



# Cheering For Self: An Ethnography of the Basketball Event

*James Vass Jr*

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This book is a study of UW men's basketball fans during the 2001-2002 season and explores their proclivity to 'cheering for self' during basketball events. The term 'basketball event' is used rather than 'basketball game' to make clear that everything connected to and seen, heard, or experienced before, during and after a basketball game is included. The actual game itself is only part of the 'basketball event'. An undercurrent runs throughout this participant observation mini-ethnography dealing with access, and the relative quality of that access, to basketball events being affected by ones age, class, race, and gender. The prominent role of advertising in shaping basketball events and helping to construct fans as consumers of products (both commercial and institutional) during the process of cheering for self is central to this idea. Cheering for self is the activity engaged in by individual fans after they find things to identify or connect with through personal investment. Fans cheer for self indirectly. Fans cheer for the team that they identify with. Through the process of cheering for self while attending the basketball event people are taught how to become fans, to consume a UW product--the basketball event and to consume advertisers' products. People have a tendency to spend their entire life trying to impress others.

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