

## **ATHLETES AS A BRAND**

### **ABSTRACT**

Besides their professional careers, athletes are also persons of great influence. Social networks brought another dimension and provided fans with the possibility to be „closer” to the ones they admire and follow. Sports marketing represents the process of designing activities within forming prices, production, promotion, and distribution of sports products. Sports fans have their needs, but also have benefits such as excitement, affiliation with the group, fulfilling their free time, will for making friendships or family activity, drive for competition and achievement, match atmosphere, friendship with other fans, rivalry with other fans, watching technical skills of athletes or content of the arena. Athletes do affect the accomplishment of a great number of marketing goals, which spread from the sport as it is to specific products which are promoted by some of the greatest athletes. Sports marketing aims to raise the value of athletes, but also to create a brand or even a cult of personality. Sports marketing, personal and brand marketing can be positive and negative. Today, the influence of athletes is not limited only to sports competitions and sports fields. Athletes dictate fashion, trends, and attitudes on life issues and create a cult of personality. This paper aims to detect positive and negative personal marketing through article analysis, using qualitative methods and content analysis. Particular attention will be paid to examples of world-famous athletes who have become walking brands such as David Beckham, Novak Djokovic, Conor McGregor, and Tiger Woods.

**Keywords:** athletes; brand; personal marketing; a cult of personality; influence.