

‘Online Hate and Sport: An overview of the key literature’

C. Kearns, G. Sinclair, **J. Black**, M. Doidge, T. Fletcher, D. Kilvington, K. Liston, T. Lynn and P. Rosati

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Abstract

Significant flashpoints such as the racist abuse English football players were subject to during Euro 2020 and the culture wars that have ignited over Colin Kaepernick’s taking of the knee protest against systemic racism in America, have brought increased attention to the topic of online hate in sport. However, this is not a recent phenomenon. It has been a growing concern for a variety of stakeholders in sport who have been subject to or impacted by racist, sexist, misogynistic, sectarian, homophobic and transphobic hate speech via social media platforms. Furthermore, hate speech has been a consistent problem in sport, particularly football, long before online spaces became such a key aspect of the discourse. Social media has just illuminated the scale and depth of the overall problem. Accordingly, sporting governing bodies, anti-hate organisations and policy makers have been left playing catch-up with a problem that continues to increase in scope and complexity. In this paper we share a scoping review of the complete history (which begins in 2005) of literature that has been written on this subject. Specifically, we document how online hate in this space has evolved as social media technology has transformed, the dominant theoretical and methodological frameworks that have emerged, the perpetrators, targets and subtypes of hate that contextualise the research undertaken. We identify gaps within the review and potential questions, contexts and methods that should receive attention in future research.