

1998

The Female Sport Experience: History, Development, and Psychological Implications

Dawn A. Whittington

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Psychology](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Whittington, Dawn A., "The Female Sport Experience: History, Development, and Psychological Implications" (1998). *Masters Theses*. 1765.

<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1765>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

The University Library is receiving a number of request from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow these to be copied.

PLEASE SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university or the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

3/2/98
Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University **NOT** allow my thesis to be reproduced because:

Author's Signature

Date

The Female Sport Experience: History,

Development, And Psychological Implications

(TITLE)

BY

Dawn A. Whittington

1970 -

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1998
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

1/24/98
DATE

2/24/98
DATE

**THE FEMALE SPORT EXPERIENCE:
HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT, AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS
DAWN WHITTINGTON
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter I:	
Historical Antecedents	3
History of Woman in Sports	5
Early Years: 1896-1945	5
Generation of Title IX	7
Chapter II:	
Psychosocial Issues Related To Women Athletes	10
Personality Traits	10
Sex Roles And Stereotypes	14
Homophobia in Women's Sports	18
Socialization Process	20
Prevalence and Etiology of Eating Disorders	23
Chapter III:	
Contemporary Issues In Women's Athletics	27
Professional Leagues	27
Society Acceptance	30

Chapter IV:

Summary and Research Implications	33
Bibliography	36

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to offer special appreciation for my thesis committee chair, Dr. William Kirk. I am especially grateful for your patience and insightful suggestions. Your encouragement and confidence have been invaluable throughout this endeavor.

I would also like to recognize committee member, Dr. Russell Gruber for his contributions. I truly appreciate your time and efforts during this process. Joan Schmidt is also acknowledged for her assistance in providing valuable resource information.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who have supported me during this project. Without your love and prayers I would not have been able to accomplish this goal.

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the literature related to women in athletics with a focus on the psychological perspective. The paper is divided into three major parts.

Chapter I traces the historical antecedents with specific emphasis on the development of sports psychology and women's gradual integration into amateur and professional athletics.

Chapter II reviews literature devoted to the psychosocial issues related to the female athlete.

These issues include personality traits and patterns, psychosocial problems associated with women entering and maintaining status in athletics, stereotypes, homophobia, socialization

issues and the incidence and etiology of eating disorders among female athletes. Chapter III

addresses the global issues related to the modern female athlete with a specific focus on

professionalism and social acceptance. Recommendations for future research are included

which focus on the psychosocial view of the female athlete and the socialization process that provides the backdrop and milieu of contemporary women athletes.

INTRODUCTION

Athletic endeavors have captured the attention of humanity for thousands of years.

Athletic accomplishment has been honored and the athlete has often been elevated to a position of role model, superstar, and idol. Historically, those who have been seen in this hero status have traditionally been men. In the last few decades and especially in the 1990's this trend has been challenged by increasing numbers of female athletes. The careers of these sportswomen have begun to impact the structure of sports in American society. Due to the attention given to the emergence of high profile female athletes, related literature has recently begun to focus on women in the sporting world. This, however was not always the case. Since the beginning of the field of sport psychology, in the 1920's, the focus of the literature and research has been on male athletes. Until the 1970's, female athletes labored in a vast shadow cast by the male athlete. In 1972 the Federal government initiated Title IX, which prohibits sexual discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance ("Title IX Regulations", 1997). With the passage of Title IX women participants have enjoyed previously unimagined opportunities. Finkenber, Mitchell, & Weems (1991) stated "the increase in opportunities for female athletes have drawn little attention from researchers". Bird and Cripe (1986) also note there is very little research focusing on female athletes; instead, the majority of studies directly target men. It is evident by the continual lack of attention given to the female athlete, the growth of women in the sporting arena has not been reflected in sport psychology literature.

Although female athletes have slowly become the focus of increasing numbers of studies, they have struggled to gain support and acceptance from society. The female athlete has been seen

in a negative light as "sports have been seen as mainly infeminine" (Swift, 1992). This stereotype may have been a major factor in the nonparticipation of many females. It is only recently this long accepted stereotype is being challenged by female athletes. Across all levels and sports, female athletes are now gaining the recognition and acceptance for their accomplishments that has long been reserved for the male athlete.

Given the recent expansion of opportunities for women in sports and the disparity in the existing literature, there is little knowledge of the female athlete. There is much to be gained from the study of personality characteristics of the sportswoman. Coaches as well as athletes stand to be the prime beneficiaries of this type of knowledge. This information might provide insight into the individual athlete in relation to her teammates, personal goals, personality, and sex roles. Clinicians also might benefit as athletes are seeking the services of trained psychologists in rapidly increasing numbers. Although great strides have been taken in the sport psychology field toward gender equality, much is still left to be done. The goal of this paper is to present an overview of the existing literature and to suggest a future direction for the study of the female athlete and her world.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

To fully comprehend the evolution of and the inclusion of women in sport, a brief discussion of sport psychology would be helpful. Sport psychology, as a science, can be traced to the late 18th century. As early as 1796, measurement of reaction times in astronomers attempting to record events were noticed to be different (Boring, 1950). Early experimental studies consisted of tests of human movement and reaction times. This focus on movement and motor skills continued throughout the 1800's. It was in 1898 that the first experiment in sport psychology was reported. Triplett (1898) studied the effects of pacemaking and competition on professional bicycle racers, finding that times improved when competing against another racer. Beginning with the first two decades of the twentieth century, numerous articles and essays focused on sport and the psychology of athletic involvement (Cratty, 1989). This era witnessed several pioneers in the field of sport psychology. An especially notable pioneer, Coleman R. Griffith, is thought by many to be the father of sport psychology. In 1925, he was employed by the University of Illinois to assist coaches in improving the performance of their athletes (Williams & Straub, 1986). His efforts led to the first laboratory designed specifically to study sport psychology and to the teaching of a course in sport psychology. His research focused on perception, relationship between personality and performance and the learning and advancement of psychomotor skills. In two separate experiments, Griffith reported improvement in the performance of golfers and basketball players by teaching them to increase their awareness of their muscles when shooting and driving the ball (Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). His books, *Psychology of Coaching* (1926) and *Psychology of Athletics* (1928), are

considered to be classics in the field. Griffith's laboratory work came to an end in 1932 when financial difficulty forced the closing of the Athletic Research Laboratory (Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). However, his interest in sport psychology continued. In 1938 Griffith became the first to study the personality of athletes when he conducted comprehensive analysis of the personalities of members of the Chicago Cubs, while serving as their batting practice pitcher, thus becoming the first professional consulting sport psychologist (Martens, 1981; Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). Although Griffith had significantly advanced the field, much time lapsed after his contributions in the 1920's and 30's until the 1960's, which saw expanded research and the field of sport psychology officially formed. One of the first steps taken to legitimize the field was the forming of associations which provided organization and structure for the study of sport psychology. This began in the 1960's, not only in the United States but across the globe. The first international meeting of sport psychologists occurred in Rome with the formation of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) (Williams & Straub, 1986). In 1967 the first meeting of the North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) was held and two years later the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology (CSPLSP) was formed. The conferences held by these various associations provided those interested in the field with an opportunity to report their findings and discuss their ideas with others.

The momentum gained from the 1960's movement carried on into the next decade. The 1970's were marked as a breakthrough for sport psychology as evidenced by two major advancements. First, two journals of sport psychology were initiated: the International Journal of Sport Psychology in 1970 and in 1979 the Journal of Sport Psychology. Second, a

significant increase in the number of published books focusing on psychological aspects of sport (Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). However, much of the emphasis of this writing was spent on studying nonathletes (Salmela, 1984). This led to a void in the available literature focused on the athlete. In addition, a noticeable gap is also evident when considering the amount of literature devoted to female athletes.

HISTORY OF WOMEN IN SPORT

A brief review of the history of women's athletics is important to gain perspective on the limitations and obstacles that have faced female athletes. This section will provide the reader with a historical view of the journey embarked upon by women hundreds of years ago.

Women wishing to participate in athletics have fought long and hard to gain entrance into what has long been considered an exclusively male privilege. Much of this progress can be attributed to the legislation of Title IX, passed in 1972. The advances as a result of this law continue to have an impact on the present state of the world of women's sports.

EARLY YEARS: 1896-1945

According to historical records, women have been involved in athletics as long as men. Kennard & Carter (1994) cited Ancient Greece as the location of the beginning of women's involvement in sports. At that time women were excluded from participating in or even watching the Olympic Games. They responded by creating their own sporting event, the Heraea Games (Sage, 1970). Sporting events included racing, wrestling, and throwing the javelin and discus. Women continued to participate in athletics, on a limited basis into the late 1800's. It was at this time that women began to receive formal higher education in America, which included courses in physical education and an increased opportunity to participate in

organized sports (Hult, 1994). This ushered in the era of women participating in sports deemed appropriate by society for females. These sports included tennis, croquet, and gymnastics. Participation in other sports such as baseball, swimming, and golf began to emerge; however, they were not incorporated into the mainstream of higher education sporting programs. When the Modern Olympic Games began in 1896, women were barred from competing (Sparhawk, Leslie, & Rose 1989). By the second Olympics, held in 1900, women were allowed to participate in limited events with a total of eleven females competing (Johnson, 1993). In 1922 the first Women's World Games were held due to the barring of women from the track and field competition in the Olympic Games (Cohen, 1993). During this time period, sporting opportunities continued to be available primarily through college and university programs. Slowly, these programs incorporated intercollegiate competition in addition to intramural sports. Women's athletics eventually expanded into the corporate world where business sponsors began to field women's athletic teams. This resulted in a wider variety of socially acceptable sports, such as softball, basketball, field hockey and track and field (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983). This pattern continued until the 1940's when the role of women in general, and especially their involvement in sports, began to change. With the vast numbers of women replacing men in the job market during World War II, the perception of women changed as they were required to demonstrate physical capabilities to be able to replace men in the labor force. It was also during this time that women had an opportunity to compete professionally, with the formation of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), which flourished throughout the World War II years. The 1960's brought the formation of other organizations to govern women's athletics.

Various associations were formed during this time period, such as National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS) and the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). This emergence and progress set the stage for a time of great breakthrough for female athletes across the nation.

GENERATION OF TITLE IX

In 1972, Congress passed the Educational Amendments of 1972. Included in this is Title IX, which dramatically changed the sports scene across the country. This federal act states: “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (Galbraith, 1992). Title IX has been described as the “single most significant piece of legislation to affect the direction and philosophical tenets of women in sport” (Hult, 1994). The law faced numerous court battles as schools and universities fought to stop its implementation (Vogler & Schwartz, 1993). Leonard (1984) estimated the NCAA spent \$300,000 in legal costs to protest the passage of Title IX.

Although discrimination is now unlawful, compliance is still not guaranteed. The primary goal is to have sports participation rates match the ratio of male and females in the student population. However, in reality colleges are required only to show significant progress towards equality, which has profoundly reduced the effectiveness of Title IX (“Sports Lib”, 1994). In 1997, Mondy, Savaiano, & Witkowski, noted that only 9 of 107 Division I-A universities were in compliance with Title IX.

The 25th anniversary of Title IX, in 1995, has brought much attention to this law as well as an opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness. Prior to the passage of Title IX, women made up

about 15% of college athletes and women's sports accounted for only 2% of the money colleges spent on athletics (Sage, 1990). Athletic opportunities have significantly increased for girls and women as much as ten times, largely due to Title IX (Reith, 1989). Vogler & Schwartz (1993) note that in the twenty-five years since Title IX, women have begun to take a prominent place in sport. In 1973 golfer Terry Williams became the first woman to receive a full tuition athletic scholarship (Roberts, 1992). In 1992, 36.9% of high school athletes were females compared with 32.3% in 1977, and at the college level they represent 34% compared to 27% of total athletes (Tarkan, 1995). Many high school girls are now participating in previously unacceptable sports such as football, baseball, and wrestling (Hilliard, 1996). The ramifications of Title IX have gone beyond the educational arena. Since the 1976 Olympics, the ratio of men to women participants has gone from 6:1 to 4:3 (Deford, 1996). The 1996 Summer Olympics had 97 events for woman compared with 86 in 1992. The number of female competitors rose from 3,008 to 3,785, while the number of men's events rose by four to 163; however, the number of men participants actually decreased from 7,555 to 6,596 ("The Olympics . . . , 1997; Johnson, 1993).

Title IX was thought to be an answer to the inequality and discrimination faced by female athletes. However, this legislation does not appear to have made the advances it was designed to. For instance, in 1994 almost twice as many boys played high school sports as girls, and colleges continued to spend up to twice as much on scholarships for men as for women (Schrof, 1994). In National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) schools more than five times the money is spent on male athletes and operating funds were three to one in favor of males (Moline, 1992). Uhlir (1987) noted that in 1986-87 31% of NCAA participants were

females, while college student bodies were 52% female. The world of coaching has also been affected by this act although not in the way intended. Before the passage of Title IX, approximately 90% of women's teams were coached by women. Presently that figure has been reduced to approximately 50% (Uhlir, 1987; "What is . . .", 1997). In the 1986-87 intercollegiate athletic year, women competed for fewer national championships, in fewer sports and divisions, than in 1981-82 (Uhlir, 1987). On the Olympic stage, 34 countries sent all male delegations to the 1992 Barcelona Games ("Winning . . .", 1996). There is cause for hope, however as for the first time since the passage of Title IX, we are now seeing an entire generation of women who have been encouraged to participate in competitive athletics over the course of their lives (Swift, 1992).

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES RELATED TO WOMEN ATHLETES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

The personality of athletes has long been the interest of coaches who considered it a great advantage to be able to identify personality characteristics that would increase the athlete's chances of success in a particular sport. Researchers were also interested in personality traits possessed by athletes, such as self-confidence, competitiveness, and calmness. These interests formed one of the first questions put forth in the study of sport psychology: does a "sport personality" actually exist?. The initial focus of studies was on determining the answer to this question.

The personality of athletes has been the topic of numerous studies since the introduction of sport psychology. These studies were typically centered on the male athlete, in an attempt to differentiate between the personality of athletes and nonathletes. Personality studies involving women have been significantly less numerous than that of men (Cratty, 1989). One of the first studies involving female athletes was conducted by Peterson, Weber, & Trousdale (1967) which studied the personality traits of women in team sports versus that of women in individual sports. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF) was administered to competitors of the 1964 Olympics. It was discovered that women involved in individual sports tended to be more dominant, aggressive, adventurous, sensitive, imaginative, radical, self-sufficient and resourceful, and less sophisticated than women participating in team sports. Malumphy (1968) also used the 16 PF in addition to a demographical questionnaire and found individual competitors to be less anxious, more venturesome and more extraverted than team

participants. This study also included noncompetitors and athletes in subjectively judged sports (i.e. gymnastics). The individual sport participants tended to be more tough-minded and had more "tough poise" than the nonathletes. Valliant, Simpson-Housley, & McKelvie (1981) discovered that competitive athletes were more dominant than nonathletes. Gulick (1988) noted that athletes had higher levels of aggression, tough mindedness, and self-sufficiency than that of the average college female. Gondola and Wughalter (1991), found that professional tennis players were "significantly more reserved, more intelligent, more suspicious and less pretentious" when compared to norms from the general female population. These findings are similar with that of O'Conner & Webb (1976) who indicate that athletes are more relaxed, artistic and reserved than nonathletes.

The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) was administered to intercollegiate athletes and the scores compared to a control group of college females (Dayries & Grimm, 1970). This study resulted in significant differences on two of the fifteen variables of the EPPS. The female athletes scored lower on order and higher on intraception. Athletes from the 1972 Olympics were found to have a high need for achievement and autonomy (Balazs, 1975). A 1976 study found that Olympic athletes had elevated scores on the autonomy and achievement scales (Balazs & Nickerson, 1976). The EPPS was combined with the 16 PF to examine champion level fencers (Williams, et al, 1971) to determine personality differences in relation to levels of achievement. Results indicated that high achieving fencers were more dominating than the lower level competitor. Johnson (1972) also targeted superior skilled athletes in four sports: basketball, bowling, field hockey, and golf. The California Psychological Inventory (CPI) was used to evaluate the differences in these athletes.

Significant differences were found among the basketball players, they were described as "more inward, self-centered, immature, somewhat defensive and inhibited" than their counterparts in the other three sports. The golfers in this study also tended to be more intellectually and socially adept than the other athletes. Elite woman field hockey players have been shown to be significantly higher on traits such as aggression, mental toughness and were more accepting of leadership and decision making roles (Morris, 1975). Kukla & Pargman determined (1976) that female athletes tended to be more independent, aggressive, achievement oriented, and dominating than the nonathlete. Research also indicates that female sports participants are higher on masculinity and extroversion than nonparticipants (Colley, Roberts, & Chipps, 1985). Diano (1985) also described athletes as more extraverted than nonathletes while being more emotionally stable.

Athletes are also more committed to goals and demonstrated greater self-confidence and self-acceptance than nonathletes. Those participating in sports have also been found to have greater self-esteem than nonparticipants (Vincint, 1976; Marsh, et al, 1995).

A second dimension of the personality, emotion, was addressed by Edwards (1995). He discovered that female athletes experienced an elevated Positive Affect, consisting of emotions such as joy, happiness, pleasure, delight, love, elation, and friendship than female nonathletes. These athletes also experienced higher Profound Negative Affect scores, consisting of emotions such as hostility, rage, aggression, hate, anger, scorn and contempt. Schultz (1977) noted female athletes have a greater positive outlook than nonathletes. Porter (1985) found that female runners were well below the nonathlete on levels of tension, depression, anger, and fatigue. Wughalter & Gondola (1991) found that professional tennis

players scored below the mean in mood states such as tension, anger, depression, fatigue and confusion. This somewhat conflicting data may suggest that athletes experience a wider range of emotions more intensely than nonathletes.

Wittig & Schurr (1980) reported that a female athlete personality type does exist. They identified an overall personality pattern of assertiveness, independence and self-assurance among college female athletes. This theory is also supported by Cratty (1989). He noted that the female athlete projects a profile opposite that of the passive, emotional, low-achievement profile of the normative female.

There is much confusion and many contradictions in the psychological studies of the female athlete (Morris, 1975). The conflicting research findings forced sport psychologists to evaluate the cause for this nonconclusive data. The debate was often heated as to why a "sport personality" did not evolve from the study of these athletes.

The trait approach of studying the personality focused on two main questions 1) Do athletes in one sport or type of sport differ from athletes in another sport or type of sport? 2) Do athletes possess different personality traits than nonathletes? There have been numerous studies that have attempted to answer these two seemingly simple questions. However, this literature has produced conflicting conclusions. Berlin (1974) determined that there is not sufficient evidence to support a female sport personality type.

There have been numerous theories as to why the trait approach provided such contradictory results. Martens (1981) noted the inadequacy of the methodological research. For example, the lack of clear operationalization of variables, weak sampling procedures, poor analysis of statistics and inconsistent measurement of personality traits. The only reasonable conclusion

to be drawn from the research on personality traits among athletes-- is that no conclusion can be drawn.

SEX ROLES AND STEREOTYPES

The influence of sex roles and stereotypes has had a significant impact on the female sport experience. The existence of negative stereotypes and the redefining of sex roles has at once hindered and advanced the female athlete in the world of sports. The resistance faced by women has served to cloud the perceptions of the female athlete in the eyes of society and also to challenge her to overcome the traditional role of women. The following is an overview of how these roles and perceptions have been contested by women in pursuit of athletics.

American society has established a relationship between qualities often associated with the male sex role (aggression, strength, dominance, self-confidence and achievement) with qualities deemed necessary for successful athletic performance. Characteristics such as these are often considered necessary to be successful in life as well as sports; however, these values seem to apply only to males (Burke, 1986). Women who possess many of these personality traits are often not appreciated. Sabo & Runfola (1980) note that in American society, sports and masculinity have become synonymous. Athletics in America are thought of as congruent with the male sex role and incongruent with the female role (Selby & Lewko, 1976; Sage, 1990). Die and Holt (1989) support this by noting "traditionally, athletic involvement has been the prerogative of the male and a male-dominated phenomenon". American society has discouraged females from spending their time and efforts on "male" sporting activities (Wetzig, 1990). Birrell (1983, p. 49) states that females in sport are often viewed as a

“woman in man’s territory”. The study of the identified sex roles of the sportswoman has been a topic of study in the field of sport psychology. Male athletes have been described by positive characteristics (i.e. smart, committed, conscientious), while female athletes have been described as husky, rough, and masculine (Watson, 1987). Separate studies by Harres (1968) & Sherriff (1969) found that high school and college students believed that participation in sports would increase a female’s “mannishness”. This coincides with Colker & Widom (1980) who found female athletes were thought of as significantly less feminine than their college peers. Pederson & Kono (1990) found that social bias continued to exist that favored participation of women in the “acceptable” sports and to discourage participation in inappropriate sports. Snyder & Spreitzer (1976) found that basketball players were more often described as “tomboys” than females participating in gymnastics and track. Ugucioni & Ballantyne (1980) discovered that women participating in sports are often classified as androgynous (having both masculine and feminine characteristics), while nonathletic women were classified as feminine. A later study (Die & Holt, 1989) indicated that these attitudes may be changing as female athletes and nonathletes were seen as possessing equal amounts of socially desirable characteristics. Several studies (Atkins, Morse, & Zweigenhaft, 1978; Selby & Lewko, 1976; Kingsley, Brown, & Seibert, 1977) have found that male and female college students, both athletes and nonathletes, do not hold negative attitudes toward female athletes and in some instances indicated positive impressions. Baslow & Spinner (1984) discovered that college students viewed all athletes as socially acceptable, regardless of sex or sport. Jackson & Marsh (1986) also reported that female athletes are capable of possessing more traditionally masculine traits without being less feminine. Czisma, Wittig, & Schurr (1988)

reported that among male and female college students, perceptions of the level of difficulty between male and female sports were very similar, as well as the social acceptability of participation in these activities. There have been many steps taken in American society toward the acceptance of the female athlete, as evidenced by the acceptance of female athletes by high school students, as long as the traditional ideas of appropriate feminine behavior were not challenged (Kane, 1987).

While attitudes and perceptions of female athletes may be changing, the existence of these stereotypes has created conflict for females. The stereotypical view of females (weak, passive, and dependent) and the characteristics necessary for a successful athlete are in direct competition (Jackson & Marsh, 1984; Die & Holt, 1989). A female who participates in competitive athletics often risks her feminine image (Harris, 1971; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1976). Kane (1989) notes female athletes are therefore heavily restricted in their sport pursuits. She attributes this to what, for centuries has kept woman in the background-- gender role conformity.

The traditional roles of the sexes have been handed from generation to generation through the passage of time. Much has been done, especially in Western society, to break the female free from the traditional role of wife, mother, and homemaker. However, the female athlete continues to struggle with acceptance for her involvement in a man's world.

Deford (1996) argues women athletes in America have never been accepted in any respect. "The female's role in sports has often been that of passive spectator or cheerleader for the male teams" (Selby & Lewko, 1976). Talbot (1988) noted that women's involvement in sport has largely been in service to others, through their sexuality in glamorizing male sport or

enabling other family members to participate. Thompson (1990) believes athletic institutions exploit the services of women for purposes of maintenance and reproduction of the male domain of sport. As noted by Snyder & Kivilin (1975) “to be a female and an athlete have traditionally been contradictory roles with conflicting role expectations”. The behavior of women athletes is often interpreted to violate gender norms (Blinde & Taub, 1992). This concept is also proposed by Watson (1987). She states that the feminine identity and the identity as an athlete are “characterized by dilemmas and contradictions”.

This dilemma is unique to the female athlete: she not only must be concerned of failure, but also of success. The more successful she becomes as an athlete, the more she seems to risk losing her feminine image (Horner, 1972; Balazs, 1975). The stereotype of the female athlete as aggressive and unfeminine often discourages many girls who would like to compete. Sage and Loudermilk (1979) reported that 26% of female athletes studied experienced role conflict. While, in 1983, Anthrop & Allison reported that 65 % of high school female varsity athletes experienced role conflict. Often, female athletes fear that success in athletic endeavors will lead to negative consequences. If the acceptable gender characteristics are not displayed, females risk being shunned by society (Nixon & Frey, 1996). The female athlete must at once satisfy the traditional role of a female, while also assuming the perceived opposite role of an athlete.

In order to handle this constant conflict of roles the female athlete often develops an unique coping skill. Felshin (1974) suggested that there is an apologetic nature to the female athlete to maintain femininity and minimize the emotional stress she may experience. This idea was supported by Del Rey (1977). She observed that women involved in sports opposing the

traditional stereotypical view of the female role (basketball and softball) displayed an apologetic attitude by adopting a traditional view of the women's role. This maintenance of feminine characteristics while assuming male traits, androgyny, has been thought of as more conducive to the psychological and social well-being of female athletes (Bem, 1974; Helmreich & Spence 1977; Kelly et. al 1976). The conflict of roles has been described as a "double bind" by Horner (1972). The perceived inconsistency between the athletics and the feminine role have led to a struggle for female athletes with their sexual identity called into question.

HOMOPHOBIA IN WOMEN'S SPORTS

As sport has been accepted as a masculine pursuit and the expression of manliness, the behavior of women athletes is often interpreted to violate gender norms. Because masculinity and femininity are considered opposites, women who play sports have therefore been considered unfeminine (Kane, 1989). Women athletes are frequently devalued and stigmatized, there is an implication that female sport participants have a flawed or suspect femininity, even failed heterosexuals (Blinde & Taub, 1992; Cahn, 1993). Thus many women athletes have been labeled as homosexuals and lesbians on and off the field of play (Nixon & Frey, 1996). This is due to the perceived incompatibility of athleticism and femininity, which results in linking women athletes with lesbianism (Lenskyj, 1991). Phillips (1996) states "women athletes are considered gay until proven straight". The very fact that a female participates in sports often brings her sexual identity into question (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983). Grant (1996) described the homophobia in women's sports as "paralyzing".

Although homosexuality may not be widespread, the assumption that it taints the image of women's sports (Nixon & Frey, 1996). Kane (1992) notes that women are "terrified of the label (lesbian)". This fear may not keep females from engaging in sport; however, it may keep females from pursuing interest in inappropriate gender sport (Messner, 1992). While the opportunities for women to participate in athletics have increased, the stereotypes about appropriate and inappropriate sports for females seems to have survived (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1989).

This homophobia in women's sports affects both straight and gay athletes. One possible consequence of this homophobic phenomena according to Sabo & Messner (1993) is that it enables males to maintain power and status advantage and reinforce traditional gender roles. Phillips (1996) also supports this theory as she notes that the fear of being labeled lesbians continues to be used as a scare tactic to discourage females from participating in athletics and thus challenging men's power and authority in sport. Sage (1990) states "organized sport is one of the most powerful cultural arenas for perpetuating the ideology and actuality of male superiority and dominance". The fear of being labeled a homosexual serves to keep women in their place and reduces challenges to traditional gender norms (Schur, 1984; Lenskyj, 1986). The stigma attached to the homosexual touches every female involved in sport.

This homophobia in women's athletics affects both heterosexual and homosexual athletes, as well as coaches (Knoppers, 1994; Grant, 1996). This is manifested in various forms, such as a coach who is denied jobs due to the length of her hair, a professional athlete who losses sponsorship and endorsements, and athletes who are alienated from their teammates (Phillips, 1996). The fear of being perceived and labeled by society as a homosexual has often

hampered the female athlete and possibly restricted the progress of women in the world of sports. Potentially, many girls and women may be persuaded to avoid sports or discontinued participation due to this stigma (Grant, 1996). Given the negative attitudes the female athlete may face, one must wonder why women become involved in the often hostile world of athletics.

SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

The unique experience of the female athlete involves two topics that are essential to a comprehensive discussion of women's sports: socialization into sport and eating disorders. The study of girls' socialization into the world of sports begins in young childhood and continues into young adulthood. It is important to discuss this issue of how and why girls become involved in the competitive world of sports, as it provides a greater understanding of the personality of the those who participate in athletics. In addition, once girls have become involved in sports the prevalence of eating disorders in female athletes has been an area of great concern.

The process in which a young girl becomes involved in sports is pertinent to a discussion of women's sports. This is a relevant topic as it offers insight into the early world of the female athletes' experience. This section will focus on the importance of support from numerous significant others to the entrance into and continued involvement in athletics.

The study of socialization focuses on discovering how individuals learn to interact effectively in a given environment. Sport psychologists are interested in sports socialization specifically to determine how an athlete came to be involved in sports. More specifically they are interested in how female athletes enter into a male dominated world (Greendorfer, 1978).

Snyder and Spreitzer (1976) discovered that socialization into sport begins in childhood and continues into late adolescence with strong support from a variety of significant others. This early introduction to sports was also noted by Greendorfer (1974) in that 70% of the 585 subjects were involved in athletics by the age of 8. The role of the family has not surprisingly played a significant part in the socialization of females into the sporting world. Snyder & Spreitzer (1973) discovered it was not a mother's interest in athletics, but rather a father's interest that was significantly related to females' involvement in sports. It is also interesting to note the influence of sisters on the female athlete was found to be less strong than that of brothers (Lewko & Ewing, 1980). This brotherly influence was determined to be significant in the female athletes childhood and into the college years (Weiss & Knoppers, 1982; Malumphy 1970). Although the families of these athletes are interested in sports, actual involvement was not necessarily evident. Morris (1975) found the parents of the athletes had not been very active participants in sports themselves, and the parents had little influence in the choice of sport. Nevertheless it was noted that the athletes' families had been generally supportive of their participation in athletics. Weiss & Knoppers (1982) note the additional importance of peer and coaches support to be significant components of a females athletes sport socialization. While studying athletes from the 1972 Olympics, Balazs (1975) discovered that the majority of these 24 women came from families of four or more children and two-thirds had siblings who also participated in competitive athletics. These subjects also indicated the support of both parents was positive and consistent and stressed the importance of having a father who was "available". These athletes also seemed to receive the message that sports do not make a girl unfeminine.

The influence of school sports programs are not as strong as one might imagine. Greendorfer (1983) states “it (school sports) does not introduce females to sport, nor does it have a strong impact in teaching them sport skills”. Although school may not be a factor in the initiation into athletics, it plays a vital part in reinforcing established patterns of sports participation through the many interscholastic athletic activities (Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). The school setting also offers opportunities to interact with interested teachers and coaches. Greendorfer (1977) reported the influence of these individuals was most significant during adolescence. The academic setting also provides interaction with other sports minded peers, which is also important in the socialization into sports for the female. It has also been discovered that females require strong support from their friends to engage in athletics (Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). Ryckman & Hamel (1992) suggest that peer influence is very important on the continued participation in sport by females. This theory was also supported by Spink (1995) who found that recreational and elite female athletes are more likely to continue to participate in athletics based on her perception of the team’s peer satisfaction. As women’s participation and interest in athletics has increased, the nature of the socialization process into sports continues to be a little understood event (Greendorfer, 1993). Still it is evident females rely on the encouragement from several individuals and relationships to become and remain involved in sports (Lewko & Ewing, 1980; Nixon & Frey, 1996).

The literature suggests that females, at any age, who remain involved in sports will struggle with the stereotypes, fears, and intertwining of sex roles. These stressors, would seem to place the female athlete at great risk for developing emotional and physical complications.

PREVALENCE AND ETIOLOGY OF EATING DISORDERS

Females face a unique set of pressures and stressors in the world of athletics, eating disorders may be a result of these additional burdens. The following offers a brief discussion of what may be the most serious health issue troubling female athletes, including the prevalence and nature of eating disorders among female athletes (Nixon & Frey, 1996).

The eating patterns of female athletes have been the subject of numerous studies within the field of sport psychology. This area continues to expand as the prevalence of eating disorders become more apparent. This section will review the research literature focusing on the prevalence of eating disorders among female athletes, the differences between subgroups of athletes and an overview of the factors that may contribute to the development of eating disorders in athletes.

In the general population, it is estimated that 4% to 19% of females have eating disorders (Borgen & Corbin, 1987). Essentially there are two major types of eating disorders, anorexia and bulimia. Anorexia involves the loss of at least 25% of original body weight through self-induced weight loss methods such as excessive dieting and/or exercise (Stoutjesdyk & Jevne, 1993). Bulimia involves episodes of binge eating often followed by self-induced vomiting or purging resulting in rapid fluctuations of weight (Borgen & Corbin, 1987). The common link between anorexia and bulimia is a distorted body image and extreme fear of becoming obese (Stoutjesdyk & Jevne, 1993). Females in general are at risk for developing an eating disorder due to a variety of factors such as self-esteem issues, depression, weight preoccupation, low body satisfaction, and cultural values of attractiveness and thinness (Katzman & Wolchik, 1984). Female athletes are subject to these influences as well as additional stressors.

Studies show that a third more female athletes use drastic weight loss methods when compared to the general student population (Black & Burckes-Miller, 1988). Generally, the origins of an eating disorder in female athletes often begins in an attempt to improve athletic performance by limiting body weight. However, the irony of this is that athletes may employ methods that are actually damaging to their ability to perform (Caldwell, 1993). These dietary practices are high-risk attempts to increase performance; regardless, they are life-threatening and often impair athletic performance (Rosen et al, 1986). Rosen et al (1986) found that 32% of female athletes practiced at least one weight control method defined as pathogenic (i.e. self-induced vomiting, binges, use of laxatives, diet pills or diuretics). One percent of the general female population appears to have pathogenic weight control problems, this is contrasted with 15% to 62% of female athletes (Nattiv & Lynch, 1994). Black & Burckes-Miller (1988) also discovered that women athletes preferred passive weight loss methods such as fasting, fad diets, and self-induced vomiting, rather than active methods such as excessive exercise or severely restricted caloric intakes. A recent study by the NCAA revealed that 93% of the programs reporting eating disorders were in women's sports (Noden, 1994). Stoutjesdyk and Jevne (1993) found that more than 10% of college level female athletes fall into the category of "anorexic". However, many times women athletes are thought of to be suffering from anorexia or bulimia as a result of their involvement in a particular sport. It may be true that girls and women who participate in sports such as gymnastics and cheerleading are more susceptible to developing problems concerning their body image and eating habits. This may be a result of athletes' attempts to gain the attention of mentors by being thin and their fears of being cut from the team if not of ideal body weight. The female athlete often believes

thinness is related to performance. It is often through observation she learns this or being directly told by a coach. These beliefs and perceptions are translated to; “leanness equals positive performance” (Nattiv & Lynch, 1994). Stoutjesdyk & Jevne (1993) also found that the highest percentage of athletes classified as anorexic were from sports that emphasized leanness (gymnastics 17.6%, diving 22.2%). Borgen & Corbin (1987) found that 20% of female athletes participating in sports that emphasize leanness demonstrated tendencies toward eating disorders or were exceptionally preoccupied with weight. This is compared to 6% of females not involved in sports and no athletes participating in sports not emphasizing leanness (i.e. swimming, track & field, and volleyball). Rosen et al (1986) found that 74% of gymnasts and 47% of distance runners practiced pathogenic weight control behaviors. These numbers are compared to a study conducted by Noden (1994), which determined that 60% of females participating in “appearance” sports (gymnastics and figure skating) and endurance sports suffer from an eating disorder. Petrie (1993) found that only 22% of collegiate gymnasts reported eating behaviors that could be classified as “normal or nondisordered”. Davis & Cowles (1989) state “female athletes participating in sports that generally encourage a thin build show greater weight concerns, more body dissatisfaction, and more assiduous dieting than athletes who are not faced with these demands”. Paradoxically, DiNicci et. al. (1994) report that college female athletes had significantly more positive feelings about their physical being than nonathletes; however this study involved athletes participating in basketball, volleyball, and softball, which are classified as nonappearance sports. This research indicates that while female athletes may not be at greater risk for eating disorders

than the general population, athletes who participate in a sport requiring lean body builds may have an increased risk of developing an eating disorder (Stoutjeskyk & Jevne, 1993).

CHAPTER III

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

The history and psychological aspects of the female athletes have been reviewed and discussed, it is now important to consider the present state of women's sports as a result of these struggles as well as the increasing opportunities for the future. In the time since the 1996 Olympics, the world of professional sports has seen the emergence of three leagues for women. These advances are both a result of, and promotion for increasing acceptance of the female athlete in American society.

PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES

The professional sports scene in America has traditionally been a male arena. To some extent the professional sports gender issue has lagged significantly behind the level of gender equality in college athletics. However, as the twenty-first century nears women are on the verge of exploding into the professional sports scene. This section will focus on the evolution of professional leagues for women as well as the necessary ingredients for a successful professional women's sport.

Women's professional sports in the United States dates back to the 1940's and existed largely due to the events surrounding World War II. The All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was founded as many of America's best male baseball players had careers interrupted by mandatory military service. The women's league fielded teams from 1943 to 1954, which made it the first and, arguably, the most successful women's professional sport (Berg & Huntington, 1997). The next five decades have seen several failed attempts to form women's leagues, mainly in basketball and softball. Such leagues included the Women's Pro

Basketball League, playing from 1978 to 1981, the Women's American Basketball Association, 1984 to 1985, and Women's Professional Softball Association, 1976 to 1979 (Berg & Huntington, 1997; Kennedy, 1997; Jacobs, 1997). These attempts to bring women to the forefront of professional sports failed mainly due to a lack of financial support and public interest (Evans & Graves, 1996).

Recently, there has been a reemergence of women's professional sports. Presently, in the middle 1990's women enjoy two professional basketball leagues and a fastpitch softball league. Beginning with the American Basketball League (ABL), which began play shortly following the 1996 Olympic Games, women are now taken seriously in the professional ranks. The ABL fielded eight teams during its' inaugural year and expanded that number to ten this season. While the ABL provided a better brand of basketball than its rival Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), as evidenced by its better field goal percentage (44% to 41%), free throw percentage (75% to 71%) and average points per game (78 to 69), the WNBA outdrew the ABL better than 6,000 per game (9,391 to 3,600) (Leland, 1997). This advantage could be due to a number of factors. First, the WNBA played during the summer months, traditionally basketball's off-season, and therefore did not compete with men's professional basketball or men's and women's college programs. Also, the WNBA, which is sponsored by the National Basketball Association (NBA), had the financial backing to spend large sums of money in advertising. Thirdly, the ABL played in small market cities such as Columbus, Ohio and Hartford, Connecticut, the WNBA placed its teams in larger, well established basketball cities, such as New York and Los Angeles. With each league enjoying a measure of success and continued expansion (the WNBA also plans to add two teams next

season) there is concern of a diluted game, giving rise to the question of a possible merger. At present both leagues claim this is not in their plans (Lefton, 1997).

The Women's Professional Fastpitch (WPF) softball league met with mixed results. In the WPF's inaugural year they fielded six teams in the South Eastern U.S., playing a 72 game season, they drew crowds as large as 2,000 and as little as 170. The league does not at present have plans to make significant changes for the 1998 season, instead hoping to increase the current fan base to stabilize the league (Jacobs, 1997).

The prevailing question remains however; will these women's sports be successful? Fitzgerald Mosley (1997) suggests they will. She notes several reasons the popularity of women's athletics is not a fad. The following is a discussion of the most notable reasons. First, is the rise of the active female noted by the growing number of women participating in organized athletics. Secondly, contemporary parents are the first generation to actively support their daughters in athletics. The media provides increased coverage of women's sports. This is partially evidenced by the debut of five women's athletic magazines in the last year and a half. Fourth, women professional athletes provide a positive role model to inspire young girls. Finally, men's leagues may be pricing themselves out of the family market, instead targeting a corporate fan base, which leaves an untapped audience to enjoy women's professional sports. As the ABL, WNBA, and WPF have their initial seasons to build upon, a fourth women's league was forced to abandon plans to begin play in 1998. The National Soccer Alliance (NSA) expected to field eight teams across the U.S. and play a twenty game schedule from April to July (1998) ("Pro Soccer . . .", 1997). However, in December the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) failed to approve the NSA which resulted in the withdrawal of

support from financial backing (“Soccer . . .”, 1997). Although the world of women’s professional athletics have overcome many obstacles, it is apparent much more must be accomplished before females enjoy the measure of success and acceptance of that of men’s sports.

SOCIETY ACCEPTANCE

Prior to 1996 and the emergence of the ABL, WNBA, and WFP, in the United States women were able to compete professionally in only a handful of sports; tennis and golf being the major sports (Evans & Graves, 1996). It is interesting to note that these sports are individual sports and are traditionally “female appropriate”. Although, the view of the female athlete, as a society, changed dramatically during the 1996 Olympics (Bhonslay, 1997). McCallum & O’Brien (1996) called the 1996 Olympics the “gender equality Olympics”, where the athleticism of women was celebrated more than ever before. In particular, women’s team sports enjoyed this success with America winning gold medals in women’s basketball, softball, and soccer. As female athletes achieved new standards, American society began to notice and even approve of females more than ever before. And these women participated in male dominated sports. The resulting message became clear “if women are given and equal chance to play and are supported in the same ways male athletes are, they’ll achieve similar success” (Hilliard, 1996). As increasing opportunities have produced better female athletes, their successes has attracted a growing number of spectators (Barnett, 1997). The sustained success of women’s professional sports remains to be seen, however, society appears to be supporting women’s professional sports as never before.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The focus of this paper has been on the female's experience in the world of sports. This included the historical aspects of the field of sport psychology, progression of women in sports, and the psychological implications of participation in athletics, such as eating disorders and homophobia.

The history of sport psychology can be traced as far back as 1796 (Boring, 1950). In 1898, the first experiment in sports psychology was conducted (Triplett, 1898). One of the pioneers in the field, Coleman R. Griffith, established the first laboratory dedicated to the study of sports psychology and taught the first course on the subject (Williams & Straub, 1986). The field continued to advance when newly established associations held conferences during the 1960's (Williams & Straub, 1986). However, the majority of the early research literature focused on males, leaving a void in studies devoted to female athletes.

Women became involved in athletics first as spectators and then participants in a limited number of sports, which were considered female appropriate, such as tennis, croquet, and gymnastics. In 1972, Title IX was passed by Congress mandating gender equality in federally funded institutions (Galbraith, 1992). Title IX has directly impacted sports on the high school and college levels, while indirectly affecting the coaching profession and the Olympic stage (Tarkan, 1995; Johnson, 1993; Uhler, 1987).

The study of personality traits and the search for a "sport personality" was the subject of numerous articles. Female athletes often possess characteristics such as aggressiveness, tough-mindedness, and self-sufficiency (Peterson, 1967). Also a high need for achievement

and autonomy has been linked to female athletes (Balazs, 1975). Wittig & Schurr (1980) identified a sport personality consisting of traits such as assertiveness, independence, and self-assurance among college female athletes.

American society long ago accepted males as athletes and associated sports with masculinity (Sabo & Runfola, 1980). Women, however have struggled against confining sex roles and stereotypes placed on the female athlete. Females who participate in sports are often characterized as “tomboys” and “mannish” (Snyder & Speitzer, 1976; Harres, 1968; Sheriff, 1969). As a female athlete becomes successful, she is at increased risk for losing her feminine image (Horner, 1972; Balazs, 1975). This often leads to a fear of success in female athletes, if acceptable gender traits are not displayed, this may lead to negative consequences from society (Nixon & Frey, 1996).

This perceived incongruence between athleticism and femininity has resulted in many women athletes being labeled as homosexuals (Lenskyj, 1991). Many female athletes may be discouraged from participating in sports or from engaging in gender inappropriate sports (Messner, 1992). Sabo & Messner (1993) and Phillips (1996) propose the theory that this homophobia serves to prohibit women from challenging men’s power and authority in sport. This fear of being labeled as a homosexual has often restricted the female athlete and the progress of women’s sports.

Socialization into sport is the process in which a female becomes involved in athletics (Greendorfer, 1978). The role of the family, especially fathers and brothers, in this process often plays a vital part (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973; Lewko & Ewing, 1980). Other important

influences to engage and continue in sports, are provided by peers, coaches, and the academic environment (Weiss & Knoppers, 1982; Isho-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986).

As the female athlete becomes involved in sport, she often faces a unique set of stressors. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia may be a result of these pressures. Research indicates that a third more female athletes use drastic weight loss methods than the general student population (Black & Burkes-Miller, 1988). Stoutjesdyk & Jevne (1993) found female athletes participating in sports emphasizing leanness had the highest percentage of athletes classified as anorexic. Research indicates as many as 60% of female athletes in these sports suffer from an eating disorder (Noden, 1994).

Today female athletes have increasing opportunities at the professional level. Recently, three leagues have been introduced, two in basketball, the WNBA and ABL, and a softball league, the WPF. Women's professional sports have capitalized on the momentum from the 1996 Olympics and are in position to succeed as never before (Fitzgerald Mosley, 1997). The success now enjoyed in women's sports can also be traced to the 1996 Olympics (Bhonslay, 1997). These Olympics celebrated the athleticism of women and have been called the "gender equality Olympics" (O'Brien, 1996). It remains to be seen if these professional leagues will attain long term success, however it appears society is approving of women's professional sports as never before.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The opening field of women's sports allows for a number of areas to expand the current knowledge of female athletes. With regard to measured personality traits of female athletes, the majority of this research dealt with women before the passing of Title IX and the move

toward gender equality in today's athletic world. As more girls and women have the opportunity to participate in sports, it is possible that these characteristics would also become more diverse. Martens (1981) suggested that improvements in methods such as consistent measurement of personality traits, better operationalization of variables, and stronger sampling procedures may result in conclusions regarding personality traits in female athletes.

In the area of sex roles and stereotypes, replication of earlier studies may yield significant information regarding the changing of these perceptions as female athletes gain greater exposure and acceptance across all areas of participation. In addition, few studies have attempted to determine the impact of these stereotypes on the participation and continued involvement in sports by females. As society's view of the female athlete continues to change, how might this affect the extent of sex role conflicts experienced by the female athlete?

It would be reasonable to assume that the level of sex role conflict would decrease as acceptance is gained by the female athlete. However, it also seems possible that this might only add pressure to female athletes, who would now be expected to excel in male sex role activities in addition to traditional female roles.

The socialization of females into sports would also be expected to be affected by the increasing numbers of women sports programs and greater acceptance of these women. As female athletes gain exposure, young girls will witness more women participating in sports well into their adult years. This exposure could serve to further encourage girls to become involved in and stay active in sports. The influence of high profile athletes, such as Rebecca Lobo, Lisa Leslie, and Dot Richardson may become a motivating factor for young athletes.

The psychological stressors the female athlete must face are numerous and varied. As females continue to have increased opportunity at the professional level, the impact of this on psychological stressors resulting in problems such as eating disorders may be seen. Will the chance of competing beyond the amateur level in a greater number of sports increase the tendency of female athletes to develop eating disorders, as they may now have endorsements and professional careers at stake? Or will the addition of more professional opportunities lessen the strain athletes feel at the young ages of high school and college, which before were the highest levels of competition available?

The return of team sports to the professional ranks also offers opportunities to study these women who have persisted and succeeded in traditionally inappropriate female sports.

The method in which these athletes have managed the psychological stressors of homophobia, incongruent sex roles, and stereotypes may also be of importance to the continued development of the female athlete in our society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anthrop, J. & Allison, M.T. (1983). Role conflict and the high school athlete. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 54, 104-111.
- Atkins, C, Morse, C., & Zweigenhaft, R. (1978). The stereotype and recognition of female athletes. Journal of Psychology, 100, 27-31.
- Balazs, E. (1975). Psycho-social study of outstanding female athletes. Research Quarterly, 46, 267-273.
- Balazs, E. & Nickerson, E. (1976). A personality needs profile of some outstanding female athletes. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 32, 45-49.
- Baslow, S.A. & Spinner, J. (1984). Social acceptability of college athletes: Effects of sport sex-typing, athlete sex, and rater sex. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 15, 79-87.
- Barnett, G. (1997, March 3). A lot of leagues of their own: Corporate america spies the future- women's team sports. Business Week, pp. 54-55.
- Bem, S. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42, 196-205.
- Berg, A. & Huntington, A.S. (1997, March). The numbers game: This time around the success of women's pro sports boils down to on thing: Money. Women's Sports & Fitness, 34.
- Berlin, P. (1974). The woman athlete. In E.W. Gerber, et. al. (Eds.). The american woman in sport. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bhonslay, M. (1997, September). Women for sale. Women's Sports & Fitness, 60-63.
- Bird, A.M. & Cripe, B.K. (1986). Psychology and sport behavior. St. Louis: Times Mirror/Mosby.
- Birrell, S. (1983). The psychological dimensions of female athletic participation. In M. Boutilier & L. SanGiovanni (Eds.), The sporting woman (pp 49-91). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Black, D.R. & Burckes-Miller, M.E. (1988). Male and female college athletes: Use of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa weight loss methods. Research Quarterly, 59, 252-256.

- Blinde, E.M. & Taub, D.E. (1992). Women athletes as falsely accused deviants: Managing the lesbian stigma. Sociological Quarterly, 33, 521-533.
- Borgen, J. & Corbin, C.B. (1987). Eating disorders among female athletes. Physician & Sport Medicine, 15, 89-95.
- Boring, E.G. (1950). A history of experimental psychology (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Boutilier, M.A. & SanGiovanni, L. (1983). The sporting woman. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Burke, K.L. (1986). Comparison of psychological androgyny within a sample of female college athletes who participate in sports traditionally appropriate and traditionally inappropriate for competition by females. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 63, 779-782.
- Cahn, S.K. (1993). From the "muscle moll" to the "butch" ballplayer: Mannishness, lesbianism, and homophobia in u.s. women's sports. Feminist Studies, 19, 343-369.
- Caldwell, M. (1993). Eating disorders and related behavior among athletes. In G.L. Cohen (Ed.), Women in sport: Issues and controversies (pp. 158-167). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, G.L. (1993). Women in sport: Issues and controversies. New York: Sage.
- Colker, R. & Widom, C. (1980). Correlates of female athletic participation: Masculinity, femininity, self-esteem, and attitudes toward women. Sex Roles, 6, 47-58.
- Colley, A., Roberts, N., & Chipps, A. (1985). Sex-role identity, personality and participation in team and individual sports by males and females. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 16, 103-112.
- Cratty, B.J. (1989). Psychology in contemporary sport (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Csizma, K.A., Wittig, A.F., & Schurr, K.T. (1988). Sport stereotypes and gender. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 10, 62-74.
- Davis, C. & Cowles, M. (1989). A comparison of weight and diet concerns and personality factors among female athletes and non-athletes. Journal of Psychomotor Research, 33, 527-536.

- Dayries, J.L. & Grimm, R.L. (1970). Personality traits of women athletes as measured by the edwards personal preference schedule. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 30, 229-239.
- Deford, F. (1996, June 10). The women of atlanta. Newsweek, pp. 62-71.
- Del Rey, P. (1977). In support of apologetics for women in sport. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 8, 218-224.
- Diano, A. (1985). Personality traits of adolescent tennis players. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 16, 120-125.
- Die, A. H. & Holt, V.R. (1989). Perceptions of the typical female, male, female athlete and male athlete. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 20, 135-146.
- DiNicci, J.M., Finkenberg, M.E., McCune, S.E., McCune, E.D., & Mayo, T. (1994). Analysis of body esteem of female collegiate athletes. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 78, 315-319.
- Edwards, S.W. (1995). Edwards inventory of emotions: Assessing emotions in athletes and non-athletes. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 80, 444-446.
- Evans, E. & Graves, N. (1996). Pro women's basketball: Are we ready? Sojourner, 21, 11.
- Felshin, J. (1974). The triple option... for women in sport. Quest, 21, 36-10.
- Finkenberg, M.E., Mitchell, C.B., & Weems, S. (1991). Self-concepts of elite collegiate athletes, preliminary analysis. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 73, 509-510.
- Fitzgerald Mosley, B. (1997, September). No flash in the pan: Seven reasons why women's sports are here to stay. Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 78.
- Fitzgerald Mosley, B. (1997, October). Pacing ourselves. Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 88.
- Galbraith, C. (1992, September). Title ix: It's the law. Women's Sports & Fitness, pp. 28-29.
- Gondola, J.C. & Wughalter, E. (1991). The personality characteristics of internationally ranked female tennis players as measured by the cattell 16 pf. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 73, 987-992.

- Grant, C. (1996). Women athletes are harassed. [Online]. Available: <http://www.femininst.org/other/olympic>
- Greendorfer, S. (1974). The nature of female socialization into sport: A study of selected college women's sport participation. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation.
- Greendorfer, S. (1977). The role of socializing agents on female sport involvement. Research Quarterly, 48, 304-310.
- Greendorfer, S. (1978). Socialization into sport. In C.A. Oglesby (Ed.), Women and sport: From myth to reality, (pp. 115-140). Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger.
- Greendorfer, S. (1983). Shaping the female athlete: The impact of the family. In M.A. Boutilier & L. SanGiovanni (Eds.), The sporting woman, (pp. 135-156). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Greendorfer, S. (1993). Gender role stereotypes and childhood socialization. In G.L. Cohen (Ed.), Women in sport: Issues and controversies (pp. 3-14). New York: Sage.
- Griffith, C.R. (1926). Psychology of coaching. New York: Scribner.
- Griffith, C.R. (1928). Psychology and athletics. New York: Scribner.
- Gulick, L.M. (1988). The correlation of personality traits to the formation and utilization of social support systems in female athletes. Dissertation Abstracts International, 49, 2909.
- Harres, B. (1968). Attitudes of students toward women's athletic competition. Research Quarterly, 39, 278-284.
- Harris, D.M. (1971). The sportswoman in our society. Women in sports. Washington: NEA Publication Sales.
- Helmreich, R. & Spence, J.T. (1977). Sex roles and achievement. In D.M. Landers & R.W. Christina (Eds.), Psychology of motor behavior and sport (Vol.II). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hilliard, W. (1996, October). The trickle down effect. Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 55.
- Hilliard, W. (1996, November-December). Riding the wave: There's a sea of change happening in women's sports. Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 35.

- Horner, M.S. (1972). Toward an understanding of achievement-related conflicts in women. Journal of Social Issues, 28, 157-175.
- Horner, M. S. (1972). A bright woman is caught in a double bind. In Martin (Ed.), The american sisterhood. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hult, J.S. (1994). The story of women's athletics: manipulating a dream. In D.M. Costa & S.R. Guthrie (Eds.) Women and sport: Interdisciplinary perspectives (83-106). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Isho-Ahola, S.E. & Hatfield, B. (1986). Psychology of sports: A psychological approach. Dubuque, IA: Brown.
- Jackson, S.A. & Marsh, H.W. (1986). Athletic or antisocial? The female sport experience. Journal of Sport Psychology, 8, 198-211.
- Jacobs, B. (1997, June 10). Softball's new cachet spawns a league of pros. New York Times, Section B, p. 18.
- Johnson, P.A. (1972). A comparison of personality traits of superior skilled women athletes in basketball, bowling, field hockey, and golf. Research Quarterly, 43, 409-415,
- Johnson, W. O. (1993). Olympics: A history of the games. New York: Bishop.
- Kane, M.J. (1987). The "new" female athlete: Socially sanctioned image or modern role for women? Medicine and Sport Science, 24, 101-111.
- Kane, M.J. (1989). The post title ix female athlete in the media. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 60, 58-62.
- Kane, M.J. (1992). Female sports reporters: Ready for prime time? In Women and sports. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.
- Katzman, M. & Wolchik, S. (1984). Bulimia and binge eating in college women: A comparison of personality and behavioral characteristics. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 52, 423-428.
- Kelly, J.A., O'Brien, C.G., Hosford, R., & Kinsinger, E. (1976). Sex roles as social skills: A behavioral analysis of masculinity, femininity and psychological androgyny. Paper presented at the meeting of the advancement of behavior therapy. New York.

- Kennard, J. & Carter, J.M. (1994). In the beginning: The ancient and medieval worlds. In D.M. Costa & S.R. Guthrie (Eds.), Women and sport: Interdisciplinary perspectives (15-26). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Kennedy, K. (1997, June 9). On an idyllic opening night, a women's pro softball league made a historic pitch. Sports Illustrated, p.31.
- Kingsley, J.L., Brown, F.L., & Seibert, M.E. (1977). Social acceptance of female athletes by college women. Research Quarterly, 48, 727-733.
- Knoppers, A. (1994). Gender and the coaching profession. In S. Birrell & C.L. Cole (Eds.), Women, sport and culture (119-133). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Kukla, K.J. & Pargman, D. (1976). Comparative perceptions of psychological well being as influenced by sport experience in female athletes. Research Quarterly, 47, 375-381.
- Lefton, T. (1997, October). Leagues of their own: For now, the WNBA and ABL have no plans to merge. Sport, p. 38.
- Leland, J. (1997, September 1). Up in the air. Newsweek, pp. 56-63.
- Lenskyj, H. (1986). Out of bounds: Women, sport and sexuality. Toronto: Women's Press.
- Lenskyj, H. (1991). Combating homophobia in sport and physical education. Sociology of Sport Journal, 8, 61-69.
- Leonard, W. M. (1984). A sociological perspective of sport (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Burgess.
- Lewko, J.H. & Ewing, M.E. (1980). Sex differences and parental influence in sport involvement in children. Journal of Sport Psychology, 2, 62-68.
- Malumphy, T.M. (1968). Personality of women athletes in intercollegiate competition. Research Quarterly, 39, 610-620.
- Malumphy, T.M. (1970). The college woman athlete: Questions and tentative answers. Quest, 14, 18.
- Marsh, H.W., Perry, C., Horsely, C., & Roche, L. (1995). Multidimensional self-concepts of elite athletes: How do they differ from the general population? Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 17, 70-83.

- Martens, R. (1981). Sport personality. In G. Luschen & G. Sage (Eds.), Handbook of social science of sport (492-508). Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- McCallum, J. & O'Brien, R. (1996, August 12). Women's games. Sports Illustrated, p. 17.
- Messner, M.A. (1992). Power at play: Sports and the problem of masculinity. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Moline, P. (1992, September). Fast breaks. Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 18.
- Mondi, L., Savaiano, J., & Witkowski, T. (1997, May 5). A level playing field for women. Newsweek, pp. 79-80.
- Morris, L.D. (1975). A socio-psychological study of highly skilled women field hockey players. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 6, 134-147.
- Nattiv, A. & Lynch, L. (1994). The female athlete triad. Physician and Sportsmedicine, 22, 60-68.
- Nixon, H.L. & Frey, J.H. (1996). A sociology of sport. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Noden, M. (1994, August 8). Special report: Dying to win. Sports Illustrated, pp. 52-60.
- O'Conner, K.A. & Webb, J.L. (1976). Investigation of personality traits of college female athletes and nonathletes. Research Quarterly, 47, 203-210.
- Pederson, D.M. & Kono, D.M. (1990). Perceived effects on femininity of the participation of women in sport. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 71, 783-792.
- Peterson, S.L., Weber, J.C., Trousdale, W.W. (1967). Personality traits of women in team sports vs. women in individual sports. Research Quarterly, 38, 686-690.
- Petrie, T.A. (1993). Disordered eating in female collegiate gymnasts: Prevalence and personality attitudinal correlates. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 15, 424-436.
- Phillips, J. (1996, May/June). Intolerable. Women's Sport & Fitness, 23-24.
- Porter, K. (1985). Psychological characteristics of the average female runner. The Physician and Sportsmedicine, 13, 171-175.
- Pro soccer: NSA sites are announced. (1997, September 12). [Online]. p.2. Available: <http://www.justwomen.com/archive>.

- Reith, K. (1989, March). **Title ix is back in action.** Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 74.
- Roberts, J. (1992, January/February). **Twenty years of victory: A tribute to title ix.** Women's Sports & Fitness, p. 24-30.
- Rosen, L.W., McKeag, D.B., Hough, D.O., & Curley, V. (1986). Pathogenic weight-control behavior in female athletes. Physician and Sports Medicine, *14*, 79-86.
- Ryckman, R.M. & Hamel, J. (1992). Female adolescents' motives related to involvement in organized team sports. International Journal of Sport Psychology, *23*, 147-160.
- Sabo, D. & Messner, M.A. (1993). **Gender role stereotypes and childhood socialization.** In G.L. Cohen (Ed.), Women in sport: Issues and controversies (pp.15-24). New York: Sage.
- Sabo, D.F. & Runfola, R. (Eds). (1980). The jock: Sports and male identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Sage, G.H. (1970). Sport and american society: Selected readings. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Sage, G.H. (1990). Power and ideology in american sport: A critical perspective. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Sage, G.H. & Loudermilk, S. (1979). The female athlete and role conflict. Research Quarterly, *50*, 88-96.
- Salmela, J.H. (1984). The world sport psychology sourcebook. Ithaca, NY: Movement.
- Schrof, J.M. (1994, June 19). Sporting chance? U.S. News and World Report, pp. 51-53.
- Schultz, B.W. (1977). Self-concepts in athletics. Athletic Journal, *59*, 60-64.
- Schur, E.M. (1984). Labeling women deviant: Gender, stigma, and social control. New York: Random House.
- Selby, R. & Lewko, J.H. (1976). Children's attitudes toward females in sports: Their relationship with sex, grade, and sports participation. Research Quarterly, *47*, 453-463.
- Sherriff, M. (1969). The status of female athletes as viewed by selected peers and parents in certain high schools of central california. Unpublished master's thesis.

- Snyder, E.E. & Kivlin, J.E. (1975). Women athletes and aspects of psychological well-being and body image. Research Quarterly, 46, 191-199.
- Snyder, E.E. & Spreitzer, E. (1973). Family influence and involvement in sports. Research Quarterly, 49, 342-350.
- Snyder, E.E. & Spreitzer, E. (1976). Correlates of sport participation among adolescent girls. Research Quarterly, 47, 804-809.
- Snyder, E.E. & Spreitzer, E. (1989). Social aspects of sports (3rd Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Soccer: No u.s. women's pro league yet. (1997, December 12). [Online]. p. 1. Available: <http://www.justwomen.com/archive>.
- Sparhawk, R.M., Leslie, M.E., & Rose, Z.R. (1989). American women in sport: 1887-1987 a 100 year chronology, Metuohen, N.J: Scarecrow Press.
- Spink, K.S. (1995). Cohesion and intention to participate of female sport team athletes. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 17, 416-427.
- Sports lib. (1994, April 9). Economist. 331, 98.
- Stoutjesdyk, D. & Jevne, R. (1993). Eating disorders among high performance athletes. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 22, 271-282.
- Swift, E.M. (1992, March 2). Women of mettle. Sports Illustrated, pp. 38-40.
- Taking their game to new heights. (1996, Commemorative Issue). Sport Illustrated, p.126.
- Talbot, M. (1988). Understanding the relationship between women and sport: The contribution of british feminist approaches in leisure and cultural studies. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 23, 31-41.
- Tarkan, L. (1995, September). Unequal opportunity. Women's Sports & Fitness, 17, 25-27.
- The olympics short-changes women. (1997). [Online]. p. 3. Available: <http://www.femininst.org/other/olympic>.
- Thompson, S.M. (1990). Thank the ladies for the plates: The incorporation of women into sport. Leisure Studies, 9, 135-143.
- Title ix regulations. (1997). [Online]. p. 1. Available: <http://www.mcs.com/titleixcfr.html>.

- Triplett, N. (1898). The dynamogenic factors in pacemaking and competition. American Journal of Psychology, 9, 505-533.
- Uguccioni, S.M. & Ballantyne, R.H. (1980). Comparison of attitudes and sex roles for female athletic participants and nonparticipants. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 11, 42-48.
- Uhlir, G.A. (1987). Athletics and the university: The post-woman's era. Academe, 73, 25-29.
- Valliant, P.M., Simpson-Housley, P., & McKelvie, S.J. (1981). Personality in athletic and non-athletic college groups. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 52, 963-966.
- Vincint, M.F. (1976). Comparison of self concepts of college women: Athletes and physical education majors. Research Quarterly, 47, 218-225.
- Vogler, C.C. & Schwartz, S.E. (1993). The sociology of sport: An introduction. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Watson, T. (1987). Women athletes and athletic women: The dilemmas and contradictions of managing incongruent identities. Sociological Inquiry, 57, 431-446.
- Weiss, M.R. & Knoppers, A. (1982). The influence of socializing agents on female collegiate volleyball players. Journal of Sport Psychology, 4, 267-279.
- Wetzig, D.L. (1990). Sex role conflict in female athletes: A possible marker for alcoholism. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 35, 45-53.
- What is title ix? (1997). [Online]. p. 1. Available: <http://www.femininst.org/other/olympic>.
- Williams, J.M., Hoepner, B.J., Moody, D.L., & Ogilvie, B.C. (1971). Personality traits of champion level female fencers. Research Quarterly, 41, 446-453.
- Williams, J.M. & Straub, W.F. (1986). Sport psychology: Past, present, future. In J.M. Williams (Ed.), Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance (pp. 2-13). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Winning equality for women in the olympics (1996). [Online]. p. 5. Available: <http://www.femininst.org/other/olympic>.
- Wittig, A.F. & Schurr, K.T. (1980). Psychological characteristics of women volleyball players: Relationships with injuries, rehabilitation, and team success. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20, 322-330.

Wughalter, E.H. & Gondola, J. (1991). Mood states of professional female tennis players. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 73, 187-190.