides sports with the possibility of revising its most important moments. On any given Monday, for example, the goals of most European football leagues are available up on YouTube.[10] They are easily accessible by their dates, the names of the teams and the players, and they are hierarchized and preselected by, for example, newspapers or Internet sports portals that hint at the most sensational scores. As a kind of archive, YouTube mixes different materials and modes of production: while some sports organizations, like the NBA, have their own channel on YouTube where they post highlight clips, others are not present at all. In such cases, users may upload television footage or their own recordings (from cellphone cameras for instance). While sports facilitates a direct access to material, it also makes evident the restrictions of YouTube, especially the removal of clips due to copyright

infringements. During the Beijing Olympics in 2008, all postings of regular television material were removed in the course of one or two days. However, users anticipated this procedure by posting clips referring to other Web pages where clips not allowed on YouTube could be found.[11] Even if YouTube does not work as a comprehensive archive for media sports, it is nevertheless structured according to a quasi-archival mode of access.

As a consequence, YouTube is secondary in the sense that other media determine the relevance of the happenings that are looked up on the site. It is live television broadcast that define the moment of importance. A significant portion of the material posted on YouTube is taken from television, often only slightly modified. Even for sports competitions that are not shown on television, other media mainly structure the access to YouTube clips. If a sports event is reported on in newspapers or in online forums, clips (of a competition which was not broadcasted) often get higher click ratings than otherwise. A recent European basketball game between Alba Berlin and KK Bosna Sarajevo serves as a case in point. There was no television broadcast of this game; however, it turned out to be not only the longest game ever played in European professional basketball — five overtimes — but also the one with the highest final score, 141 to 127. The game was, hence, reported in media that normally don't write anything about basketball, and as a consequence, the YouTube clip recorded by a fan received much more attention than the usual clips on European games.

As other features of sports on YouTube that will be dealt with below, the structure of the quasi-archival access is deeply dependent on the kind of sport, with occasionally completely different structuring of time, space and events as well as, of course, a completely different structure of copyright and availability — an aspect that cannot be elaborated on appropriately here.

Referentiality, Condensation and Reinterpretation

Sports periodically generates well-defined events that are objectively (in quantifiable terms) outstanding and present in all media. While different media depictions of sports are closely related, together they claim to refer to an external event. The highly referential mode of media

sports becomes especially noticeable in the fact that there are different broadcasts of one and the same event — often from different countries with commentary in different languages. As a result of the complicated and highly restrictive copyrights of sports broadcasts, users can at times only find scenes from some international competition in languages they don't understand. However, on YouTube the main focus is often the depicted performance. This means that grainy images can be important also, such as if they depict an outstanding performance worth watching even if only outlines of the athletes are recognizable.

The externally defined need or desire to see something very often contributes to an ongoing reflection on the way the media work. The quality of the images and the ways the television sportscasters make their comments is discussed very often. Of course, this problematic revolves around various copyright issues that also become especially apparent in the field of sports and are explicitly discussed by fans. Hence, user-generated clips that show a competition as a sequence of still photographs or as an animation using Playmobil or Lego figures are not only a funny or artistic appropriation of professional material,[12] they are also reminders of the fact that the "real" event is not accessible and are very explicitly only approximations of this "real" event. Thus, sports contributes in a direct and specific way to what Thomas Elsaesser has described as the "necessary performance of failure" that accompanies the "constructive instability" of emerging media.[13]

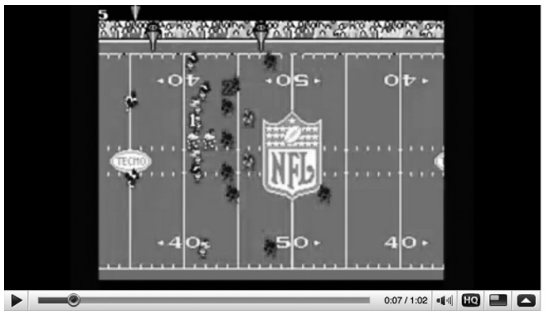
While YouTube's depiction of sports is closely related to television (and other media), it nevertheless changes the way sports is shown and accessed. The most obvious issue here is the highly selective aspect of YouTube, which reduces sports to remarkable moments (or to series of such moments) and finally recontextualizes these moments in different ways. In a sense, YouTube pursues only the different levels of condensed repetition that are already established in television (and my argument would be that sports on YouTube is, here again, more directly structured by traditional mass media than a similar reworking of other media material). During live broadcasts, some scenes are made more valuable by an instant replay. The same goes for post-game interviews and highlights programs, where the performance often gets reduced to single moments. In all these cases the definition of some moments as highlights changes the meanings of these moments that, on the one hand, have to represent the whole game; on the other hand, fragmenting the

continuity of the performance opens it up for more production of heterogeneous meaning.[14] It is no wonder that YouTube not only continues this process but also does so by using similar criteria as television. The communication of sports always deals with the question of what the most decisive moments of the competition actually were. While there is an incentive to discover hidden aspects, the search for decisive happenings is nevertheless common to different kinds of sports. The preponderance of goals, fouls, tricks, etcetera on YouTube is not only due to the endeavor to pick the most spectacular, but also adheres to the fact that these are the most evident moments of relevance. This becomes even clearer when YouTube clips deal with disputable happenings, above all with referees' decisions.[15] The clips, then, are meant as pure evidence for a specific type of action. If it is indeed completely indisputable, as when a ball hit Brazil's Rivaldo on his leg during the World Cup in 2002 and he pretended it struck him in the face,[16] such clips rapidly become a joke related to other "funny" videos. But if a situation isn't as unambiguous as the author of the description proclaims, a furious discussion might arise in which images are interpreted in contrary ways. If television reduces the partisanship characteristic for sports—mainly because of the demand for objectivity[17]—YouTube seems to reintroduce this partisanship into media sports. Most clips that are posted don't aim at a non-biased view of a competition, but at the praise (or denunciation) of a team or athlete. The discussion about a clip often becomes rude, not seldom outspokenly nationalist or racist. YouTube doesn't offer many other possibilities to react than by anonymous comment or a related video; it doesn't integrate tools for appropriating and reworking the given video, or for chatting. Ways of using clips to discuss "actual" happenings are, thus, clearly restricted.[18]

Modes of Comparing

In all the examples mentioned above, sports seems to underline the database logic of YouTube.[19] Particular items are addressed because there is an external reason to view the clip and because it is possible to access items directly by name, date or category of event. This becomes especially obvious when the database is used not for a repetition and reviewing of—or compensation for—an important event whose live

broadcast on television is now either gone or didn't exist at all, but as a tool for assessing future possibilities. Fans who discuss the chances of their team against the next competitor or the qualities of a player who will join their team for the next season use YouTube clips to gather information or support their argument. The short and condensed form of YouTube clips, especially "best-of compilations" that have already compiled the most remarkable scenes with a certain team or player, fit the requirements of such usages. Again, there are external incentives for this kind of use and the discussions mainly take place in more specialized online forums. Furthermore these discussions, referring to a reality beyond the clip, assess not only the depicted performance but also the reliability of the clip itself, i.e. if it is a "representative" selection of situations and so on.



36 Stylization of real sports using computer games

As a consequence, the referential and intermedial dynamics of media sports highlight YouTube's function as a database. At the same time, the site modifies access to sports, especially, as Cornel Sandvoss argues, its spatial determinations. "The coverage of sporting events on the Internet contributes to the dual tendencies of cultural 'homogenization and fragmentation' in that it has aided the formation of transnational sports fandom while simultaneously eroding the coherence of national sporting cultures that formed in the post-war era of nation state-centered broadcasting."[20] Still, YouTube places sports performances in a different context than other media, and its specific mechanisms of comparison

and interrelation change the depiction as well as the communication related to sports in a more profound way. While such online formats as live tickers, sports portals or fan chats feature modes of knowledge production quite similar to those of television sports—in fact, they are based on the knowledge and also the imaginations generated by television[21]—YouTube features dynamics that just don't fit media sports. The heterogeneous relations built up inside YouTube detach the sports clips from the modes of communication established by other media.

37 Zidane vs. Materazzi

Most clips on YouTube that can be related to the topic of sports do not contribute to the communication on sports in this narrower sense. One of the typical modes of appropriation in YouTube takes cultural products, be it a film or a sports competition, and transforms its meaning by re-staging or re-editing it. These kinds of clips are interesting because they are somehow between the database logic defined by the sports discourse and YouTube's dynamic of recontextualization that goes way beyond sports' comparison of performances. The decisive scenes of the 2008 Super Bowl, for example, famous for its surprising outcome and also for the most remarkable performances, can be watched as "real" video as well as an animation done with an early, now nearly "classic" football computer game.[22] Still, it is significant for sports that these appropriations are used to understand and discuss the "real" happenings and to criticize the television commentary. The more weird appropriations of sports events don't aim at the most accurate re-staging

of the happenings, but they can still be related to sports' incentive to discover how it happened. Take the innumerable video comments on the infamous headbutt by Zinedine Zidane during the World Cup final of 2006. Using visual effects, videos commenting on the "event" replace, for example, one of the two players involved with a lamppost, an armed "terrorist," and so on. Thus, they still contribute, at least on a metaphorical level, to the ongoing speculation concerning what really happened on the field and what the reasons were for this behavior.

While these examples, then, are still connected to the communication on sports, using various remediations to gain insight into "real" happenings, they obviously go beyond mere comparison of performances. Naturally, YouTube is a huge machine for relating and comparing; even a single clip often presents sequences or rankings of comparable items, from the best touchdowns and the most embarrassing knockouts to the sexiest athletes. YouTube's various mechanisms of linking different clips guarantee that there are no clear criteria and no borders for comparisons. This means, for example, that the worst fouls or the sexiest athletes are compared, that changes from different leagues and different levels are comparable, and of course, it also means that the appropriation of a sporting event by means of a computer game is related to similar appropriations of a film or anything else. There is, quite simply, no specific means of comparison that fits the very systematic requirements of sports. Where YouTube contributes to the comparison of sports performances, it does so on the basis of and in close connection with other media. The embedding of videos in online forums, blogs, etcetera involves them in a communication on sports that is not identifiable as a distinct field on the pages of YouTube.

Conclusion

While YouTube is, as a database, well integrated into the media sports complex, the site's way of relating and comparing are at the moment of no particular use for modern competitive sports. This doesn't mean that YouTube's modes of comparison are chaotic, unreliable or of no use at all. Rather, it remains significant that practices that are somehow connected to sports but can't be considered sports according to the more narrow definition benefit from the dynamics of YouTube—and might

even be dependent on them. Significant examples are some dance cultures or the subculture urban performance of Parkour.[23] Both are developing into global phenomenona because of YouTube's possibilities for comparing the movements of other practitioners (whether as historical examples or innovative advancements). The mode of comparison, however, aims not at the same amount in a (quantifiable) comparison of performances, and it surely doesn't aim at the (referential) decision of whether this or that movement was right or wrong, decisive (for a final result) or not. Furthermore, it is precisely the fact that these forms are not already pre-structured by other media, television in particular (through its aesthetic and economic forces), that enables their presence on YouTube to give them a specific organization.[24]

While sports, as has been shown in this article, accentuates specific aspects of YouTube and contributes to its structure (at least the structure of its access), there are at present no procedures in YouTube that contribute to the comparison of sports performance in a more specific way. YouTube has adopted several of the dynamics of media sports, but the site itself is not a medium participating in the definition and production of sports. Rather, it (more often than not) subverts the modes of communication that constitute modern sports. This can be explained by the "deficits" of YouTube — the absence of possibilities for a more structured discussion and more systematic and meaningful relation between clips. Yet, it can also be explained as a result of the unobstructed operation of YouTube's most significant features: the accumulation of relations that are defined by a wide range of practices, semantics and technologies. Looking at YouTube, it becomes clear that sports is based on a specialized, defined and also hierarchized form of communication. Looking at sports on YouTube, it also becomes clear how undifferentiating YouTube's modes of listing, comparing and ordering actually are.

Endnotes

1 See e.g. "The 10 Hottest Female Athletes" – www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_KvIzo3cFc&feature=channel_page [last checked 15 February 2009].

2 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfAsibkCmZw; and www.youtube.com/watch?v=1796OXXdVzs; and finally www.youtube.com/watch?v=0iks s1fGCZE&feature=related [last checked 15 February 2009].

3 For an historical overview, see Janet Lever & Stanton Wheeler, "Mass Media and the Experience of Sport," *Communication Research* no. 1, 1993, pp. 125–143.

4 See Dan Streible, *Fight Pictures. A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) and Douglas Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

5 Tobias Werron, " 'World Series'. Zur Entstehung eines Weltereignisses," in *Weltereignisse. Theoretische und empirische Perspektiven*, eds. Stefan Nacke et al. (Wiesbaden, Germany: Verlag für Socialwissenschaften, 2008), pp. 101–140.

6 Tobias Werron, "World sport and its public. On historical relations of modern sport and the media," in *Observing Sport. System-Theoretical Approaches to Sport as a Social Phenomenon*, eds. Ulrik Wagner & Rasmus Storm (forthcoming).

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Markus Stauff, "Zur Sichtbarmachung von Strategie und Taktik. Die mediale Organisation des Kollektivs in Sportwissenschaft und Fernsehen," in *Strategie Spielen. Medialität, Geschichte und Politik des Strategiespiels*, eds. Rolf F. Nohr & Serjoscha Wiemer (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2008), pp. 162–188.

10 As I am interested in the main intersections of YouTube and sports, I focus on the most prominent examples, i.e. the kinds of sport that are televised on a regular basis. It would, of course, be necessary to research not only why some sports are generally less prominent (often a question of national success and also of historical coincidences), but also what kinds of sport better fit the procedures of YouTube.

11 See e.g. www.youtube.com/watch?v=LznMSKpEWz8 [last checked 15 February 2009]; this one uses some stills from a football game following the preliminary caption: "YouTube's Terms of Service doesn't allow me

to post this video here! CLICK on the link in description to watch FULL video!!!" For a more general survey on copyright infringements, see the contribution by Paul McDonald in this book.

12 See www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh8WQUJNcKE [last checked 15 February 2009].

13 Thomas Elsaesser, " 'Constructive Instability', or: The Life of Things as the Cinema's Afterlife?" in *The Video Vortex Reader. Responses to YouTube*, eds. Geert Lovink & Sabine Niederer (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008), p. 19.

14 Travis Thad Vogan, "Football-Highlights. Zur Politik der zusammenfassenden Sportberichterstattung," in *Mediensport. Strategien der Grenzziehung*, eds. Felix Axster et al. (Munich, 2009).

15 Typical examples are traveling and double dribbles in basketball (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uo9TyFCEz1k&NR=1 and www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty6DA8SGGYg&NR=1) and fouls or dives in football (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu90rhU4Pi0 [last checked 15 February 2009]).

16 www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgfRCa71Kmw [last checked 15 February 2009].

17 Geoffry Nowell-Smith, "Television – Football – The World," *Screen* no. 4, 1978/79, pp. 45–59.

18 A more in-depth analysis of these limitations of YouTube can be found in Jean E. Burgess & Joshua Green, "Agency and Controversy in the YouTube Community," in *Proceedings IR 9.0: Rethinking Communities, Rethinking Place –Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) conference* (Copenhagen: IT University of Copenhagen, 2008) – http://eprints.qut.edu.au/15383/1/15383.pdf [last checked 15 February 2009].

19 Lev Manovich, "Database as Symbolic Form," *Convergence* no. 2, 1999, pp. 80–99.

20 Cornel Sandvoss, "Technological Evolution or Revolution? Sport Online Live Internet Commentary as Postmodern Cultural Form," *Convergence* no. 3, 2004, pp. 39–54.

21 Ibid.

22 Examples of animations done with the computer game Tecmo SuperBowl can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1VPaEjks2U and www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQU8p40qcuQ&feature=related [last checked 15 February 2009].

23 Samantha Carroll, "The Practical Politics of Step-Stealing and Textual Poaching: YouTube, Audio-Visual Media and Contemporary Swing Dancers Online, " *Convergence* no. 14, 2008, pp. 107–120; Rebekka Ladewig, "The rabbit hole is deeper than you think! Zur medialen Inszenierung von Parkour," in *Mediensport. Strategien der Grenzziehung*, eds. Felix Axster et al. (Munich, 2009).

24 This might in part also be the case for some kinds of sports that are indeed defined by the mediated "comparison of performances," but that are also not on television (at least not very prominent). In this context it would, for example, be worth scrutinizing more carefully the case of poker (this was pointed out by Tobias Werron) or the practice of "stacking," where people reorder plastic cups in a specific succession as quickly as possible – www.youtube.com/watch?v=U951R_r-3fM [last checked 15 February 2009].