Reviewer Comments

Reviewer 1
The case study which constitutes the second part of your paper is thought-provoking and could probably be further developed. It presents the readership with an 'extreme' Muslim doing ordinary things and reminds us that most terrorists do have other lives that involve additional interests and even hobbies. That is something that is most confusing about perpetrators of political violence - even for people who share the same religious or cultural background as the terrorists. The first section of the article, on the other hand, seems to me to raise more questions than it answers. You may well be correct that the framing of sport-loving American Muslims as 'moderate' is a familiar trope. But let's think about this from the perspective of the sport-loving American Muslim, or indeed a Muslim in North Africa, the Middle East, the sub-continent and so on. What can Muslims in the US do if, when they express an interest in sport, they are to be framed as 'moderate Muslims'? Should they shun sport? This would imply that their love of sport is an act which would further suggest that 'real' Muslims are not truly interested in sport. I just felt that there are many unexamined assumptions and, at times, essentialist readings in the first section of your article. If the initial discussion could be more nuanced, it would prepare the way much better for the insightful case study that follows.

Additional comments
p. 4 It is surely pushing it a bit to describe Islam as 'an American religion'. It's a world religion which because of its interrelationship with politics is contested by followers in many parts of the world as they seek to confirm who are the 'best' Muslims.
p. 5 Provide references/sources for the claim that 'sport is actually encouraged in Islam'. Perhaps there needs to be more direct reference throughout the first part of the paper to Islamic teaching.
p. 6 The discussion of gender is a little weak, both here and later, perhaps because you seem to be drawing mainly on relatively dated sources e.g. Connell (1987). Greater consideration of intersectionality would help you to provide a more nuanced analysis and avoid essentialism. In addition, if gender is deemed to be a significant element in your study, this should be signposted right from the beginning.
p. 7 The relationship between gender and terrorism needs to be articulated much more clearly.
p. 8 Do all sports fans feel uneasy when their heroes make political interventions? How do you know? Sports fans are never a homogenous group.
p. 9 By this stage, the discussion of gender has become even more confusing. Greater clarity is definitely needed.
p. 12 Now we've reached the strongest part of your paper. However, for the benefit of uninitiated readers, it would be a good idea to provide a helpful definition of 'hypertrophied heterosexuality'.
p. 13 Tsarnaev's Chechen background might be worth some further comment.
p. 14 How did journalists know about Tsarnaev's 'desire to represent the US in the Olympics'? Did they interview him? Was he a reliable interviewee?
p. 15 Again gender seems to come and go in the article not always in particularly satisfying ways.
p. 16 How was Rodriguez framed - as a 'good Dominican'? Isn't that also problematic? If not, why not? Is it because 'real' Dominican men like sport whereas 'real' Muslim men don't?
p. 18 On what basis can one pronounce on Tsarnaev's sexuality? Where's the evidence?
p. 20 Be sure in your own mind that you have actually demonstrated what you claim to have demonstrated.
Reviewer: 2
There is not much scholarship on the representation of Muslim athletes, so I am glad that the author is exploring this issue. However, I think that the author needs to develop a more coherent and integrated argument in this case study.

From my perspective, the author needs to provide a clearer framework for this essay. Introducing Kaepernick, Ali, Iman Webb and then the Obama/Trump comments from 2015, these threads make the beginning of this essay unclear. If this essay is about Tamerlan Tsarnaev and the media depiction of him as an athlete in 2013, it seems like the discussion in the beginning of the essay should be about the framing of Muslim Americans in 2013. I get that the author is trying to position Tsarnaev into a larger conversation about Muslim athletes, but there is a big difference between Ali and Ibtihaj Muhammad (athletes who identify as Muslim) and Tsarnaev (an accused terrorist who happens to be an athlete). From my reading, it seems like the long discussion in the beginning of the essay works against the later analysis. I understand that the author is making some arguments about how Muslim athletes are otherized, but it seems like in this essay, there needs to be more development of how Tsarnaev as an athlete works from a communication perspective. If this extensive contextual information is included, I think that it would be helpful to move through this section a little faster instead of providing a short paragraph about these issues. Additionally, the literature review introduces a variety of relevant concepts, but it would be helpful if the author was more direct in identifying exactly which argument is being made in this essay. For instance, there are paragraphs about hegemonic masculinity and sports nationalism, but these areas of scholarship need to be better integrated into the overall argument. How do these areas of scholarship work together for this analysis and what contributions does this essay make that is different from previous research?

Within the analysis, there needs to be more support and justification for the case study. In terms of support, the author needs to be more consistent in using source citations with contemporaneous events. Since the precise date is not identified in the text, it’s hard to follow if there was a consistent pattern or disconnected stories about Tsarnaev. Also, some of the themes focus on comments by just a few people, and it’s unclear how this constitutes an intense media focus. In the justification section, the author identifies 34 digital texts analyzed, but there isn’t much explanation for why these specific texts are used (particularly the one from 2017). Are these texts from national or local media texts? Are these texts general news sources or sports coverage? On page 10, the author argues that there was intense media focus on Tsarnaev’s athleticism, but the author needs to make that argument more explicitly with clearer identification of the sample. I’m not suggesting that each individual text needs to be identified, but a discussion of why texts were chosen would be helpful.

Finally, there needs to be more attention to APA style citations. There is inconsistency throughout the manuscript (in text and references), and these errors take away focus from the arguments being made. I would recommend the author spend some time with the draft fixing these issues. Considering that the instructions for authors on the C&S website is detailed, I would recommend the author clean up these citations before moving forward with publication.

I would encourage the author to continue to work in this area of scholarship. This is an area that needs more attention in our discipline, and it would help contribute to the study of identity.
Reviewer: 3
This essay engages an important and timely topic: sport’s function in mediating muslim identity in the US. Though the piece holds a great deal of promise, I believe it would require a major revision to be considered seriously for publication. My central concern is that you overplay some theoretical moves (hypertrophied heterosexuality) and underplay (orientalism) or omit (respectability) others, resulting in what I think is a kind of basic misreading of your own case study.

Here is where I think you’re headed: Sport in the Unites States articulates a relationship between nationalism and exceptionalism, a formula which provides a path by which muslim Americans often earn the credentials required for cultural assimilation and citizenship. Tsarnaev disrupts that relationship through his link to boxing, and its recuperation entails either turning him into an exception marked by hypertrophied heterosexuality’s “perversions,” or removing the sporting identity from Tsarnaev’s attempt to box (“he wasn’t an aspiring athlete, he was training for combat”).

I think this is what you’ve got. If I’m reading you correctly, then I think this argument can be rendered far more clearly. Here’s what I think can help you:

It seems to me that you’re describing a theory of muslim respectability in the US. The politics of respectability are most often associated with the African American experience (most notably through theorists of intersectionality like Patricia Hill Collins). The essential idea is that black Americans might demonstrate their claim to inclusion by performing the cultural and communicative norms of white supremacy. You assert (rightly, I believe), that performances of the “moderate muslim” have a disciplinary effect which renders them politically dubious, but I think you also struggle to frame this judgment.

I think respectability can help you. It does two things: (a) it exposes the ruse which allows western liberalism to both perpetually promise and defer the logic of inclusion; what counts as “respectable” will always shift to minoritize and exclude non-normative others, and (b) respectability grasps a dynamic I think you’re trying to get to with Tsarnaev, namely that its disciplinary effect exists partly as a function of its uptake and deployment by minoritized identities. Respectability, in other words, is contextual and polyvalent. In some cases, it does important work (see, for example, Jackie Robinson or Michael Sam). In other cases, it conditions cultural expectations for other members of subordinate groups (see, for example, Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods). Respectability might be an important African American political strategy in the postwar 1940s, but serve regressive political ends in the 1990s.

My point here is that respectability is, in fact, a mode of political agency, and in the contemporary US, respectability may in fact be quite useful to muslims for whom cultural assimilation is an endgame. With Tsarnaev, I think you have two choices here: (i) explicitly (and rigorously) critique assimilation as a political goal — which would give force to your assertion that the “moderate muslim” is a dangerous construct, or (ii) read respectability into Tsarnaev’s attempt to box for the US Olympic team. If you choose (ii), you both deliver agency to muslims for whom the “moderate muslim” operates normatively and explain respectability’s innovative flexibility; sport can still present the moderate muslim through nationalism and exceptionalism,
provided that individuals like Tsarnaev are written out of the nation and understood as refusing the exceptional narrative the nation provides.

This last point is particularly important, and here’s where I think you’re misreading your case study. Tsarnaev’s failed attempt to box for the Olympic team produced a media narrative which held that he became resentful of his perceived relationship to the nation. Now, who knows if this is true; it is certainly the case that amateur psychology mobilizes in moments like these. But, you write, “The coverage had to then present Tsarnaev’s athletic background in a way that could align with his portrayal as a terrorist, a task made difficult given the role of sport in nationalism.” The role of sport in nationalism actually made this task easy, not difficult. Islam and sport are not presumed to be opposing ideals, their compatibility is what delivers an exceptional status to the nation. Yes, exceptionalism refers to the idea that the US is special, but in what is that specialness constituted? At the bottom of p. 8, you cite Patman to the effect that sports heroes mean that the US has the “best muslims.” But it is not simply their athletic excellence that warrants exceptionalism, it is the fact that they are assimilated muslims, muslims who’ve entered the melting pot, muslims who’ve modernized, muslims who are diverse, etc. These individuals warrant American exceptionalism because they become proof of the nation’s embrace of liberal values and ability to confer them upon newcomers. Sport simplifies the Tsarnaev terrorist narrative by illustrating his recalcitrance to assimilation. Tsarnaev is an easy outlier, in other words, because “not even sport” could assimilate this “perverse muslim.”

I really like where this essay is headed, but it needs a great deal of streamlining. A few other stray suggestions:

- If you wanted to re-tool and make Tsarnaev one example among others, I think you’re on the trail of a project that asks this question: How does the discourse of American exceptionalism both condition strategies of resistance and dissent and urge the construction of religious and/or racial difference. As it stands, your paper is written to affirm existing theory, but I think if you shifted the frame this way, and offered Tsarnaev as an example of how respectability fails, you might break some new theoretical ground on the relationship between exceptionalism and muslim identity.

- For muslim respectability specifically, check out Stanley Thangaraj’s _Desi Hoop Dreams_, and Haroon Moghul’s _How to Be a Muslim_, both of which might offer you some resources for explaining how music and sport demonstrate diversity within and the modernization of Islam in the US.

- You should be able to find newer evidence on the relationship between sport and masculinity, especially from scholarship that adopts an intersectional reckoning. Intersectionality can certainly help you as you seem to struggle to define national and gender identities through sport in a patchwork manner.

- I am curious about the term “hypertrophied heterosexuality,” because it seems to imply an excess of heterosexuality. How does this imply, then, a latent homosexuality?

- In the passage where you cite Butterworth on “fragile identifications,” you need to flesh out the
relationship between nationalism and imperialism — their coordination is not self-evident.

- Is it possible for you to condense the material on the “moderate muslim”? Once you cite Mahfoud, I’m left wondering why you didn’t just cite that material from the start and move on. Doesn’t it do all of the work you need for this section? (Unless you’re planning an intervention into this thread of scholarship, I think this section might be overwrought).

- If you want to make the “negative image” argument, i.e. Tsarnaev is the aberrant muslim against which the moderate muslim is constructed, then I think this is where you need additional theoretical explication. It sounds a bit like what Foucault tried to do in Madness and Civilization (we define the insane to convince ourselves that we are sane), and, obviously, what Said did in Orientalism. I’m especially wondering if you can quote and explain the relevant passages from Said in this essay.

- Don’t let theoretically fraught terms appear out of nowhere, i.e. “ideograph.”

- Generally speaking, I would remove the social science scaffolding from this essay “methods,” “sample,” “limitations,” etc. You’re conducting an act of criticism, not science. It’s ok to simply present your interpretation of the media landscape to your readers.

Reviewer: 4

This article examines media framing of the athletic life of Tamerlan Tsarnaev, a Russian national of Muslim faith who planted bombs at the 2013 Boston Marathon. This is an interesting article that attempts to connect communication and sport to religious-based terrorism and, more generally, the integration of migrants - a topic that will likely impact Western societies in the decades to come and which is becoming increasingly relevant in academic circles as well. To date, the link between communication, sport, and migrations has been rather marginal in communication and sport circles. This manuscript has the potential to blaze a trail for this kind of research; however, needs some changes before it can be published in Communication and Sport.

Precisely due to the potential it has, I would like to see this article developed better. Specifically, this article points to several interesting aspects, but key terminology is unclear or confusing, some findings seem exaggerated, and the intellectual (rather than theoretical) framework is defined somewhat loosely. At present, the article reads like an intellectual critique written in a bit of a haste: its findings are not connected to a broader body of knowledge on sport and Islam or sport and religion more generally. Hopefully, the suggestions provided in this review will provide the author with some advice and direction.

As noted in the previous paragraph, unclear key terminology is a major issue encountered in this article:
- Most crucially, the expression “sports discourse” (spelled “sport discourse” on pp. 2-3 and 20-21) seems to indicate in different contexts “discourse about sports” (pp. 2, 5), “media discourse about sports” (p. 4), “discourse in sports” (p. 7), and perhaps even other meanings. Such interchangeable use is confusing and makes it unclear what the focus of the study even is. Please define early on what is meant by “sport(s) discourse” or choose a more specific and conventional term.
Along similar lines, the article references and examines the construction of “moderate Muslims” – again inconsistently spelled as “moderate” Muslims, “moderate Muslims,” or “Muslim moderates,” with different words in quotation marks, throughout the article. Who are “moderate” Muslims, what are their characteristics (especially since being “moderate” is understood here as an “exception,” as indicated on p. 2) – and what are the alternatives (are Muslims either moderate or orthodox, or are there other types of Muslims still)? Unfortunately, the paragraph that starts with “Let us first consider the term ‘moderate Muslim’” (p. 6) does not clarify the confusion.

Please consider these suggestions carefully; at present, key concepts are disorganized and prevent a clear understanding of the article. As a result, the very premise central to the article – “that sport discourse is, indeed, on the rise in conversations about U.S. ‘Muslim moderates’” (p. 3) – is indeed quite unclear.

Moreover, the article relies on some claims that need to be explained and/or supported with evidence:
- “U.S. Muslims face enormous pressure to demonstrate nationalism” (p. 2) – by whom, what is the source or rationale for this claim? Also, how does the author understand/define nationalism? If anything, I would expect them to be pressed to demonstrate patriotism, which is not the same (authors such as Anthony Smith and Michael Billig have discussed patriotism and nationalism, their meaning, differences, and expressions in societies).
- “Islam is, historically, an American religion” (p. 4) – what does it mean that a religion is “American?”
- “The ‘moderate Muslim’ trope allows the United States to argue that it has the ‘best,’ most ‘exceptional’ Muslims in the world” (p. 8) – please explain this statement. (Also, are the United States supposed to have ‘better’ Muslims than the 22 countries in the Arab League?)
- “Presumably, the Tsarnaevs chose this [Patriots’ Day] day to send a symbolic message in addition to the violence they committed” (p. 11) – is there any indication (letters, statements, quotes or materials from trial) this was indeed the case or is this just the media’s or author’s assumption?
- The attack “became viewed as a direct attack on the nationalism associated with sport in America” (p. 11) – explain this comment, provide citations or references to support this.

Now, some comments related to the theoretical framework of this manuscript.

The article lacks of a literature review on sport media and religion. How is religion – either Islam or other creeds – discussed, represented, framed in mass media? Potential sources for this section include recent studies on the framing of Tim Tebow, a pious football player, by media outlets. Also useful might be the literature review on sport and the Christian religion published by Nick Watson and Andrew Walker in 2014 (see esp. Chapter Three on sport and religion in popular culture).

The conceptual link to gender ideology (pp. 6-7) provided in the introduction is interesting but underdeveloped. The switch from sport and religion to sport and gender is abrupt; lead the reader, consider moving this content into a dedicated section under a separate heading. In turn, it appears this study has the potential to expand the discussion of sport and gender ideology by
introducing a religion angle (as the implicit religious framework when discussing sport and gender ideology is Christianity). It would be good to address this point in the conclusion as well: what new findings emerged through this study?

The “Method and Case Study” section is unclear and would benefit from being reorganized. Consider combining all content describing the case into one section: currently, it is split between the “Method and Case Study” and “Data & Analytical Approach” sections. Describe the case in factual terms; at this stage, avoid assumptions and inferences (e.g., “That Tamerlan was an accomplished boxer was an unlikely and inconvenient detail…,” p. 12). Omit from this section media quotes that belong into either the introduction or the results sections. The research question (“how does sport mediate his construction as a terrorist,” p. 12) is unclear – what does it mean to “mediate his construction?” (One could perhaps study “media framing of Tamerlan as a terrorist,” or something to that effect.) How did the author select the 34 texts analysed in this study (e.g., a Google search, a Facebook search, a snowball sample, etc.)? Provide more information about the coding process. Importantly, excluding articles that “only briefly mentioned Tsarnaev’s boxing” (p. 13) is acceptable – but keep in mind this will skew the results of the study as we are now looking at a specific and selected sample of media texts. For example, the author argues that “Tamerlan’s sexuality needed to be constructed as dangerous” (p. 17) and “Tsarnaev is flattened into nothing more than a terrorist” (p. 20) in subsections that provide very few examples supporting these claims from an already selected pool of articles. As further elaborated in a section below, tone down claims and avoid hyperbole: it is interesting to identify specific themes, but it is also important to retain a sense of proportion. Please be sure to acknowledge this limitation in the conclusion as well.

Speaking of the conclusion, it would be very beneficial to connect the findings of this study to other literature on the subject. The first paragraph on p. 21 (“There is a lot at stake…”) is a good start, but the rest of this section expounds the author’s subjective perception (“I am not saying that…”) rather than relating findings to relevant scholarship. Consider situating these findings within a larger body of literature on sport media and Islam and/or religion in general (esp. after adding such section to the introduction).

When revising the manuscript, consider also revisiting the writing style. Focus on facts and write for an international, rather than American audience. Avoid ethnocentrism and hyperbole. Some examples:
- Change references like “President Obama” (p. 1) to “United States President Barack Obama” (most readers of Communication and Sport would object to sheer references to “President Xi” even though he presides over a country that has four times the population of the United States).
- Muhammad Ali’s passing “received unprecedented attention from...media” (p. 3) – unprecedented as compared to whom? This seems an exaggeration – please explain or rewrite.
- The reference to Colin Kaepernick as an example of the relationship between sport and nationalism (p. 8) is not particularly impressive. Given the text that follows this example, consider citing events from the Olympic Games, perhaps even involving Muhammad Ali (who was mentioned earlier in the article), or drop this reference altogether.
- “This could not be more evident” (p. 14) – yes, it could; tone down.
- “Tamerlan’s citizenship was eventually denied due to his arrest for domestic violence, which
again points to the United States’s position as being morally superior due to its discerning citizenship granting process” (p. 19) – actually, many countries prevent foreigners involved in criminal proceedings from obtaining citizenship: one cannot become a Canadian citizen if they “have been charged or convicted of an indictable crime;” a British citizen if “they have a serious or recent criminal record;” an Egyptian citizen if they have a criminal record. Even Tsarnaev’s native Russia requires candidates for citizenship to “adopt lawful behaviour.”

Some additional minor points to consider:
- The Orlando nightclub massacre which was carried out by an ostensibly “radicalized Muslim” (p. 3) – same as above, not all readers might recall or even be aware of this event. What were the key characteristics of the attack, who described the attacker as radicalized?
- South by Southwest is a film, interactive media, and music festival rather than “just” a music festival (p. 3). Provide a reference for the claim that SXSW is the “nation’s largest music festival” (p. 4) – or omit or rewrite if this particular detail is not central to the point the author is making (perhaps it would suffice to say it is a “large festival?”).
- Avoid contractions (didn’t, wasn’t, p. 4; wasn’t, p. 19; shouldn’t, p. 21).
- The claim that terrorist attacks are constructed as necessarily “foreign” (p. 9) could use contextualization; in addition to Islamist extremism/terrorism, the United States occasionally experience anti-abortion violence and terrorism (bombs and shootings outside Planned Parenthood clinics) and White supremacy terrorism including Anti-Semitic and right-wing extremism (Charleston church, Overland Park Jewish Community Center, and Wisconsin Sikh temple shootings). While some mass media outlets avoid describing these incidents as terrorist acts, avoiding to do so (and, thus, not calling them for what they are) in an academic paper reinforces media and popular bias.
- “Amara Mahfoud” (pp. 9, 25): Mahfoud is the first name and Amara the last name.
- The claim that scholarship “locates sport as a site for gender empowerment and equity in Muslim-majority countries and beyond” (p. 10) will need to be qualified: Saudi Arabia, Brunei, and Qatar all had to be coerced into sending female athletes to the Olympic Games. See more work by Western authors Hargreaves and Pfister and even United Nations reports for more nuanced view on the subject.
- “The article is clearly struggling…” (p. 12): articles are inanimate objects and cannot struggle. (Also, as I understand it, the specific Fox News quotation referenced by this sentence points to a contrast between staging a terrorist attack against the United States and wanting to represent this same country at the Olympic Games rather than a contrast between Islam and sport, as indicated by the author – but I concede my interpretation might be incorrect).
- “Tamerlan is distanced from the American sport of boxing” (p. 16) – boxing is not an American sport. (In its present sport, it has been codified in England, but throwing punches at each other is not exactly a modern invention.) Perhaps the author meant “American style of boxing,” or something to that effect?
- The argument that “dressing stylishly...does engage stereotypes of effeminacy and homosexuality” (p. 17) is unconvincing: Kevin Durant wears fur coats yet he is not described as effeminate or homosexual, and one can think of many other athletes who “dress stylishly” without having their sexuality questioned.
- The ABC News source listed in the References section (p. 22) is copied from the reference from Yahoo! Sports on p. 31. Please check.
Dear Dr. Wenner,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit my essay, “When Terrorists Play Ball” (formerly called “Moderating Muslims through Sports Discourse”). I am grateful for the comments offered by you and the anonymous reviewers, and I hope you and the reviewers find that the changes are satisfactory. I am happy to conduct another revision if necessary.

Editor’s Comments

You suggested I address all the revisions detailed by Reviewers 1, 2, 3, and 4 to streamline my theoretical approach, strengthen my analysis, and correct my APA formatting (the latter was echoed by Reviewers 2 and 4).

I have corrected my APA formatting errors, including the use of “pg.” instead of “p.” I have also corrected capitalization errors and cited authors in-text and in my reference list for news sources when available, and corrected punctuation and spacing errors on my reference list.

I detail the substantive changes in response to Reviewers 1, 2, 3 and 4 below, focusing on strengthening the theoretical framework, developing the analysis, and improving the overall written style. Because the comments were both substantive and far-reaching, I have grouped overlapping concerns in places. In the few instances where reviewer comments conflicted, I note the conflict and explain why I chose to make the particular revision I did.

Reviewer 1’s Comments

1. Reviewer 1 noted that my initial discussion contains a lot of assumptions about the authenticity of sports participation by U.S. Muslims.

   This is an important concern, and I have addressed it throughout my essay. I mention early in my essay (pg. 2, pg. 3 in parenthesis) that sports is encouraged by Islam, and thus
part of Islamic practice. On pg. 7, I have included a discussion in the first full paragraph about the purposefulness with which U.S. Muslims might engage discourse about sports. I have reiterated the agency such a move delivers to U.S. Muslims at the bottom of p. 10.

Finally, I have removed all the comments through the essay that imply that Muslims participate in sports inauthentically, and exclusively to affirm citizenship. I include references to Stanley Thangaraj’s Desi Hoop Dreams (pgs. 11 and 13) to demonstrate how sports helps young Muslim-Americans build uniquely “Muslim” sporting communities.

2. **Reviewer 1 critiques my characterization of Islam as an “American religion” (as did Reviewer 4) and encourages me to include evidence that Islam encourages sporting.**

I have rewritten the “American religion” statement, which now reads “Islam has, historically, always been a religion with strong roots in the U.S….” (p. 6). I have also included a full page providing evidence about how Islam encourages sporting (p. 15).

3. **Reviewer 1 notes several weaknesses with my use of gender theory, suggesting that it engage intersectionality; articulate the link between gender and terrorism; and use more current sources.**

I have included a discussion of gender and intersectionality in the first section after the introduction (Hargreaves’s study on the role of sports for Muslim women, p. 5, as well as the mediating role of race and gender for Ibtihaj Muhammad, p. 4). I have included a paragraph about “terrorist” and “moderate Muslim” masculinity (p. 8-9) to articulate the link between gender and terrorism more clearly. I also describe the racial roots of respectability, how “moderate Muslims” demonstrate respectability. I have included a section showing the overlapping salience of gender to discourse about sports, U.S. exceptionalism, and “moderate Muslims” (bottom of p. 11 - 14). In this section, I offer a clearer explanation of the term “hypertrophied heterosexual;” discussed the Orientalist stereotypes about gender “moderate Muslims” encounter; and how gender ideology furthers exceptionalism discourse. Finally, I include more recent sources on gender and sports to demonstrate overlap with characterizations of “terrorist” and “moderate Muslims” (p. 12, Hardin & Greer, 2009 and Butterworth & Turman, 2015).

4. **Reviewer 1 observed that I had made several unsubstantiated claims, which I have deleted as follows:**

I removed the sentence on p. 8 stating that sports fans feel uneasy about sports heroes making political interventions. I eliminated all the language where I imply that Tsarnaev demonstrated “effeminacy” and “homosexual stereotypes” through his clothing (Reviewers 3 and 4 also critiqued this). I have also removed, through close editing, as much overwrought language as possible that overstated my findings (particularly ascribing intent to news articles, e.g. describing news articles as “struggling to reconcile” or “deliberately” framing ideas in particular ways).
5. Reviewer 1 asked that I examine how the news framed Edwin Rodriguez, one of Tamerlan’s opponents in the ring, since I mentioned that Rodriguez emerges as a contrast to Tamerlan.

I explain how Rodriguez comes to represent the respectability associated with sporting (bottom of p. 21), as respectability is a thread I have incorporated throughout the essay in response to Reviewer 3’s comments. I also mention that as an immigrant himself, he presents a foil to Tamerlan’s “bad immigrant” status, and demonstrates how sports still remains a way to access citizenship.

6. Reviewer 1 asked that I comment further on Tamerlan’s Chechen background and delete any statements that take it for fact that Tamerlan “hoped” to participate in the Olympics.

I have included a comment about Chechnya on p. 19, and deleted any statements presenting Tamerlan’s “desire” to participate in the Olympics as “fact;” I now only acknowledge them as quotes in articles.

Reviewer 2’s Comments

1. Reviewer 2 points out that my initial discussion of U.S. Muslims and sports discourse (the section under the new heading “American, Muslim, and Rooting for the Spurs, p. 3) is unclear and convoluted, and does not bolster the later analysis. I have reworked this initial discussion in the following ways:

   - Reviewer 2 points out there is a big difference between the athletes I list (Muhammad Ali, Ibtihaj Muhammad, etc.) and Tsarnaev. I couldn’t agree more, and I have included a paragraph (second half of p. 5) stating this while explaining that sports has a history of being aligned with “exceptional Muslims,” thus creating an exigency for recuperating sports from terrorism discourse concerning Tsarnaev
   - Per Reviewer 2’s suggestion, I have deleted the example about Colin Kaepernick
   - In this section, I demonstrate more clearly how news articles frame Islam and sports as incompatible (p. 4, Ibtihaj Muhammad example), but that sports is also perceived as having a “moderating” influence on Muslims (p. 5)
   - I introduce the idea that everyday U.S. Muslims, too, are able to access the nationalism and “citizenship” through discourse about sports. This proffers a larger implication of my essay, i.e. discourse about sports mediates the identities of U.S. Muslims in general, and not just Muslim athletes

2. Reviewer 2 encouraged me to streamline my literature review and make all the theories I introduce clearly relevant.

I have reorganized and modified my literature review substantially. The key change is that I now have two distinct sections that contribute to my theoretical framework: the sections titled “Respectably Moderate” and “Gender, Exceptionalism, and Sports Intersect.” The first section clarifies the term “moderate Muslim,” and engages its
intersectional components (particularly gender, p. 8) and its role in countering Orientalist stereotypes and “terrorist masculinities.” This first section also introduces respectability politics (p. 9-11), which is now a key lens for my analysis and situates the goals of the “moderate Muslim” (i.e. Muslims attempting to access respectability and citizenship, in this case through engaging discourse about sports).

The second section more clearly demonstrates how discourse about gender, exceptionalism, and sports intersect, and why this intersection is necessary for my study of “moderate Muslims” and sports. I limit myself to talking about gender only as it emerges in discourse about sports, and as it emerges in discourse about “terrorist” and “moderate” Muslims. In this way, I demonstrate the overlapping relevance of gender to sports as well as to U.S. Muslim identity. Finally, I introduce the relevance of exceptionalism, as “moderate Muslims” are constructed as “exceptional” and assimilated. Additionally, the sports arena is constructed as a site where exceptionalism is on display. I describe how gender also furthers exceptionalism (through what Jasbir Puar calls “sexual exceptionalism,” p. 14).

3. Reviewer 2 asked for more justification and clarification about my case study and sample size.

I have streamlined my description of the Boston Bombing for clarity, and offer some context for why the coverage focused on Tamerlan’s boxing career (p. 17, first full paragraph). I also explain, at the bottom of p. 18, what elements of the coverage I focused on when I coded the articles. I explain more clearly how I selected the articles that made up my sample size, including my criteria for excluding articles (p. 18, first full paragraph). I removed the article from 2017 from my sample, and included two additional news videos from the time frame I am looking at, i.e. articles published within 6 months of the bombing. I explain the uniqueness of this case study to justify my selection, as it brings together terrorism discourse and sports so clearly (p. 18, p. 28).

Reviewer 3’s Comments

1. Reviewer 3’s key critique is that I do not acknowledge the component of respectability politics that run through the “moderate Muslim” discourse, particularly since sports enables access to such respectability.

My most substantive revision has been in response to this very insightful critique. I have included respectability theory in my framework, most extensively in the section “Respectably Moderate” (p. 8-11). I use respectability theory to explore the facets of the “moderate Muslim” trope. Furthermore, I discuss the similarities between the respectability expected of Black bodies and Muslim bodies (p. 9, “Now I want to turn to...”). Additionally, I reference Stanley Thangaraj’s Desi Hoop Dreams (another excellent suggestion by Reviewer 3) to make a point about sports loci providing an arena for Muslim males to safely perform state-sanctioned forms of hegemonic masculinity,
thus demonstrating how sports, the “moderate Muslim” trope, and respectability converge.

I also weave respectability politics throughout my analysis, most notably in the section “Boxing: A Path to Citizenship?” (p. 18–23). In this section, I describe how the articles repeatedly critique Tamerlan’s “lack of discipline” and “cocky” attitude, showing that he lacks the characteristics of “true” sportsmanship. I discuss how Tamerlan’s failed attempt to secure citizenship converges with his failed attempts at sportsmanship, because both sporting and citizenship are paths towards respectability. I also discuss how the coverage provides a contrasting example of a respectable immigrant sportsperson, Edwin Rodriguez, which helps rehabilitate the link between sporting and respectability.

In the section “Style without Substance in the Ring,” I continue my argument that Tamerlan’s appearance and attire are critiqued as evidence of how he fails to achieve respectability.

2. **Reviewer 3 also suggested I engage intersectionality and Orientalism in my analysis.**

   I now attend to intersectionality throughout my essay, most visibly on p. 8-9 (“It is also important to recognize…”); my description of the racial historical components of respectability (p. 9-10); the interplay of gender and sports for women (p. 5, the Hargreaves reference) and the Orientalist characterization of Tamerlan due to his “whiteness” being suspect (p. 24 - 25).

3. **Reviewer 3 offers several other smaller but significant critiques, and I address them here in turn:**

   - Reviewer 3 encouraged me to consider making Tsarnaev one example among others to show how respectability fails. I think that is a good idea for a larger future project (perhaps even a book), but outside the scope of this article
   - I deleted the reference to Butterworth’s “fragile identifications” concept, as it was not necessary
   - I have streamlined the description of “moderate Muslims” and situated it within respectability politics
   - I dropped the theoretically fraught term “ideograph,” as it is not necessary to my essay
   - I removed the social science scaffolding/language from this essay, and instead used more descriptive subheadings introducing my framework; describing the case study; and organizing my analysis based on themes

**Reviewer 4’s Comments**

1. **Reviewer 4 pointed out that I use the term “sports discourse,” which is vague and seemed to imply different meanings in different places in the essay.**
I have replaced it with the term “discourse about sports,” which is more specific, and also provided a definition (p. 3, first full paragraph, “I use the term…”). I have also replaced the term “sport” with “sports” throughout.

2. Reviewer 4 also pointed out inconsistent phrasing: “moderate Muslims” or “moderate” Muslims or “Muslim moderates” and so forth.

I have replaced all these variations with “moderate Muslim.”

3. Reviewer 4 asked for clarification on the meaning of the term “moderate Muslim.”

I have provided a more streamlined and intersectional explanation of the term “moderate Muslim” by engaging respectability politics (p. 8).

4. Reviewer 4 pointed out some statements that are unclear, or that make unsupported assumptions. I have addressed them as follows:

   • Reviewer 4 pointed out the following statement is unsupported: “U.S. Muslims face enormous pressure to demonstrate nationalism.” I have replaced it with the statement beginning “As U.S. Muslims face increased scrutiny for radicalization…” (p. 3). I have also used the term “nationalism” throughout and eliminated any interchangeable use of the terms “nationalism” and “patriotism”
   • Reviewer 4 asks what I mean when I say the U.S. alleges to have the “best” Muslims in the world (p. 14). I added an explanation that the “best” Muslims would be those who are assimilated and “modernized,” and therefore in service to U.S. exceptionalism
   • I deleted my comments about the Tsarnaev brothers choosing Patriot’s Day for their attacks, and that the attacks became viewed as a “direct attack on the nationalism associated with sport in America” (formerly on p.11). Both comments were unsubstantiated, and unnecessary

5. Reviewer 4 suggested I include a literature review of sports and religion in mass media.

   I specifically did not include such a review because I do not attend to sports and religion in my analysis. I do not examine how the media narratives frame Islam or Muslims – indeed, I was hard pressed to find any discussion of Islam or Muslims in the articles focusing on Tamerlan’s boxing. Additionally, I wanted to focus on how sports, something we value deeply as a nation, mediates identities that we recoil from, i.e. terrorists’ identities. And so my literature review only attends to those components that directly relate to terrorism discourse: gender (and terrorist masculinity), U.S. exceptionalism, respectability and “moderate Muslims” (the foil to terrorist identity).

6. Reviewer 4 suggests I make the relevance of gender ideology clearer.

   Reviewers 1 and 2 make a similar suggestion, and I believe I have made the relevance clearer by discussing Puar’s concept of “terrorist masculinity.” I have also taken
Reviewer 4’s suggestion to move the gender content into a dedicated section (now on p. 12, “Gender, Exceptionalism, and Sports Intersect”).

7. **Reviewer 4 asked that I use more social science language to organize my sections.**

   This conflicted with Reviewer 3’s suggestion that I eliminate such language. After making content revisions, Reviewer 3’s suggestion was a better fit.

8. **Reviewer 4 asked that I explain how I selected my texts for analysis, and describe the coding process.**

   I have added a few sentences describing my selection criteria, as well as the specific patterns I was paying attention to (p. 18, the paragraph beginning “As I examined…”).

9. **Reviewer 4 offered several helpful critiques of my writing style, which I have addressed as follows:**

   - I have dropped any language that ascribes intent to the articles or coverage (e.g. “the article struggles to reconcile…”) as well as any hyperbolic language (“this could not be more evident…”)
   - I have rewritten any statements that overtly speak to U.S. audiences and exclude others (e.g. on p. 2. I now say “former U.S. president, Barack Obama” instead of “President Obama” and specify that my essay focuses on U.S. identity and U.S. discourse, e.g. “U.S. Muslim identity/discourse about sports in the U.S.”). I have also added a little more detail about the Orlando club massacre since all audiences may not be familiar with it (p. 4)
   - I have fleshed out my conclusion section by:
     - Stating more clearly the limitation of examining one component of one terrorist attack (p. 28)
     - Developing the paragraph describing what is at stake with my study (p. 29). I mention the broader implications for U.S. Muslim identity and agency; terrorism discourse; and discourse about sports
     - Establishing some potential areas for future research (top of p. 28, “It is worth examining more closely, then…”)
   - Deletions: I have dropped the Kaepernick example; the comment about the U.S.’s discerning citizenship process (formerly p. 19); the claim that terrorist attacks are constructed as necessarily “foreign” (formerly p. 9); the comment that South by Southwest is the “largest” music festival in the world
   - Other corrections: I have done a close edit of the paper to eliminate contractions and the passive voice where possible. I have also corrected errors in my APA style

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Dr. Wenner, I hope you find that the revisions address the concerns and questions detailed in the feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the manuscript. I would also appreciate it if you could pass on my gratitude to my four reviewers for their thoughtful and productive critiques. I look forward to hearing from you further.
Warm wishes,

Lamiyah Bahrainwala