

For a Few Dollars More – the representation of elite women’s cricket in Australia

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In 2018, Cricket Australia launched #WATCHME, a powerful new marketing campaign created to promote the Australian Women's Cricket Team and the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) – the country’s elite professional Twenty20 national cricket competition. This paper provides an important empirical snapshot and analysis of number of key areas. Namely, the representation of women’s cricket and differences between that of the men’s game; differences in the financial value placed on both forms of the game by fans; and the significance of the choice of venue for women’s cricket matches.

A two-phase mixed methodology was adopted for this study, utilising participant observation in conjunction with quantitative survey data. Participant observation was conducted at four WBBL matches and an online survey was sent out via the club’s email distribution list yielding 308 responses. The gender breakdown was 159 females (52 %) and 149 males (48 %). The modal age was 18 - 24 years of age.

The findings revealed that there were differences in the presentation of WBBL games compared to those of the men’s Big Bash League. WBBL games were also observed to have a more family friendly atmosphere and were less focused on established rivalries and competitiveness. In addition, female fans preferred smaller, suburban venues for these matches. Significantly, it was found that male fans financially value women’s sport less than female fans do. These findings indicate that women’s sport remains a site of contestation with on-going struggles over whose version of sport truly matters.