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THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN COACHING

A Masters Thesis presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate Program in Exercise and Sport Sciences
Ithaca College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Science

---

by

Lauren Schoenberger

December 2015

Ithaca College
Graduate Program in Exercise & Sport Sciences
Ithaca, New York

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

This is to certify that the thesis of

Lauren Schoenberger

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the School of Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College has been approved.

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Graduate Program: ______________________

Dean of HSHP: ______________________

Date: ______________________

ABSTRACT

In the 43 years since the implementation of Title IX, the number of women participating in sport at the college level has grown from 16,000 to 200,000 athletes (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Despite this increase in participation, the proportion of women's teams coached by a female head coach has dropped from more than 90% in 1972 down to 43.4% in 2014 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). A number of reasons contribute to this decline. Sport historically served a social purpose for males and reinforced the notion of heteronormativity (Griffin, 1998). Additionally, unclear career paths, a lack of formal hiring practices in coaching, a lack of role models, unequal compensation (Drago, Henninghausen, Rogers, Vesciao, & Stauffer, 2005), and discriminatory practices (Hemphill & Symons, 2009; Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Muir & Saltz, 2004) all contribute to the barriers facing women who might enter the coaching profession. Mentoring has been shown to promote the advancement of women in other professions and is therefore a viable option for women in sport (Tharenou, 2005). This study examined the lived experiences of women in coaching. Specifically, eight head coaches, five assistant coaches, and two administrators from one institution were interviewed, describing their path into athletics and their experiences over time. Using the constant comparative method, four themes emerged: the developmental pathway, gender inequity, attaining balance, and the supporting cast. The results of this study identify the importance of mentoring to promote growth for women in sport and expand the literature by focusing not on what has driven women out, but on the tools used to make working and remaining in athletics a rewarding choice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Justine Vosloo for her support, encouragement, and thought provoking conversations throughout this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Deborah King for her helpful feedback, as well as her expertise in research methods. Finally, I would like to thank my family, whose love and support has always allowed me to see the world without glass ceilings.

DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the women who shared their stories with me. This Thesis is also dedicated to the girls who play, the women who coach, and the pioneers who started it all.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the 37 year update of their study of women in intercollegiate sport, Acosta and Carpenter (2014) found that, of all women's teams, only 43.4% were coached by a woman, and further, of all men's and women's teams combined, only 22% were coached by women. In the years preceding the implementation of Title IX, more than 90% of women's teams were coached by women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Despite the increase in female participation in sport, the small proportion of women coaching women's teams is troubling. Sport is one of the few fields in which participation is often segregated based on gender, though in coaching, men can be found coaching both men's and women's teams while women are rarely hired as coaches of men's teams (Norman, 2010). As Drago, Henninghausen, Rogers, Vesciao, and Stauffer (2005) pointed out, athletics is a unique field in that the proportion of women's coaches declined at the same time that gender equity in other professions tended to improve.

Not only is there inequity in the number of women coaching women's sports, but the conditions for those who are employed as coaches are drastically different based on gender. Women in coaching are not exempt from the gender pay gap. According to their work with census data, Drago, et al. (2005) found that female coaches are paid about $3.50 per hour less than men. In addition, women are more likely to be part-time coaches than men. When women are employed as head coaches, they tend to be found more often in power conference schools (Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Welch and Sigelman (2007) defined power conference schools as those Division I institutions that automatically receive bids to play in championship bowls. Female coaches are also more prevalent as

coaches of major sports like women's soccer. Religious schools were less likely to have women as coaches, while southern states were more likely to employ women coaches (Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Welch and Sigelman (2007) noted that athletic departments that had a female athletic director were also more likely to have more female coaches. This finding suggests that the gender of the athletic director might bias the potential applicant pool, or that athletic directors are more inclined to hire coaches of the same gender, a phenomenon known as homologous reproduction.

The sharp reduction in the number of women coaching women's teams since Title IX, along with the small proportion of women employed in athletics in general, is not easily explained. Women comprise only 22.3% of athletic directors, 32.4% of head athletic trainers, 12.1% of sports information directors, and only 28.6% of schools with strength and conditioning coaches employ a woman in this role (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). This disproportion is likely due to a number of reasons.

The historical role of sport in defining and segregating the genders is a major contributing factor to the disproportion of women in coaching, as men used sport to assert their masculinity (Griffin, 1998). The inclusion of women in sport threatens this male dominated space, resulting in discrimination against women both as athletes and as coaches. Further, because of the scarcity of women in coaching, there is little opportunity for women to have role models or receive mentoring (Drago, et al., 2005). Men tend to hire other men and offer their mentoring services to those like themselves, so women are largely left out of the picture (Norman, 2010). As a result, the career path in coaching remains unclear (Drago, et al., 2005).

Despite these barriers, other professions have made great strides in achieving greater gender equity over the same span of time that gender equity in coaching decreased. In other professions, mentoring is often cited as an influential and necessary part of this process (Tharenou, 2005). Due to its success, mentoring appears to be a viable option in the efforts to increase the number of women in the coaching profession. The current study examined the role that mentoring plays in recruiting and retaining women in coaching. Specifically, through interviews and qualitative analysis, this research aimed to identify in what ways mentoring contributed to the beginning and ongoing career advancement and development of women in coaching. In addition, this study aimed to determine if women in the field were actively mentoring upcoming student-athletes and coaches.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experience of women in coaching. Specifically, this study examined what factors influence women to enter and remain in the field of coaching, as well as what role mentoring plays in this process.

Assumptions of the Study

For the purposes of this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. The participants are representative of the general experience of women in coaching within the NCAA Division III level.
2. The participants' professional development is consistent with those of other women in coaching.
3. The participants responded honestly during the interviews.

Definition of Terms

1. Mentoring – Describes a relationship between a more experienced party, or a mentor, who offers support and guidance to a less experienced party, or a protégé.

2. *Heterosexism* – The "stigmatization and harmful behaviors that arise toward individuals because of (perceived) non-heterosexual practices and behaviors" (Calhoun, LaVoi, & Johnson, 2011).

3. *Title IX* – Federal legislation enacted in 1972 prohibiting all educational programs receiving federal aid from discriminating based on sex (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

4. *Homologous Reproduction* – A term describing when employers hire others who are similar to themselves because it is easy and comfortable (Kilty, 2006).

5. *Heteronormativity* – The idea that there are only two sexes, which in turn relate to only two genders, and that heterosexual relationships are normal (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009).

Delimitations

The following are the delimitations of this study:

1. The participants were all from one Division III institution.

2. Participants were women currently in the coaching profession.

Limitations

The following are the limitations of this study:

1. The results can only be generalized to medium sized private Division III colleges in the Northeast United States.

2. Participants were not chosen at random.

3. The results can only be generalized to the lived experiences of Caucasian women in coaching.

4. The researcher had a preexisting professional relationship with the participants in this study, which could have influenced the way in which the participants responded.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The following sections examine 1) history and discrimination, 2) the roles of women in sport, 3) gender pay gap and work life balance, 4) coaching pathways and career expectations, and 5) mentorship. Previous research on women coaches focused primarily on coaching as a profession full of barriers to women, and therefore has painted a picture of coaching as an unsustainable career path. As a result, further research should be conducted to analyze and explore what does, in fact, make some women successful in the field, and additionally, how can professionals in athletics use this information to increase the proportion of women coaching women's teams. Specifically, previous research has revealed the need to better understand a) what factors make a career in intercollegiate coaching seem like a viable and ideal option for women; and b) what role mentoring relationships play in creating opportunities for women in coaching.

History and Discrimination

The decrease in the proportion of women coaching women's sports occurred at a time when overall participation rates for girls in athletics increased, leading researchers to attempt to explain this pattern. According to Griffin (1998), sport historically served a social purpose for men, as it provided a place where concepts of masculinity could be defined and created a space for male bonding while reinforcing heterosexuality, establishing status, and exemplifying male privilege. In this way, the participation of women in sport is a feminist act (Griffin, 1998), and the gendered organization and

segregation of sport makes it a critical environment for challenging gender norms (Pelak, 2008)

Griffin (1998) noted that in the early 1900s, sport was thought to threaten a woman's ability to reproduce, a health concern echoing an argument used to keep women out of education (Daniels, 2005). As gender roles and marriage evolved, some participation in sport became socially acceptable, as women were seen as energetic, active, and assertively heterosexual (Griffin, 1998). Yet, opportunity was restricted to upper class, private sports like hunting, golf, and tennis, thereby excluding the working class, immigrant, non-white, aboriginal, and lesbian women (Daniels, 2005). Despite the increase of women and girls participating in athletics, masculinity and sexuality garnered greater emphasis as a result of the gender, race, and class movements of the mid 1900s, bolstering socially constructed power structures that privilege straight white men over everyone else (Messner, 1996). Despite this association with masculinity, women continued to hold an interest in sport, and the implementation of Title IX in 1972 afforded them opportunity where previously none existed (Blumenthal, 2005).

Since Title IX passed in 1972, the number of women playing sports at the college level increased from around 16,000 to 200,000 athletes, yet in the same 40 year span, the representation of women coaching women's teams decreased from more than 90% to 43.4% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). The patterns that Acosta and Carpenter (2014) identified in the realm of intercollegiate athletics are present in Olympic competition as well, where the overall percentage of women competing in sport has increased, the percentage of women in coaching has declined, and women are almost absent in administrative and managerial positions (Jevtic & Juhas, 2011). According to the

International Olympic Committee (IOC), women's participation grew from 13% of all participants in 1964 to 44% in the 2012 games (International Olympic Committee, 2014 update). However, women comprise 22.5% of the IOC membership, 26.6% of the IOC Executive Board, and about 5% of all National Olympic Committee Presidents (International Olympic Committee, 2014 update).

Jevtic and Juhas (2011) attributed this partly to the lack of women who can serve as role models or mentors as coaches. When women become head coaches, they are visible to the public, thereby making them representative of the capability of women in any leadership position (Buzuvis, 2010). Other factors include the lack of support for women entering the field of coaching, the pursuit of higher paying jobs, and other structural barriers to women in athletics (Jevtic & Juhas, 2011).

Title IX promised equal opportunity regardless of gender, but in practice, women were met with resistance. The increasing presence of women in sport threatened the historic masculinity of sport, causing men to actively defend and protect their image. Group members tend to behave in similar, normative ways to fit in with one another, which in men's sport culture can manifest as aggressive heteronormative sexual behaviors (Krane & Barber, 2003), coaxing one another into asserting virility by demeaning and abusing women, homosexuals, and less masculine teammates (Hemphill & Symons, 2009; Muir & Saltz, 2004). Men who do not conform can face harassment. These discriminatory behaviors perpetuate a culture within sport in which there is no space for gay men, gay or straight women, or minorities.

Women faced discrimination on a large scale as well. From 1968 until 2000, the IOC allowed femininity testing out of fear that men would compete as women (Daniels,

2005). In this way, when a woman participates and succeeds in sport, her status as a woman falls under scrutiny. Mass media outlets contribute to discriminatory viewpoints as well. For example, movies create gendered expectations in their narratives by depicting women either as the cheerleader distraction for male athletes or as straight and beautiful athletes, normalizing homophobic and misogynistic slurs used to characterize poor performance by men (Daniels, 2005).

Online message boards portray similar behaviors and views. One study revealed an unwritten ethical code in which racism was intolerable while sexist and homophobic slurs were acceptable (Kian, Clavio, Vincent, & Shaw, 2011). Even the portrayal of Title IX in sports writing calls to question the validity of affording women the opportunity to participate in sport. Hardin, Simpson, Whiteside, and Garns (2007) found that national stories tended to discuss Title IX issues using war language, focusing on the limitations imposed on men by Title IX. Accounts that used more male sources tended to portray Title IX more negatively than those with more female sources, but most sports writers were men, and male writers tended to use the most male sources, resulting in an unbalanced dialogue peddled by major news sources (Hardin et al., 2007).

College and university media outlets normalize the degradation of women in sport as well. For example, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender coaches are hidden or underrepresented in online coach biographies, a practice that maintains the majority versus minority standings (Calhoun et al., 2011). The expectation of norms might vary by race as well as seen in a study by Southall, Anderson, Nagel, Polite, and Southall (2011) in which 62% of white respondents and only 35% of African American respondents were comfortable with an LGB coach. Due to the perpetuation of stereotypes and the

normalization of discrimination, players and spectators can tacitly cultivate a preference for heteronormative male scripts and make choices to play for coaches based on this subconscious opinion (Knight & Giuliano, 2003).

Naming practices also contribute to and reflect the “gender equity climate” that views men as the dominant, rightful members of athletics and keeps women in a subordinate, second-class position (Pelak, 2008). When a department places a word like “lady” in front of the women’s team name while leaving the men’s team name alone, that department communicates that men are the real athletes and women are the intruders (Pelak, 2008).

Interestingly, schools that are low in their adherence to Title IX’s proportionality prong are more likely to apply sexist naming practices in their department. In other words, schools that distinguish gender in their team names tend to be the schools that already limit the opportunity for women to participate in sport at that institution. Further, despite the increase in female participation in sport since Title IX, a majority of higher education institutions, especially in Divisions II and III and among schools in the South and Midwest, are in fact not in compliance with Title IX (Anderson, Cheslock, & Ehrenberg, 2006). Conversely, among other factors, schools that employed a woman as a head women’s basketball coach were less likely to use sexist names (Pelak, 2008), revealing an apparent relationship between schools that place women in power positions and a more equitable athletic environment. Such behaviors and expectations can serve both to reflect what is occurring in athletics and to normalize those behaviors and expectations. Muir and Seltz (2004) observed this in their study of rugby’s subculture, noting that the male athletes promoted demeaning, poor treatment of women and

commonly used homophobic and anti-female slurs to criticize performance and imply weakness, while sport officials and the women who supported the players rationalized, excused, and tacitly overlooked the derogatory behavior (Muir & Seltz, 2004). When discriminatory, demeaning actions and language go unchecked, they become normal and acceptable.

The idea that women do not belong is bolstered by discrimination. Because sport is historically a man's domain, it is no surprise that men hold the power role of head coach, despite the increase in female participation in sport. Women who pursue a career in coaching are choosing to enter a professional field in which masculinity is still often valued as superior. Women are not warmly welcomed, yet despite the cultural and societal belief that they are less than their male counterparts, some women do still decide to coach.

The Roles of Women in Sport

The homophobia and sexism in sport directly impacts the student-athlete experience. Males who are worried about appearing masculine enough might be deterred from participating in sports viewed as more feminine, like gymnastics, while females might choose to abstain from certain sports to avoid earning a lesbian label or building muscle (Krane, 2001). In addition, both male and female gay athletes and coaches can experience fear, humiliation, isolation, violence, be kept out of sport, fear being outed, and might be forced into silence for the purpose of upholding a team's image (Osborne, 2007). As a result, in an effort to fit the socially accepted gender molds, men act in hyper-masculine ways while women are forced to portray a stereotypical feminine image (Griffin, 1998).

Griffin (1998) identified the socially constructed female archetypes as "sexy beauty queen, the girl next door, the cute little pixie, the bitchy slut, and the wife and mom" (1998, p. 51-65). While some of these roles might sound harmless, attempting to finely fit into any of these boxes works to perpetuate the objectification of women in sport, valuing personality and appearance over professionalism and competence. In professional sport, the money and personal value that a woman gains in her career tends to depend more on her ability to portray a "heterosexy femininity" than on her athletic ability (Daniels, 2005). This is true for women in coaching as well. Not only are elite coaches often assumed to be men, but women employed in health, kinesiology, or elite coaching positions are often implicitly assumed to be lesbian, which is in turn associated with separation from a partner, stereotyping, loss of status, discrimination, and pressure to promote a heterosexy image (Norman, 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2010).

Sartore and Cunningham (2010) suggested that heterosexual women should use their majority, privileged status to help remove the stigma attached to homosexual women, as they have the ability to advocate without fear. On the other hand, women might put themselves at professional risk by not conforming to an acceptable feminine image. Gender biased hiring practices can occur, as in the case when an athletic director who suspects a woman of being a lesbian hires a man instead in an attempt to "rehab" a team's lesbian image, or under the assumption that the female athletes will be safer with a man (Griffin, 1998). Opposing coaches might use suspected homosexuality as a negative recruiting tool (Griffin, 1998; Kilty, 2006). Such practices create a hostile hiring environment, forcing lesbian women to hide their sexual orientation. This is problematic, as a failure to increase role models and visibility for women allows members of the

athletic community to maintain the stereotypes and assumptions that lesbians in sport have an unfair advantage in athletics, discriminate against heterosexuals, are immoral and poor role models, are sexual predators, and participate in specific sports (Griffin, 1998).

Strictly heteronormative sporting environments foster prejudice, which could make student-athletes and their parents more comfortable with a heterosexual coach (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009a). When participation in sport subjects women to discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation, all women's identities are threatened. Because of the negative psychological, physical, and professional tolls that arise from attempting to manage perceptions of identity, women choose safe spaces or gender appropriate roles and sports and are left acutely aware of their at-risk status (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009b). However, by choosing to enter and remain in "safe" jobs and conforming to socially acceptable images, women play an active role in reinforcing negative stereotypes, heterosexual norms, and the marginalization of women.

Griffin (1998) posited that, for conditions to improve and women to pursue careers in athletics, they must see other women, both straight and gay, blazing the trail. Without the guidance of a mentor, young coaches grow discouraged and are more likely to leave the field (Kilty, 2006). When lesbian coaches remain closeted in their professional lives, they model that behavior as the acceptable behavior for their athletes to follow (Krane & Barber, 2003). Although sport is touted for its ability to empower girls and women, the silence surrounding homophobia in sport leads to disempowerment, the perpetuation of negative ideas, and the ongoing stress, low self-esteem, and poor self-concept among lesbians in sport (Krane & Barber, 2003). An increase in role models and the opportunity for the mentoring of student-athletes could help create new norms for

women in sport (Ensign, Yiamouyiannis, White, & Ridpath, 2011; Krane & Barber, 2003).

Advocating for change and standing up to the status quo can be risky, however. Sexual orientation is not a protected class in thirty-eight states ("Sexual orientation," 2015), there are no federal laws prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination, and Title IX has no clear protection against sexual orientation discrimination (Osborne, 2007). Further, because there is so much scrutiny on the appearance of women in athletics, female coaches can feel the burden of representation, a pressure that is even higher for black women in coaching (Norman, 2010). Women in Norman's (2010) study felt like they had to work harder than others to prove their competence but had little opportunity for further education or coaching. In this way, women cannot solely focus on coaching, but instead, must reevaluate every decision to ensure they are not only doing well in general, but that they are representing all women satisfactorily.

The burden of representation can fall upon student-athletes as well. A study of the first black female swimmer for a particular Division I women's team described the woman's feeling of loneliness, isolation, and stress as she was consistently required to explain and correct her teammates about the perceptions of black culture and black swimmers (Norwood, Waller, & Spearman, 2014). Kamphoff and Gill (2008) found that minority athletes often cited a lack of role models, unfair treatment, and a lack of support for minority coaches, and were more likely to perceive differences in treatment of coaches based on race when compared to non-minority respondents. White women when compared to white men more often reported noticing a difference in treatment based on gender. Despite their awareness of discriminatory practices, however, athletes from racial

minorities were more likely to express interest in pursuing a career in coaching than were non-minority athletes, pointing out that they were likely to face discriminatory practices regardless of their final career choice. Therefore, discrimination or unfair practices in athletics were not deterring factors (Cunningham & Singer, 2010).

Despite this view, racial minorities find a career in coaching a challenge as well. Drago et al. (2005) pointed out that, among women coaches, African American women are especially underrepresented. Research outside of sport explained that racial minorities have to work longer in middle management than white people before they advance (Thomas, 2001), leading to lower representation of minorities in power positions (Bozeman & Fay, 2013). This is in part due to the lack of mentoring opportunities for minority employees (Thomas, 2001). Cross-race mentoring could help, but does not occur often because of possible resentment and scrutiny for both the mentor and mentee (Thomas, 2001). Black coaches and those of other racial backgrounds must overcome both the barriers to women in general, as well as the unique burdens of representation and barriers that accompany minority races and cultures.

Gender Pay Gap and Work-Life Balance

Due to employers' gender-based expectations for women in the workplace, it is not surprising that women are entering their careers with their own expectations for what will come. The challenges women face, like unclear career paths, a lack of formal hiring practices in coaching (Drago et al., 2005), and occupational structures in sport (Bradford & Keshock, 2009) work to create an environment in which women hold low expectations for their treatment. Specifically, women tend to expect lower pay and fewer promotions than men (Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011), a feeling consistent with the fact that

women coaches are paid about $3.50 per hour less than men (Drago et al., 2005). The pay gap in athletics widens as the level of competition grows. Specifically, at four-year division III private institutions with football, head coaches for men's teams make an average salary of $34,156, while head coaches of women's teams on average are paid $28,471. At four-year division I-A private institutions with football, head coaches for men's teams make an average salary of $585,345, while head coaches of women's teams make an average salary of $146,843 ("The equity in athletics," 2013).

This finding reflects the national issue of the gender pay gap. Research conducted by the American Association of University Women (2015) found that, while the pay gap has decreased over time, on average in the United States women are paid only 78% of what men are paid, with numbers ranging from as low as 66% in Louisiana to 91% in Washington, DC. Further, the pay gap increases over time, from 82% immediately after college graduation to 69% ten years later (American Association of University Women, 2015). The gender pay gap cannot be explained by different choices made by men and women. Beyond general gender discrimination, women are evaluated based on different criteria than men (Lips, 2013) and face cultural and societal expectations that correlate to specific pay and employment opportunities. The result is the segregation of the labor force, with men more heavily represented in fields that offer higher pay (American Association of University Women, 2015; Stockdale & Nadler, 2013).

When women do have the opportunity to work alongside men, they are often treated differently, especially if they have children. Women with kids are often pushed out of their jobs by resistance to family-friendly work policies and a lack of flexible schedules (Lips, 2013; Tharenou, 2013). In fact, men are often better compensated after

becoming a parent, while women are paid less or not hired at all (American Association of University Women, 2015). A workplace that favors one gender over the other removes what appears to be choice in women's decisions and reveals instead necessity (Lips, 2013). Baker's (2010) study of academia supported that men and women do not have the same choices when aiming to balance their work with their personal lives, and women often feel the brunt of these conflicts. Women reported a lack of positive female role models and the challenge of overcoming familial expectations that a female should pursue a more traditional career. Men were more likely to move for their own career advancement, have a partner, and have children, while women were often separated or divorced, lacked children, and if they were partnered, felt they had to put their male partner's career first.

Baker (2010) noticed the combination of cultural influences and institutional pressures that Lips (2013) suggested. Women more often reported the need to adjust their work schedules to care for children and a majority of the housework duties, while men were unlikely to accommodate family issues instead of a career opportunity. Further, while a partner can provide support, some women in academia felt their lack of a partner or children made them seem more serious and driven in their careers and less of a liability (Baker, 2010). Again, women are presented with the problematic choice of work or family, as even when an organization claimed to be accommodating to family issues like maternity leave, coworkers struggled to act in an accepting manner (Baker, 2010). Improving institutional structures, therefore, does not necessarily correlate to improving cultural norms and expectations.

Rather than work to better understand or address inequities in pay and advancement based on gender, wage gaps are used to justify the status quo. The current social expectation is that while both members of a couple should work, women should also spend more time at home because of lower pay or inappropriate benefits packages, yet, when women take on more childcare and housework than men, women report lower job satisfaction overall (Zhao, Settles, & Sheng, 2011). This argument portrays housework and childcare as negative and secondary to work and makes work-life balance specifically a women's issue, driving women out of work. It also assumes heteronormative family structures, thereby failing to address the diversity of the workforce. Such a narrow scope in research on work-life balance fails to lend itself to broad, real-life application.

Instead of focusing on work-life balance solely as a women's issue, it should be discussed as a men's issue, a social issue, and an institutional issue. Bailyn (2011) highlighted this problem, citing that conflicts between work and home are not necessarily clear-cut, as gender bias in the workplace is a systemic, accepted part of the everyday procedures, making it hard to identify and easily dismissed. Further, issues of work-life balance extend beyond childcare to any personal life outside of work and therefore cannot be defined as a single gender issue. As a result, addressing gender equity at work and home can help all employees find balance (Bailyn, 2011).

Careers in intercollegiate athletics reveal similar work-life problems. In coaching, work-life balance pressures include extreme workloads, family-unfriendly jobs (Drago et al., 2005), and high-level competition (Stebbings, Taylor, Spray, & Mtoumanis, 2012). These findings are consistent among women working in all levels of sport, as they face

gender inequities, sexism, roadblocks from the old boys network (Quarterman, 2006), wage discrimination, and a decreased likelihood to partner or parent than other women (Schneider et al., 2010). Bruening and Dixon (2008) suggested that sport is structured on a male-model in which employers do not view coaches as primary caregivers. However, athletic directors retain coaches who are mothers when they allow for a flexible schedule or provide coaches who are parents with additional assistants. Women cited the support of their athletic director as almost equally important to partner support (Bruening & Dixon, 2008). The gendered nature of work-life conflicts should be addressed to see improvement.

Kolb (2013) recommended using negotiation not only for salary or position but also for an improved workplace culture that combats unequal gender expectations resulting from “second generation” bias, or bias that is less obvious but happens daily. Buzuvis (2010) suggested that lessening the wage gap would in turn close the gender gap in coaching. Mentoring is another tool that aids employees in overcoming stereotypes, biases, and racism, and can therefore be used to aid women in their career advancement (Wilson, 2014). Mentoring programs should help women view themselves as both career and family-oriented and provide encouragement for women to pursue opportunities (Baker, 2010). Although these solutions only address work-life balance as it pertains to women, they can still aid in improving the overall climate for work-life balance in athletics.

Additionally, women in coaching can call upon Title IX to protect against discriminatory actions based on sex, reporting unfair or discriminatory practices, or when given fewer resources than men but are held to the same high standards. In other words,

Title IX is a tool for women in coaching that can allow them to focus on actual coaching responsibilities instead of combating and overcoming discrimination in the workplace (Buzuvis, 2010). The number of court cases concerning Title IX is growing rapidly, creating greater opportunity to understand what exactly the legislation covers, as well as how broadly it can be applied to combat inequalities (Anderson & Osborne, 2008).

Coaching Pathways and Career Expectations

Despite the barriers women face when entering and attempting to make a career in coaching at the intercollegiate level, there are those who persevere. In a study of the development of expert coaches by Nash and Sproule (2009), coaches named other coaches or physical education teachers who influenced them in their career choices and success. In addition, most of the coaches played other sports, began coaching while still playing, aspired to coach, viewed their athletes as people, and found informal mentoring and watching other coaches to be valuable. Specifically, coaches cited that mentors were especially helpful early in their careers (Nash & Sproule, 2009). Similarly, Erickson, Cote, and Fraser-Thomas (2007) outlined what they viewed to be the important stages of coaching development. These included playing a number of sports from ages 6-12, playing more competitively from 13-18, playing at a highly competitive level and beginning to coach from 18-23, developing through interactions with mentors from ages 24-28, and finally living as a high-performance head coach from age 29 on.

In a third study, Werthner and Trudel (2009) asserted that coaches are lifelong learners and experience five common learning situations throughout their career. These include athletic experience, formal education, coaching training, coaching clinics and courses, access to mentors, and self-reflection. Researchers found that these five themes

were important to the coaches surveyed, but the perception of each situation's importance varied from coach to coach (Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Stebbings, Taylor, Spray, and Mtoumanis (2012) examined what male and female coaches found fulfilling and inadequate about their jobs. Professional development opportunities increased job satisfaction for coaches by allowing them to interact with peers in the profession, increase their overall perceived value of coaching, and increase their competence which in turn affirmed a feeling of job security, a sense of belonging, and a greater sense of psychological well-being, thus allowing them to coach freely and create a better atmosphere for their athletes (Stebbings et al., 2012).

The discovery of a common career path to coaching could be shared and used to increase the representation of women in the profession. For example, Nash and Sproule's (2009) study and Erickson, Cote, and Fraser-Thomas' (2007) study both showed that commonly, coaches played their sport and were influenced at some point by a mentor-like figure. If interest in coaching were attributable to those two factors alone, one might assume that there would be more women coaching already simply due to the rise of women participating in sport. However, the rate of increase in proportion of women in coaching has not kept pace with the increase of women participating in sport, resulting in a dearth of mentors for women, a problem that is consistently cited as a contributing factor to the lack of growth in the field of coaching for women (Bradford & Keshock, 2009; Drago et al., 2005; Jevtic & Juhas, 2011). Senior women administrators, for example, commonly report a lack of female mentors – the presence of which could enable networking opportunities – as a contributing factor to a lack of advancement for women in athletics (Schneider et al., 2010).

Unless there are women interested in pursuing a career in coaching, pathways are irrelevant. Motivations and career expectations, then, are equally important avenues of research, and according to Sagas (2000), men and women expect different outcomes as coaches. Men typically perceive a need to spend more time as an assistant coach than women. Men also anticipate retiring later than women. Interestingly, of the participants in Sagas' (2000) study, more men sought head coaching positions, yet women perceived a greater gender advantage and more opportunity. Perhaps there is opportunity, but women are not aware of the length of time they must invest to attain higher positions. The presence of a more experienced mentor might help women learn appropriate career expectations (Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011). Interestingly, Sagas (2000) also found that when women were passed over for a head coaching position, they attributed it to a lack of experience or to their young age. This is an important point, as it reveals the incongruent expectations among women regarding career advancement: women expect to advance with little experience, yet point to this lack of experience to explain why they fail to advance.

Sagas (2000) also found differences in motivations between men and women coaches. Men tended to want to be a head coach so that they could be in charge, while women wanted to show career advancement that aligned with their personal goals, as well as to attain the ability to control their time and schedule. Such variation in career motivation reveals different values between the genders, which could aid in explaining the disproportionate number of women coaches.

Pressure to win is commonly listed as a negative aspect of coaching (Sagas, 2000; Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). Weiss et al. (1991) found that women in

assistant coaching positions discussed overemphasis on winning as one negative aspect of coaching, in addition to poor interactions with their head coach, large time demands, low perceived coaching competence, negative working relationships with players, and a lack of administrative support. When asked to explain their own perceived coaching weaknesses, participants listed a lack of sport knowledge, a lack of positive leadership qualities, poor planning and management skills, poor injury-prevention and maintenance skills, and poor physical skills (Weiss et al., 1991).

Interestingly, the weaknesses noted by these female coaches relate to the aspects of coaching that they disliked. Perhaps, for example, an assistant who has a broader knowledge of sport, better leadership qualities, and better management skills will not only feel more competent, but will also be less likely to report bad interactions with coaches, perceived incompetence, or poor working relationships with players. Further, many of the noted negative sides to coaching would likely be cured with experience, but women will not gain experience if they quit. Further, if a woman is working without adequate support or guidance, the coach might feel as though she will not improve. A mentor could help this coach to grow and improve perceived weaknesses while effectively navigating administration and other factors beyond a coach's control.

Despite the negatives, the women in Weiss et al.'s (1991) study acknowledged positive attributes to coaching as well. These included influencing the life development of their athletes, acting as role models, developing their own skills in coaching – especially when they have a mentor – and the social support that comes from having a mentor. They listed their strengths as interpersonal communication and teaching skills, motivation, knowledge of the game, discipline, and providing a balance of work and play

(Weiss et al., 1991). Again, in light of their perceived strengths, it is no surprise that influencing development and acting as a role model were favorable aspects of coaching. The mention of mentorship as a positive aspect of being an assistant is notable, as it suggests that both want and need the guidance offered by a mentor to keep them in sport.

As Nash and Sproule's (2009) and Erickson, Cote, and Fraser-Thomas' (2007) studies explained, coaches tend to have a career as an athlete before entering the coaching profession. In their study of whether or not college athletes want to coach, Kamphoff and Gill (2008) found that fewer women were interested in coaching than were men. Women who did want to coach expressed more interest in coaching youth sports or helping other female athletes to reach their potential. Kamphoff and Gill's (2008) findings could be influenced by the factors that Weiss et al. (1991) found to appeal to female coaches. For example, women who want a better life balance and enjoy teaching might decide to coach youth sport.

Finally, the women in Kamphoff and Gill's (2008) study who wanted to coach expressed interest in addressing women's issues like equal pay and equal opportunity, revealing that student athletes and women outside of coaching can see the gender-based inequities of sport. However, the research fails to address how to encourage these forward thinking women to enter and stay in the field, and while mentoring is consistently posited as the answer to the scarcity of women in coaching, there is little practical application or insight into the validity of this answer.

Mentorship

Mentoring can occur in a number of ways. According to Chao (2009), mentors can offer career support, which occurs when the mentor provides the mentee with work-

related challenging assignments, guides the mentee in work with others, and aids in promotion (Beres & Dixon, 2014; Chao, 2009). A mentor can also provide psychosocial support, which is characterized by the mentor counseling, accepting, and offering friendship to the mentee (Beres & Dixon, 2014; Chao, 2009), though this could be less critical than career support (Stamm & Buddeberg-Fischer, 2011). One study found that women whose mentors offered more career support tended to advance higher than women whose mentors offered more psychosocial support (Metz, 2009). Psychosocial support is defined as help from a mentor that deals with emotions related to career, while career support directly confronts the challenges and barriers in the environment (Tharenou, 2005).

In a study of the influence of mentor support on career advancement for women in lower and middle organizational levels, women who had mentors that offered career support were significantly more likely to advance in their careers, as seen by promotion and increase in pay (Tharenou, 2005). As in Metz's (2009) study, psychosocial support from a mentor did not help career advancement, and might have deterred it (Tharenou, 2005). Tharenou (2005) also found that female mentor support was more helpful to women than male mentor support, as long as that support was career support and not psychosocial support.

There are also different types of mentoring structures. Haring-Hidore (1987) discussed the differences between grooming-mentoring and networking-mentoring. Grooming-mentoring occurs when a protégé receives mentorship from an experienced worker and is characterized by an intense relationship between the protégé and the mentor. Grooming-mentoring tends to contribute to rapid career advancement for the

mentee, though the intensity of the relationship can be problematic, as coworkers might become angered over perceived favoritism. Further, as the mentee advances, she will likely become peers with the mentor, causing the two to redefine their relationship, which could take some time. Finally, a mentee might be hindered if her mentor experiences problems or setbacks with her own career (Harring-Hidore, 1987). On the other hand, Haring-Hidore (1987) pointed out that networking-mentoring is less intense, and can include a number of people who exchange resources and information. Networking can help more women at one time, as there is not one specific mentor.

Mentoring is unique in its intensity and involvement. According to Chao (2009), informal mentoring tends to be more intense than formal mentoring, as the mentor and mentee will likely have approached one another of their own accord, and will thus be more invested in the relationship. In addition, because informal mentoring relationships are not mandated through an organizational program, the relationship can be long-term. That being said, Chao (2009) pointed out that formal mentoring can work, but the process of matching the mentor and mentee should be done carefully. Specifically, mentor and mentee should be matched based on strengths, needs, and priorities, in addition to background information. However, Chao (2009) noted that the mentor and mentee will be more successful if both parties are engaged and committed, suggesting that the characteristics of informal mentoring make it advantageous over formal mentoring relationships.

A related field to mentoring, Stelter (2014) discussed these interpersonal supportive relationships using the terms "coaches" and "coachees." There are three focuses for this coach and coachee relationship: values, meaning-making, and reflecting

on storytelling and narratives. Like a mentor and protégé relationship, Stelter (2014) deemed the purpose of this relationship to listen and inspire one another. Both the coach and the coachee benefit from these conversations. Waltman, Bergon, Hollenshead, Miller, and August's (2012) study illustrated the mutual benefits of mentor and protégé. They found that educators who acted as mentors were happy to have the opportunity to mentor students, stating that mentoring was rewarding for them.

Interestingly, Miller and Slocombe (2012) explained that what is required of a mentor might be changing as the millennial generation enters the work force. Miller and Slocombe (2012) characterized this generation as one that is not concerned with whether or not they are qualified to join the work force; instead, this group simply feels entitled to jobs, feeling a higher sense of confidence despite their lack of qualification or academic prowess. If the rising generation of workers is drastically different from previous generations, mentors will need to revise and refine their approach to mentoring. Miller and Slocombe (2012) recommended that mentors focus on competitiveness, recognize where the mentor and the mentee expectations for performance do not match, provide appropriate incentives for performance, and give realistic feedback. Further, mentors should help the mentees to consider the needs of their employers and encourage the notion of teamwork (Miller & Slocombe, 2012). These recommendations seem applicable to coaching, as they not only encourage clear and open communication between the mentor and mentee, but they mimic the communication that a coach might have with her athletes.

Miller and Slocombe (2012) stated that mentors should be aware of the needs of a rising generation of workers. However, their concerns might not be unique to dealing

with the millennial generation, as matching appropriate mentors with mentees and understanding how to properly promote growth in a mentee are both principles that are necessary for all successful mentor-mentee relationships. In addition, as noted, the role of the mentor is to aid in the successful advancement of the mentee within a company or organization, not to cater the company's work processes to the mentee's needs. Worth noting, at times, mentees report receiving more guidance and information than the mentors realize they gave (Beres & Dixon, 2014). So, perceived differences or communication barriers based on generational or other gaps might not be as drastic as mentors and mentees understand.

According to McDowall-Long (2004), professionals who had mentors tended to have more career success, advancement, satisfaction, and positive coping skills. Further, Weaver and Chelladurai (2002) found that professionals who were mentored tended to be more satisfied with their work and extrinsic rewards than people who were not mentored. This is important, as extrinsic rewards like rate of advancement in an organization, degree of status in an organization, and salary, all play a role in overall job satisfaction.

Mentoring has been suggested as a critical tool for aiding women and minorities in their career advancement (McClain, Bridges, & Bridges, 2014). Numann (2011) noted the inequality in academia and cited unconscious bias, or the "second generation" bias discussed with Kolb's (2013) research, as one of the culprits perpetuating inequities. Numann (2011) claimed that women need mentoring to advance, as mentoring relationships enlighten women on the process of career advancement. Further, Numann (2011) noted that the process of advancement should be transparent. Numann wrote that gender and race do not affect knowledge and skill, so mentoring opportunities should be

available to all people, not just men. This would in turn work to eliminate discrimination in career advancement, which would benefit academic and other professional institutions, as it would ensure that the most qualified people move up the ranks, not just the most qualified white males. By ensuring that the most qualified people advance, these institutions will promote a better future for academia. Yet despite the suggestion that mentoring would help women and minorities, institutional barriers within mentoring itself combat rapid improvement.

While mentoring would likely help women in their career advancement, Noe (1988) noted that men in management positions were often unwilling to mentor women. In a longitudinal study of the careers of lawyers, Kay and Wallace (2009) found that men and women did not seem to have much of a difference in the quality of their mentors. However, men tended to have more access to mentors of a senior status, which gave them some advantage in career satisfaction and sense of fairness in the workplace. On the other hand, women tended to form close mentoring relationships with more than one mentor. When this occurred for women, they had more satisfaction with the workplace than men.

As professionals climb from managerial positions to corporate leadership, the scene remains bleak. Women are underrepresented in corporate leadership, an issue that McDonald and Westphal (2013) attributed to the group dynamics of current boardrooms. Most board members are white men who have the power to mentor and guide up and coming employees who might be on the board, and these men choose others like themselves to mentor. If there is no woman or minority already present on the board, women and minorities receive little mentoring. So, even if they make it onto the board, they are unlikely to receive the guidance that other first time board members would

receive, leading to poor performance and subsequent removal from the board (McDonald &Westphal, 2013).

Similarly, in a study of medical school graduates, Stamm and Buddeberg-Fischer (2011) found that more men had mentors than women. They also found that career success was predicted by gender, career orientation, having a mentor, and career support. Those who prioritized family over work or who wanted more convenient working hours were less likely to have a mentor, while those who were active, decisive, independent, and proactive, and those pursuing work in academia were more likely to have a mentor.

In athletics, Noe (1988) suggested that women do not have mentors because, in a male dominated field, there are fewer women available to act as mentors for other women, and without a mentor, opportunities for advancement might then be given more to males than females. As mentioned, there is a higher proportion of men coaching than women, making Noe's (1988) discussion of gender-biased mentoring practices relevant for the field of athletics.

The practice of men networking with and mentoring only other men creates what is commonly referred to as the "old boy's club" (Norman, 2010). Jevtic and Juhas (2011) called this homologous reproduction. A study of the perceptions of senior women administrators (SWA) in intercollegiate athletics found the "old boy's club" to be the issue most often noted as a factor preventing women from advancement within an athletic department (Schneider, Stier, Henry, & Wilding, 2010). The SWA's that participated felt that factors such as a lack of education or degree, a lack of knowledge, or a lack of basic qualifications were not to blame for the lack of career advancement for women in an athletic administration. There are qualified women who should have the opportunity to

advance, but similar to Griffin's (1998) findings, Schneider et al. (2010) found that SWA's experienced setbacks like prejudice and discrimination against women in general, and lesbian women specifically, thereby hindering their career advancement. On the other hand, men in sport administration perceive discrimination based on the need to hire a senior women's administrator, as mandated opportunities for women limit the opportunities for men (Bower & Hums, 2013).

Further, homologous reproduction can be used to aid women as well. For example, the gender of an institution's athletic director could make a difference. Welch and Sigelman (2007) found that athletic departments with a woman as the athletic director were also more likely to have more women coaching within the department. This finding suggests that the gender of the athletic director might bias the potential applicant pool, or that athletic directors are more inclined to hire coaches of the same gender.

Within athletic administration, Weaver and Chelladurai (2002) found no significant association between the rates of mentoring and gender or divisional membership. This finding should not be a surprise, as it reflects research done on people who have climbed the ranks of their profession. If mentoring does in fact play a role in career advancement, we should find little to no difference between males and females within the same profession holding the same positions. These rates should be consistent. If this is a valid assumption, then research surrounding the role that mentoring plays in coaching could provide a crucial key to aiding other women in entering the profession.

Meanwhile, a study of NCAA Division I basketball coaches found that when the assistant coach and the head coach were similar in both sex and attitude, the assistant received more career and psychosocial mentoring from the head coach. This finding was

most dramatic in shorter mentoring relationships. Women in assistant positions were likely to receive less mentoring from head coaches who were white men (Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2008).

Coaches want to learn, be better, and be mentored (Nelson, Cusion, & Potrac, 2013). In a study of mentoring in coaching, Nash (2003) found that mentors often initially saw their role as that of an overseer, correcting the mentee's behaviors instead of developing a relationship. However, to have a positive mark, mentors should have effective communication skills, knowledge of the sport, experience in the field, approachability, and enthusiasm (Nash, 2003). Further, students in Nash's (2003) study reported that their mentors were a resource, helped to build confidence and develop knowledge and skills, provided challenges and questions, and acted as role models.

Summary

Women face a number of barriers in the workplace, including a lack of access to networks of information, tokenism, stereotypes, socialization practices, avoidance of cross-gender relationships, and a reliance on ineffective power bases (Noe, 1988). Women who work in athletics are no exception to these workplace inequalities (Drago et al., 2005). The historic role of sport as a men's space, and the gendered nature of sport as a whole creates an environment in which women are already considered less than men before they even step up to compete. Despite the increase in women's participation in sport following Title IX, women still face hurdles as they attempt to make a career in athletics. Women can face discrimination based on gender, race, and sexual orientation, too, making them less likely to pursue a long term career in coaching.

The relative absence of women in coaching has been evaluated for years. Researchers consistently offered solutions with common themes: women need greater opportunity, supportive networks, positive discrimination, or women on the inside actively working to bring others up and make conditions and opportunities equitable, and finally, the key to all of this, mentoring (Norman, 2012). Yet, despite the consistent suggestions for improvement, the current research tends to focus not on a solution to the problem, but on the problem itself. Some authors discuss career paths for coaches in general, yet women are not the focus, and when they are, excerpts focus on the struggles of a woman in coaching. Further, despite the widespread research on mentoring in other fields of study, current research fails to investigate the role mentoring might play in helping increase the proportion of women coaching women's sports.

The present study sought to address this gap. Specifically, in gathering information from women who coach, this study aimed to identify if and how mentoring contributed to the career advancement of women in coaching, as well as whether or not current coaches actively mentor others. The findings of this study open the door to a wider look at solutions to the low proportion of women coaching women's sports, and further aid the creation of future recommendations concerning how to increase the number of women in coaching.

Chapter 3

METHODS

This chapter describes in detail the methodology of the study. The methods section is subdivided as follows (a) design, (b) participants, (c) procedures, (d) data analysis, (e) validity and reliability, and (f) researcher bias.

Design

This study was carried out as an ethnographic qualitative study. Merriam (2009) wrote that qualitative research focuses "on process, understanding, and meaning" through a descriptive, inductive process (p. 266). Merriam (2009) also noted that the researcher is the instrument of data collection. Data were collected by the researcher through a series of interviews and was subsequently analyzed by the researcher as a means to inductively draw conclusions. The term qualitative study covers a range of approaches. Critical research attempts to assess power dynamics in an area and pushes for change in these dynamics, while ethnography works to interpret culture and cultural systems (Merriam, 2009). Finally, this study was also a case study. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). This study took place in a single, purposefully selected institution. The researcher interviewed specific individuals within that institution, and the analysis of these interviews was richly descriptive. Therefore, the present study was a critical feminist ethnographic case study.

Participants

Sampling in this study was purposeful, thus allowing the present study to capture a full picture of career advancement for the women in coaching at the chosen institution. Participants ($N = 15$) were women who currently coach and work in the context of

intercollegiate level sport. Work-life balance is often cited as an issue in sport, so in an effort to gain perspective from those who have learned or are learning to balance this, participants were limited to full-time coaches. Participants included head coaches, assistant coaches, and administrators, allowing for multiple perspectives and a range of experience.

As this is a case study, participants were all from the same Division III athletic department at a college in the Northeastern United States. There were 15 participants based on the full number of women serving as full time head or full time assistant coaches at the school and women in administration, as defined by the school's athletic department as working a 40 hour week and being compensated as such. The 15 participants in this study included 2 administrators, 8 head coaches, and 5 assistant coaches, ranging in experience from 4 to 39 years working in intercollegiate athletics. Information regarding each participant's position and career can be found in Table 1. All head coaches had more than 20 years of experience. Those not employed as full time head or assistant coaches of a varsity intercollegiate sport at the time of the study, men who coach women's teams, and coaches outside of the chosen institution were not included. The specific institution in this study was selected based on the position the researcher held within the institution, as well as the unique circumstances of the school. The researcher was a coach within this department, providing a professional rapport with the participants, as well as an insider's view into the case. In addition, while women make up about four out of every ten (43.4%) of coaches of women's sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), women coached eleven out of fifteen (73%) women's teams within the

Table 1

Participant Information

Role	Sport Type	Years Coaching
Head	Individual	23
Head	Individual	39
Head	Team	20
Head	Team	32
Head	Team	25
Head	Team	25
Head	Team	25
Head	Team	22
Assistant	Team	12
Assistant	Team	6
Assistant	Team	6
Assistant	Team	4
Assistant	Individual	16
Admin	-	35*
Admin	-	20*

*years total represents time coaching and time in administration
Note: Participant labels (e.g. P1) have been redacted from this table to maintain confidentiality

chosen institution. Further, two women currently led the athletic department in this study – one in the role of athletic director and the other in the role of assistant athletic director – while overall, only 22.3% of all athletic directors are women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). These deviations from the norm made this institution an ideal case study. Because of these unusual circumstances, this institution and the women who coach there lent itself to greater understanding of the factors that make coaching a more viable, long-term career for women.

Procedures

Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis. After approval from the Institutional Research Board, the study commenced. Each participant received an email asking them to participate in this study. Due to the researcher's standing professional relationship with each of the potential participants, each participant received a personal email asking for participation in a study of the role mentoring plays in the coaching profession. Each participant was asked to participate in a 90 minute interview. Once the recruited coaches agreed to participate, they were given an informed consent form (Appendix A), and the researcher arranged a time for the interview to take place. The location of the interview was in each coach's office, or an agreed upon location.

In this context, interview means that the researcher and the study participants had a conversation about mentoring in the context of coaching. The interviews in this study were semi-structured. Specific questions were asked for information such as "What is your position?" and "How long have you been coaching?" According to Hardin and Whiteside (2009), the process of asking questions and exploring narratives is important, as it provides insight and enlightenment in regards to social climates and ideologies.

When women share their stories, they create the opportunity for change (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009). Therefore, the remaining questions in this study were open-ended. Examples of these open-ended questions are "What made you decide to choose coaching as a career path?" "Tell me about any mentors you have had that have influenced you as a coach," and "Tell me about the opportunities you have had to mentor others." See Appendix B for the full interview guide.

The questions in this study were designed based on a pilot study completed in May, 2013 (Appendix C). The pilot study asked participants to complete a questionnaire pertaining to each participant's length of experience coaching at the intercollegiate level, her perception of the role that mentoring had played in her career, and whether or not she herself mentored another coach. While the pilot study covered the same materials, it was carried out via an online questionnaire. As a result, open-ended questions were minimally answered, and there was no opportunity to follow up on these written response questions. For the present study, data collection was changed from online survey to in-person interviews. Further, the number of questions was reduced and the use of refined open-ended questions allowed for elaboration and follow-up on interesting points as the interview progressed.

Interviews were in person. Each interview was tape-recorded, and the researcher took notes during the interviews to keep track of any interesting or noteworthy moments in the conversation. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the voice recordings of the interviews. Participants were then given a summary of their transcribed interview to check for accuracy and clarity.

Data Analysis

Because this study was based on interviews, data collection and analysis occurred throughout the study. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Transcriptions contained identifying, descriptive information that distinguished each interview. The researcher also took notes during the interviews, and recorded thoughts and ideas in a notebook throughout the study. Each transcribed interview was typed and digitally stored. The researcher worked through the transcripts line by line, assigning each line a number. Interviews were transcribed during the study according to the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009).

After each transcript was typed and numbered, the researcher proceeded with open coding, making notes in the margins of the transcripts line by line and characterizing each data point. Next, the researcher proceeded with axial coding, a process during which the researcher worked through the transcript again, searching for ways in which each individual data point could be grouped with others, creating larger categories and themes. This process was repeated until all transcripts were coded and categorized, and the number of categories was narrowed down to an appropriate number for expressing the data (Merriam, 2009).

Trustworthiness

The researcher took a number of steps to ensure trustworthiness in this study. First, the researcher adequately engaged in the data collection, specifically looking for ways in which the data could support a different conclusion or explanation than the researcher initially noticed. This worked to overcome any biases the researcher might have had in analyzing the data. The researcher reflected on biases and dispositions, as

seen in the next section. In addition, data sources went through analysis triangulation, as the interviews were compared against each other to gain a full understanding of the lived experiences revealed within the study (Shenton, 2004). Further, the researcher kept an audit trail, or a journal of the study with specific descriptions of each step of the study. Finally, participants in the study were given the opportunity to examine the typed summary of their interviews to check for accuracy and clarify any sections that they felt misrepresented their intention.

Researcher Bias

The researcher of this study was a woman and was a full-time assistant coach within the athletic department in which this study was conducted. She approached this research with a feminist perspective (Merriam, 2009), and her experience in athletics led her to believe that women are not afforded the same opportunities as men, and the language and culture of athletics, though generally positive and empowering at her current institution, is commonly unsupportive of women as athletes and professionals. She decided to enter the field of intercollegiate athletics because of her appreciation for sport, positive experiences coaching younger athletes, and conversations and learning opportunities afforded her by a mentor coach during her time as a college athlete. As a result, she saw mentoring as valuable in her own experience, but arrived at this topic wondering how intentional mentoring is and how successful it is as a tool to promote growth of women in the field of coaching.

The researcher was sensitive to these biases. She was also sensitive to her position as a staff member and coworker to the participants. While her professional relationships

might have created an environment of easy conversation and greater trust, she was sensitive to this familiarity as she analyzed the data.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Analysis of the interviews revealed the emergence of several themes: a) the developmental pathway, b) gender inequity, c) attaining balance, and d) the community. See Appendix D for extended thematic results.

Theme 1: The Developmental Pathway

The first theme to emerge addressed the journey that led each of the participants in this study to a career in athletics. Specifically, the women described growing up around sport, their initial foray into coaching, and the developmental opportunities they had after becoming coaches.

Sub theme 1: "I grew up playing sports"

The participants in this study described their participation in sport at a young age. Availability of opportunities to participate in sport varied, but participation in some form of physical activity was consistent. Those growing up in the Title IX era specifically noted their participation despite limited availability of such opportunities.

> "....I grew up loving all sports and I grew up in a time where you played whatever the season is, so I played field hockey, I played basketball, softball, I was on the swimming team, and.... so as an athlete I was probably a jack of all trades, and.... I knew in high school that I wanted to do something involved with athletics...."
>
> (P12)

Because the availability of sport opportunity was inconsistent, family support was key for the women in this study. Parents and siblings encouraged and allowed these women to

pursue their interests in sport, fostering positive experiences with athletic participation. As one participant described,

> "Well, I grew up playing sports. I grew up with an older brother. I grew up with my dad coaching, and then his teaching me and my brother taught me, so I grew up around athletics." (P8)

Playing sport was normal, and especially in a family with siblings, was not a gendered experience. Instead, dads, moms, brothers, and sisters all encouraged play. Another participant described this normalcy of sport and play:

> "I was the youngest of 4.... [W]hen I was born I was in this environment and my.... siblings were all very engaged in athletics, and I'm like 4 years behind....so they were really competitive as I was growing up, and I would just pick up the sports as they did it, because they were doing it." (P11)

Again, sport participation was not unusual within the family. Instead, it was like any other childhood routine.

Sub theme 2: "I just never thought it was a possibility"

After growing up around sport, these women attended college. While some of the women entered college with the intention of pursuing a career in athletics, not all did. Yet regardless of initial career expectations, college provided a space for these young athletes to continue competing in sport. During the exploration of higher education, coaching became a natural path for some participants, as described here:

> "As I was taking the classes.... I liked what I was doing, I didn't really want to do it, I just knew that. I wanted to coach and I wanted to coach at the college level and I never thought twice about it." (P11)

For others, coaching was not their initial aim. Instead, participants earned degrees in areas such as physical education, athletic training, theatre, psychology, and special education. Yet, when given the opportunity to work in their chosen fields of study, they disliked their options. One coach remembered her time as a student teacher:

> "I was a Phys Ed major.... did my student teaching and in the middle of it decided there was no way I wanted to teach at a school." (P15)

Similar experiences in other areas of study turned women off from their initial career trajectories. Still, women did not think of coaching as a replacement option. One coach described this succinctly:

> "I mean, it's not that I didn't want to coach, in the beginning, I just never thought it was a possibility." (P7)

As a result, initial forays into coaching were less often purposeful career moves than they were a means to an end: a master's degree. After earning bachelor's degrees, the participants who sought their graduate degree used their athletic experiences to work as graduate assistant positions as a means to afford more schooling. One applied for a graduate assistant coaching position to enable her to earn a degree in athletic training, an experience that unexpectedly pushed her instead towards coaching:

> "So I got that position, and.... helped coach. It was great, and I was an athletic trainer, decided that was not for me, absolutely, definitely not for me." (P1)

Again, another participant described a poor professional experience as an intern that inspired her to use her athletic background to return to school:

> "[O]ut of college I wasn't sure what I was going to do, so, I....had the opportunity to work...as a sports information intern, and after doing that for 9 months, I

> decided that was not the correct path for me, so.... I used my playing background... to get a GA position… [I] was hoping to... get my MBA [and] use that experience to just pay for it, and then see where the path took me, really open ended, no like I'm gonna be an astronaut type stuff." (P14)

By offsetting the cost of education, graduate assistant coaching positions created exposure to the world of coaching and exposing it as a viable career choice.

Worth noting here is that the women in this study did not inherently know about the opportunities to become graduate assistants. With the widespread availability of the internet, openings for assistantships are easier to find, but most of the women in this study were exploring a world predating the web. So, whether attending graduate school or entering coaching immediately upon graduation, other coaches and people of influence shared information about job postings, fulfilling a critical role in finding opportunities, jobs and assistantships. Further, information sharing was often informal and more a passing comment than a directive. One participant described the role her coach played:

> "When I was graduating, my college coach came to me and said 'you know there's an internship at... college for assistant... job,' and I wasn't sure I wanted to get into the teaching world just yet so I was like alright. And I never even thought about coaching as a profession so I was like, well let's go try it." (P5)

In that example, again, coaching was not perceived as an option until her coach offered a suggestion that it could be. Another woman recalled a similar conversation with her own coach:

> "So, my college coach actually said 'why don't you try to get a grad assistantship and get your masters that way.' [I] really didn't have a lot of money, so.... graduate school really wasn't an option for me." (P10)

Sometimes, the call to pursue higher education came from outside athletics. While less directly tied to coaching, the faculty who inspired this woman to pursue graduate studies played a similar role to the coaches in the previous examples, using their knowledge and experience to offer a path otherwise unconsidered:

> "Right after, as I was going through the spring of my senior year, all the faculty said, 'you're going to need a master's degree in order to be certified to teach.'" (P12)

Participants in this study reported a love for coaching after this initial experience. Although often it was not originally intended as a next step or a permanent move, becoming a coach felt natural. One participant recalled,

> "I didn't know where anything was going to go, but I.... still wanted to be competitive, and so coaching was a draw, because it was a way to still be competitive and not be an athlete." (P3)

Sub theme 3: "If you're not getting better, you're already worse."

The women in this study eventually remained in the profession, sometimes working at up to five schools over the course of their careers thus far, and all eventually arriving at the current institution. As they continued their careers in athletics, their developmental opportunities grew from working within their small world of contacts into the greater governing bodies within their sports. Coaching conventions and clinics, for

example, provided opportunities for networking and learning about current issues and techniques in each sport. As one woman stated,

> "[A]t the convention....I met a lot of other people in coaching so I got involved in more camps and throughout the country and stuff, which was good." (P10)

More specific conventions offered intense networking. For example, in addition to general coaching conventions, three of the participants noted attending a convention specifically aimed at women in coaching, called the Women Coaches Academy. This intense kind of work offered closer networking and support specific to women. One participant specifically was struggling in her career when she was accepted to this conference. She shared,

> "Like I said I just couldn't take it, and then I went there and .... it was just an uplifting very.... encouraging part that.... you need to show young women, they need to see that, you know, women need to coach women, and it was just a really good ....experience for me. It turned my life back around and said hey, you know, you gotta suck it up.... you just gotta find different ways to do it and approach it differently….I was sitting in the corner actually caught crying, and writing in a book of why I do this, and what my philosophy is. It just totally changed my life around.... I couldn't see myself not doing what I wrote on the paper another day of my life." (P9)

Intensive clinics like this created an environment in which women in coaching could get beyond the surface level networking and dig into heavier topics. Another woman explained this further:

"The small close knit group of the coaches academy....is really unique, and then you have, this helps you develop a network because you spend an intense amount of time in a short period, going over all aspects of coaching, with a group where it's immediately set up as this trusting environment, and then you know, you get into it, and I think that allows you to develop.... a system of at least a few people out of that group where you can have a close, respected, support network moving on." (P14)

The variety of professional development conventions allowed the participants to make connections and network effectively within a variety of circles. Where a convention like the Women Coaches Academy might offer a supportive network of women across sports, a sport specific convention might offer career networking.

Similarly, recruiting posed benefits beyond the obvious identification and evaluation of prospective student-athletes. Coaches found that recruiting additionally offered another venue for networking with other coaches. One coach summarized this well:

"The convention is all ideas, networking.... recruiting. You watch kids, but you sit there and watch kids with other coaches, and you can talk the game and talk strategy and ideas, and it's networking. It's like, 'oh hey, we're going to dinner." (P7)

Like recruiting and conventions, participants noted their work on committees, working camps, taking classes, coaching other teams outside of college, and the personal growth that occurs over time. The willingness to learn was a key factor in the effectiveness of developmental opportunities. As one woman stated,

"I think you learn from everybody, in any situation….If you're not getting better, you're already worse." (P8)

Interestingly, despite the range of experiences, successes, and outside influences, the women in this study commonly concluded that their paths were due instead to luck, as illustrated in the following reflections: "It's also sort of like hey, this is what just landed in my lap!" (P2); "A lot by luck. Being at the right place at the right time." (P1); "….I was at the right spot at the right time." (P8); "And I'm like alright, this is what's in my faith too, and I guess there's a plan for me, and let's just follow it." (P13); and finally:

"I distinctly remember when I turned 40, going, 'wow, am I really gonna do, is this my career? Is this really....I'm going to finish out my career as a coach, or if not I should probably.... think about what I do want to do because I probably should do it if I want to do it, and decided yea, I, this is what I want to do for a career, and I kinda just did it up to that point because I enjoyed it. And.... fell into it, kind of." (P3)

Now all working at the same institution, the participants each had reasons for coming and staying as long as they had so far, including the surrounding community, peers at the school, and positive work experiences. A common draw was the pride that accompanied the opportunity to return to their alma mater. When offered the opportunity to return to the school, one participant who was an alumna stated:

"And so I thought about it and then I said yes I would love to go to [sic] at this point in my career and have the chance to work here, and it's funny because I feel like everything I've done…. really prepared me for what I'm doing here now, and this is a huge program, there's a lot of people, and very, very different,

complicated challenges to this position, and it's really exciting. I love being here." (P12)

Though each woman carried a unique life story, the participants in this study shared a common developmental path. Their early exposure to sport normalized the experience and created a safe, supportive environment for them to grow and compete in the games they loved. All of the women went to college and competed in athletics, then often at the suggestion of a coach or trusted advisor, coached after graduation, and finally made the decision to pursue coaching as a career. Professional development opportunities like clinics and a variety of conventions aided their growth in the field, and through a series of career moves, all of these women found themselves working together, many for decades, at one common institution.

Theme 2: Gender Inequity

The second theme addressed the improvements in gender equity the participants witnessed and helped to implement over the course of their careers so far. Over time, the women noticed positive change within their own institution. Continued struggles then were focused on interactions with members of the broader athletic community at competitions and other outside events.

Sub theme 1: "What's changed? Everything."

Head coaches and administrators spoke openly about the battles to achieving fair treatment in the workforce. Few noted discrimination or hostility growing up, but one experienced homophobia at a young age because of the sports she played:

> "See I think I was lucky and, for some reason, I just never cared that people made fun of me because it was just so thoroughly enjoyable to me I could care less. And

that was, that's something that a lot of girls growing up my era couldn't get past, you know and some things now you know, and softball always had the stigma growing up, as being you know the gay sport, lesbians play softball, whatever, but you know and I just didn't care. I enjoyed the game, I enjoyed basketball, I didn't care. I enjoyed just playing, you know and playing at a high level." (P8)

Other participants did not mention being targets of homophobia.

Instead, gender discrimination was the most prevalent type experienced by the women in this study. To achieve longevity in athletics, women had to fight for improvements. Over time, the demographics changed within specialized areas of sport as well as within the institution's department. Often, change was intentional, initiated by women within the department banding together and demanding equity across the board. Title IX became an effective tool, used to prompt a series of debates and eventual improvement in treatment, job expectations, facilities, and overall support for women's programs. A coach who had been at the school throughout this process reflected on these experiences:

> "What's changed? Everything. Nothing has stayed the same....What has changed? Well.... gender equity, you know, that whole process, where you know the coaches are on more equal terms as far as workloads for coaching, and workloads for teaching, 'cause that was very skewed back when I first started." (P8)

She went on to describe the process of change, noting that improvement took a long time, hard work, and a willingness to fight:

> "[W]e used to just go toe to toe, and you know [a male administrator] brought me into his office and goes.... you can't take this personal and I go.... number one,

you Male, 50 some odd years old, cannot say that to me, because you have not lived in my shoes. You have not lived in all high school us wearing gym clothes as our uniforms when the baseball, basketball, and all the [boys'] programs had full sets of uniforms. You can't tell me that when we'd have to practice at 8 o'clock at night when we'd have to practice after Varsity and JV boys were done, and then the Varsity girls could go. I go, you can't tell me these things because ....it is personal. I have lived it. I've lived the entire time. I am a Title IX baby. I am that. I got my job because of Title IX. And now these kids, these girls, women, the Olympic programs now, the kids are benefiting, you benefited from it. You know people have benefited from it, but I was in the trenches. We were fighting that fight." (P8)

Thanks to these struggles and the perseverance of the women in the department at the time, participants admitted they have seen vast improvements. For example, many attributed the fulltime status of their respective coaching positions to the institution's commitment over time to improve, but some still struggled and had garnered a broader awareness with age.

Over time, the focus of the fight shifted outward. Women recalled recent instances of blatant gender discrimination at events outside of the institution, where more men were present than women. One participant described being called a "bitch" on a regular basis by other coaches and officials at competitions where she tended to be vastly outnumbered by men:

"I take it personal, you know, I really take a lot of pride in the fact that I don't think I'm, I am that way, like I just coach the sport, and it has nothing to do with

who I am as a person, you know and of course the whole, 'well that's why you're not married because you're just a bitch,' I mean I've gotten that a couple of times, and I'm like, 'well, no I'm not married because I choose not to be married,' you know." (P6)

So, instead of focusing on preparing their teams for competition, women have the added burden of preparing themselves for harassment.

Sub theme 2: "....I've never played for a female."

Interestingly, women experience gender discrimination from their own teams, too. One might assume that women who play sports would be happy to play for women who coach, but instead, women in this study commonly noted experiences in which their student-athletes challenged them because they were afraid of playing for a woman. One recalled a conversation with an athlete who confessed her initial reservations after being recruited:

"[W]e had a kid here once say, 'I was actually worried about playing for you because I've never played for a female.'" (P7)

When students have never competed for a woman coach before, they can be hesitant, or carry preconceived notions of what that experience should be like based on their interactions with other women of authority. Another participant commented on this challenge of perceptions:

"You know one other thing [that is] interesting is that, because, so many guys coach at the high school and club level, they come to me and they've never had a female coach. You know? And so quite often, and I'm pretty I mean I'm demanding, and at the same, I think culturally they're not used to women being

> maybe as demanding as I am sometimes, so I mean they can take it from men, but they take it very personally from a woman. So that's a challenge sometimes." (P10)

Others continued to comment that women athletes expected different treatment from women coaches, sometimes attempting to explain this phenomenon further. As another participant noted, female athletes can react negatively to women who coach when their expectations of treatment do not align with the reality of the relationship:

> "I think that it's tough for women, I think female students are harder on female coaches than they are on male coaches, that's been my observation…I think that there is.... an expectation from female athletes that 'oh, he's a guy, he's gonna yell at me, so it's ok,' whereas if a female coach does some of the same things, it's not tolerated. There's a different, it's just a different expectation, and I think what's happened is, over time, more and more youth programs are coached by men, and so that's what girls and women are used to, and so that's like, it's almost an anomaly when they have a female coach." (P12)

While this was a common struggle, another participant cited that at times, conforming to cultural expectations and coaching in a gentler way allowed greater success in coaching female athletes:

> "[W]here I find [sic] coaches being successful from my perspective, a[s] women who coach women, is when they definitely show a high level of care and nurturing, [and] at the same time [a] good dose of you know, feedback, critical feedback that's very direct and very sport specific, and I think that that's, that's an interesting takeaway." (P14)

These comments so far consistently referred to gendered treatments and expectations held by others against the women in the study. However, as this participant posited, women can enact negative gendered expectations on themselves as well without realizing they are doing so:

> "I have a friend that's applying for jobs and I playfully asked are you applying for men's jobs as well and it was just a 'No.' It wasn't even a consideration as an option. So it's interesting. Men don't use gender as a barrier when applying for jobs and women do." (P14)

Identifying discrimination from the outside is easy, but this comment suggests that women could be complicit in some ways as well, inhibiting their own growth within athletics by following their own perceived gender guidelines.

Despite the change in overall conditions for women at this particular institution, discrimination based on gender persisted in their everyday experiences, highlighting the shift of the battle from within the institution to the perceptions of outside programs, incoming student-athletes, and sometimes even themselves.

Theme 3: Attaining Balance

The participants in this study described the challenges of having both a rewarding career and a fulfilling home life. The struggle to attain balance centered around being near family and friends early on in their careers and later shifted to making decisions based on the influence of a partner or children. Interestingly, the women in this study tended to make decisions that leaned towards career advancement if they could not balance both. Strong partner support and administrative support made coaching a sustainable enterprise.

Sub theme 1: "I packed my bags and moved"

In addition to fighting the ever-changing face of gender discrimination, women commented on the struggle to find a balance between work life and home life. The interviews revealed a number of challenges to balance, including the distance between family or a partner and a job opportunity. This distance often played a role not only in deciding which job opportunities to pursue, but also in choosing whether or not to remain in the coaching profession. One woman recalled the difficult decision to leave a job where she was growing professionally so as to be closer to family:

> "[S]o it was really, tough but to be closer to home, and to be at one of the best Division III programs, I packed my bags and moved…." (P6)

The struggle to choose a career move entailed weighing personal priorities, including the opportunity to be closer to family. However, another participant did not realize that family was a personal priority until she took a job away from them:

> "I had four nieces and nephews born in the year I was out west.... I couldn't see them until a month or two later, and I realized gosh, family is really important to me, it's more important than I thought it was, you know." (P13)

That same woman then moved back to be closer to family, and described her new lens for decision-making:

> "I met my husband not long after that, and I thought this would be a great place to.... have a career, I can get everything I want as far as career, I've got my family, and a great environment, so that's kind of how I came to stay here." (P13)

When the women in this study were able to find the location that offered the opportunity for professional growth and a rewarding family life, they tended to stay.

Sub theme 2: "You give up a lot of family life when you become a coach"

But, living in the same town or area as family did not solve all problems of balance. Instead, creating time for both work and home life still posed a challenge. The decision to have children exacerbated this stressor, especially over periods when sport demands were high. One woman recalled the demands of her job at the time when she and her partner decided to start a family:

> "It was consuming, and I was trying to get pregnant, I was underweight, I mean I was stressed." (P1)

Having children brought greater demands outside of work and created inflexibility and compounding stress. As one woman described:

> "[A]nd then it's just like, your lack of sleep, and you just are.... trying to you know keep everybody healthy and go to work so you can come back and mow the lawn and take care of stuff and we had a great nanny, well, then you're looking for child support and that's one thing [this school] doesn't have, is any child support, so you're on your own, man." (P11)

During the busiest times of the season, women with children worked to give enough attention to work and family with the promise that things would get easier when their sports transitioned out of season, only to find little relief:

> "During the summer it's a little different but, even then it's still time that you're traveling and you're away from home and I think that definitely takes its toll after a while." (P5)

The time demands of sport and athletics out of season increased over the years, making recruiting a point of contention and a central reason for lack of balance. Many women found that aiming to give equal attention to work and family did not work. Regardless of how the women prioritized their time, they felt like they were shortchanging the other side. One participant characterized coaching as a decision to make sacrifices:

> "You give up a lot of family life when you become a coach...especially at the college level there's recruiting to do." (P9)

However, another woman reflected on her attempt to balance her home life with her work life. She managed her expectations, yet still hoped to find a solution, describing,

> "[I]t's never going to be a fair balance, but it's going to, you're going to have some, I want some kind of personal life." (P15)

Whether the women in this study defined their family as kids, partners, parents, or siblings, attaining close proximity was a comfort, but not always a complete solution.

When the women in this study could not be close to family, they described a longing for change and dissatisfaction with their situation. Choosing what to do on a day off became prioritizing loved ones and limiting time with friends or other family. The year round commitment necessary to run a competitive program limited social opportunities and diminished the ability to attend important family events as well.

> "I don't want my job to be my whole life… I want to like, have a family and like, have friends my age that I can play with, and have, which aren't necessarily things that go with being up here doing this, but I'm also like, well this is the only full time job with benefits that I have had." (P2)

Other women echoed this longing for proximity to family and friends. Their comments often ended with a general feeling of dissatisfaction and resignation to their current situation. As another coach described,

> "....The closest person to me that is....someone who I genuinely....love, is an hour and a half away…. that is tough, that's really tough….I genuinely have to drive at least an hour and a half to find someone near and dear and close to my heart, which is hard." (P7)

When family or a partner was not supportive of distance or the demands of a job, women had the option of passing up an opportunity or leaving their partner.

Sub theme 3: "I've got a partner in that"

Those who gave up coaching for a partner realized they made the wrong decision and returned to their careers without their partners. Those who spent time working to balance work with an unhappy partner struggled to do so. Instead, it created dissatisfaction in both arenas. Family support proved important in creating the opportunity for the women in this study, as parents encouraged their daughters to play sports and later, to apply for jobs. That the next level of vital family support is finding a supportive partner then is unsurprising. One coach recalled consistent comments from a partner regarding how much she was investing in her work:

> "That doesn't make me feel any better, as a person, that I have to miss things. You know what I'm saying? And to have that repeated several times is like, ok I get it." (P15)

In this way, a supportive partner is necessary for survival and longevity as a coach.

Another participant attributed her ability to rise in her career to her decision not to tolerate a partner who was not supportive. Often moving up in athletics necessitates moving to a new location, and she described this relationship between her career advancement and her expectation of partner support, and her "lack of tolerance" for someone who is unsupportive of her career:

> "I think those are important factors for sure, it's a, for me a factor of being with me and then also you know, a factor of, I don't know, it's just a positive thing to have, so it's kind of ....deal-breaker." (P14)

For her, having a supportive partner was critical to a better feeling of stability and balance, creating a sustainable lifestyle. This sentiment was common, as women with supportive partners reported confidence in their abilities to overcome obstacles and find solutions for problems. One coach discussed her own challenges with balancing work and family but came to a positive conclusion:

> "[T]hose are, you know those are challenges but I think that....you know I've got a partner in that, you know and, and we certainly you know, try to figure those things out together and kind of carry a little bit of the load." (P3)

This coach knew that she had help in her struggles, and her description illustrates the relief and sustainability that this support provides.

Women with children attributed their ability to work and have children to their partner support, too. While older children might have a better understanding of job demands, partners have the ability to normalize the lifestyle of coaching for young children by delivering positive messages to their kids. For example, if a coach parent has

to miss a family event because of work, she can work with her partner to ensure their child still feels support and love. One mother talked about her family in this way:

> "It's hard because I give up a lot of, a lot of my family time, a lot of my family life.... I saw [my child] maybe playing 1 or 2 basketball games, all of [the] whole basketball season, you know and I was, I was here….That end makes it, makes it a lot trickier....[I]f I didn't have a supportive husband, I wouldn't, I wouldn't be able to, I would have had to quit my job." (P9)

While her description still revealed the struggle of balance, her supportive partner helped make her job feel sustainable. Another coach described that although her family was supportive, she found herself looking at her job from a different perspective:

> "Even having a partner too, it's like you make a decision, like there's more in life than work 'cause when you get on your deathbed you're not going to think oh I should have taken that last recruiting trip or you know? It's going to be about your family and that kind of thing, and what time you spent with them.... I have a little regret, that I've spent more time working than I should have at times with them....but, I can't do it any other way." (P13)

Sub theme 4: "They give you the utilities to succeed"

In addition to family and partner support, administrative support proved vital to career satisfaction and a reduction of stress for coaches. Women needed to feel not only that their administration understood their family demands by allowing for flexible schedules, but provided a positive vision, direction, and protection, all of which enabled the coaches to worry less and focus more on their jobs. While comparing her current administrative staff to one at a previous institution, one coach described,

"[The administration is] not only supportive but they give you the utilities to be able to succeed. So they're not saying yea, go to the coach's convention, but they give you the funds to go. You know, so I think that's what's different here is, they believe in what they're saying, and they're willing to help you find the ways to get there." (P4)

Another coach described the importance of administrative support early in her career.

"I remember the first year I got, like I was just about in tears. I received this nastiest letter from a senior's parent. You know.... 'she doesn't know what she's doing, she's this, she's that'....I brought it in to [my AD] I said…. 'I'm sure you got this, I don't know what to do you know, I'm I think I'm doing ok, I'm starting from the ground up with my first years, I've got a solid group of 11, and you know they're great, these guys, I'm not [the old coach], I'm not a big 300 pound man yelling at them, I do things differently,' and [my AD] just took the letter and he ripped it up…. He's like, 'don't worry about it.' He just tossed it. He's like, 'you go back to doing what you're doing.'" (P10)

When the director tossed the angry letter, coach felt supported to work within her own style, creating a trusting relationship. Another coach cited the positive effect of a supportive administration. When comparing the current administration with previous groups that have come through, she stated,

"It's really cool to have someone that has that much passion and drive and vision, and the energy to make it happen, versus someone that had no vision, not a bad, not bad people, just visionless." (P8)

Overall, strong family, partner, and administrative support created less stress and a stronger feeling of balance for the women in this study. Supportive figures helped the most when the coaches also understood and accepted the demands of their jobs, as described by a participant reflecting upon women who coach in general:

> "I think they have to be supported, I think they have to be encouraged, I think they have to understand that, there's going to be times when you have work life balance and there's going to be times when you don't, and if you want to be in a rigorous competitive profession, you've got to figure it out, and there's times when it's 7 days a week and it feels like it's 24/7 and that's just the nature of the beast, but there's other times particularly in Division III where there's a little more down time and hopefully, you have a personal life and a support system around you that understands that and allows for that." (P12)

Theme 4: The Community

Partner and administrative support both enabled the women in this study to sustainably continue their careers in coaching while feeling personal balance at home as well. The fourth theme explored the greater athletic community that made time in the workplace specifically a positive experience. These populations included peer coaches, who both provided career support and traded information, mentors who provided encouragement and empowerment early on, and both sport specific staffs and student-athletes.

Sub theme 1: "There's just a lot of experience in this campus"

Family, partner, and administrative support allowed women to enter the realm of sport early on and provided them with the ability to pursue a career in athletics. Further,

as noted in the section regarding the pathway to coaching, teachers, coaches, academic advisors, and others made suggestions and inspired the women in this study to initially try coaching. Outside people continued to influence the women in this study throughout their careers. After entering the profession, the women in this study noted the importance of the relationships with peer coaches both within a department and at other schools. Networking and building these relationships gave both the administrators and the coaches in this study a network of professional support, specifically creating an atmosphere for safe learning and venting frustrations. Peers within a department were easily accessible, as one coach reported,

> "I haven't taken advantage of that as much, but boy I tell ya, you know, just walking around and sitting down in a coach's office and having a conversation could be really valuable, even a different sport." (P3)

Learning from others required coaches to be proactive, ask questions, and find coworkers who were willing to help and exchange ideas. Those who were able to take advantage of peers within and outside of the department were proactive and took action, working to build trusting relationships and putting forth the effort to reach out when needed. They were confident in their approach, as described here:

> "Like I'll ask anybody anything, because I just I mean, the people we're surrounded by here especially, there's just a lot of experience in this campus in that regard...." (P6)

This willingness to ask questions created an exchange of ideas, and further created an investment for both coaches involved. Longer peer relationships helped solidify peer support, especially since many of the participants in this study were alumnae or had been

working at the school for decades. Another participant commented on the longevity of these peer relationships:

> "I just think because so many of the coaches here have been here for a while, they see your development just as they see their own development, and you share a lot in that growth experience and stuff, like that's been a constant, beautiful thing about working here." (P10)

Again, the shared experiences and length of time as peers built trust in these coaching relationships, which was key to having strong support. Another participant followed up with this point, stating,

> "I think to me.... that's trust, and those are really important qualities, and you know, it's really important." (P14)

Sub theme 2: "They genuinely wanted me to become a better coach"

In addition to interdepartmental relationships, the women in this study described a number of people outside of their families and departments who took the time to help them in their career. One category of influential people included outsiders who decided to reach out and invest in a budding coach, an experience that empowered young coaches to become better. One coach recalled an experience when another woman that she barely knew decided to advocate for her early on:

> "It made me feel pretty good, that she thought I could be decent. Because it's very empowering when someone of her stature thinks I might be ok. Like oh, alright, well maybe I'll stick this out." (P8)

By expressing confidence and support, an outside coach empowered this participant to stay on course. Another woman described a similar experience:

> "They genuinely wanted me to become a better coach. They were so open to sharing ideas, like I worked I'll never forget the camp I worked....everything she said I was like, 'Oh my God,' or.... I'd go up to them at a recruiting event, and I'd go up to them and be like, 'Hey, how do you approach this issue'....and they'd be more than willing to share. They have been awesome. They really have." (P7)

The willingness for coaches more experienced in the field to aid the development of younger coaches made a lasting impression and helped young coaches to gain the confidence to push through difficult times and make coaching a lasting career.

Sub theme 3: "*Showing people pathways to success is really important"*

Other people of influence included members of their administrative teams or sport specific staffs. Over time, participants were exposed to numerous coaches, teachers, teammates, and other professionals, gaining the opportunity to learn not only how to coach, behave, and build a philosophy, but also how not to coach. They took the time to reflect on both positive and negative experiences to shape their styles and change as they developed. For example, one coach described her pursuit to create a better style than what she had commonly experienced:

> "I wanted to see if I could coach in a way that gave people that, where people could find their own worth without having to necessarily have the medal to prove it….I wanted....to help people find their worth from the inside." (P2)

The women described the importance of seeing other strong women as well. Women outside of sport who were pioneers and high achievers in their respective fields were strong role models for the women in this study. Additionally, these empowering women did not need to have any actual interaction with the participants in this study to be

influential. Instead, their very presence in their fields and the public personae were enough to inspire. This point emphasized the importance of all women in sport holding visible positions and recognizing their roles as strong women, as mentioned by this participant:

> "I think it absolutely makes a difference, and I think the more you can see ....people achieving at a high level, whether it's, whatever the sport is, the more it reinforces that there's opportunity, and so, you're a lacrosse coach and you're probably focused on lacrosse coaches, but when you watch the women's final 4 and you see that.... three out of the four coaches in the final four of the women's basketball division I championship are women, it's inspiring....So I think that modeling and mentoring and showing people pathways to success is really important." (P12)

When asked if they had any mentors, participants listed coaches, teachers, family, and other influential people, but a few challenged the use of the word mentor, and descriptions did not always fall into the working definition of mentor. Further, some refused to acknowledge that formal of a relationship. One woman described the people who had influenced her development, stating,

> "But no they gave support, but I think those people in my mind you know.... you look at what she's doing, she's pretty incredible, so, um no yea there's no really mentor." (P1)

Another went on to elaborate about the idea of mentoring:

> "You know you just read about it.... all this mentoring and, I think it's great if it naturally occurs and, and you have someone that you have like a great

relationship with that can help....bring you along in certain ways, but I don't think that's the fit for everyone. But I do think that....having a trusting environment with someone that can provide honest feedback both positive and critical ....a voice of reason when you need it, you know all those [qualities] that you think of [in] a mentor, someone that might be able to pull you along, you know maybe get the best out of you, I think there are ways maybe it's a mentor or a small circle of support that has happened through relationships, I think that's important. And I don't know if I have one mentor or a mentor? But I definitely have a small circle of support....some are you know professional, some are personal, some are family, and you know they all have a strong influence and are there to help me work through some good times and some tough challenging times and issues." (P14)

Meanwhile, other participants in this study had a stronger opinion on mentoring and its effect on their careers. One woman described the positive impact mentors had on her life, but she also noted that she was intentional in her pursuit of a mentor as well:

"So I think I have been richly blessed by the number of mentors I've had, advocates I've had, people who have taken an interest in me, who have helped me along the way, like it's amazing. But I was always looking for you know, how can I learn something, and I was always watching people, and when I watch someone, and respected what they were doing, I was never afraid to go up to them and say I, I really would appreciate if you'd teach me something about recruiting, or something about, how do you do this, or I'm trying to build my team into a state champion, a national champion, how do you, how do you do that, and so I

personally I've always sought mentors, and I've always had people be very generous with me with their time." (P12)

An overall openness to learning and willingness to ask questions proved important here again in building relationships over time, regardless of the label the participants used for other influential people.

Student-athletes were a driving force for the women in this study. Participants noted the joy they felt in developing relationships and sharing in their student-athletes growth and development over time. One woman stated:

> "You get attached to them, like they're your own daughters....I just think it's the people that you're coming in contact with and the people, the players as well here are just, genuinely awesome people, you know you don't get that at every school." (P5)

Another went on to describe this connection, explaining that the students were why she coached:

> "I mean I guess, a lot of it has to do with the athletes….I do this because, I mean you want to win, and you want to see them run faster or throw farther or whatever, but it's really about watching them grow up and watching them develop as people." (P6)

As described, the relationship between coach and player or head and assistant coach might fit that of mentorship. Participants were asked what they saw as their role as a mentor. Common responses indicated that coaches saw themselves as mentors to their student-athletes insofar as they were available to guide the students if needed or asked, and some did in fact decide to pursue coaching, a career choice that elated participants:

> "They weren't always the best athletes but they were definitely the top tier. They just, again what they did, as leaders, you could tell that they just loved the sport, you know, so um, I'm just assuming they're doing it because they love the sport because they're smart enough to do anything, they're very talented. But again another question I've never asked them. 'why do you do this?' They'd look at me like I'm crazy!" (P1)

Another coach described the honor of an athlete continuing to coach:

> "We actually have a lot of alumni, men and women, who are coaching. And…. I think that is probably....the highest compliment that we could have on what we do, that we have so many of our alumni that we have that are out coaching." (P3)

Yet, despite the joy of helping their athletes grow and the honor they felt when their athletes went on to coach, often the reason why the athletes entered the profession was unknown, as described by this woman:

> "So it's just nice to see how that all kind of comes back, because when you're doing it, you don't really know, you know, what kind of difference and then when they call you and like "You're the reason I got into coaching" that's just a really cool, that makes it, that's pretty cool." (P5)

The women in this study had a stronger grasp on their role as mentor to an assistant coach or a graduate assistant than their role as mentor to student-athletes. When discussing the relationship between head and assistant positions, mentoring was described as a balance of managing expectations of assistants and helping to prepare them for a future in coaching. Lessons for the future included advice on choosing a supportive partner, how to interact with player's parents, and how to do the work in the

office. Not all coaches had much experience mentoring assistants as many only recently gained full-time assistants. Graduate and part-time assistant positions tended to yield high turnover, preventing a long-lasting mentoring relationship to arise. Still, coaches had developed strategies and expectations for their assistants:

> "Actually the biggest thing I try to give them is autonomy.... I would like them to, to learn by teaching.... I try to give them framework, and relate back to you know their experiences and really let them develop their coaching style as part of that experience." (P3)

Similarly, another explained her strategies in preparing her assistants to continue coaching:

> "But you know I've had GA's that I you know, want them to continue to coach so I want to give them.... as much experience here, you know I don't want to just .... send them out to practice every day, like, I want you to know how to fill out an expense report, and go recruiting, and talk to a parent…. and let me teach you how to do that." (P6)

This coach wanted her staff to understand more than sport specific knowledge, indicating her understanding that her assistants were likely impermanent fixtures in her staff that need to be ready to take on their own program in the future. Managing career expectations proved an important component as well. Head coaches wanted their assistants to understand the work involved in running a program. One woman described giving this lesson, stating,

> "Well to my assistant it's to really, teach them and prepare them for the next, to be a head coach, and to teach them the work it involves, and the hours, you know,

and I always tell [them] it is not a job, it's a lifestyle. Coaching is a lifestyle. And if you can't buy into that mentally, you cannot be, coaching is not going to be your career." (P8)

Finally, just as some participants did not identify others in their lives that were mentors to them, some women were less inclined to call themselves mentors to others. These women did not seem to recognize the influence that they had in the career of those behind them. One woman explained:

"You know, I don't, see myself that way. I think I provide, I see myself more supportive when people need it and if people reach out or I see something, I'll reach out to them, but I don't have like, too many, I mean I ….would think I would be a mentor to them. But I do think there are plenty of people here at [school] that I do provide a high level of support to, and ....I just don't know if we're quite to that mentor relationship yet." (P14)

Regardless of each participant's perception of their mentoring status, each woman in this study described other people who provided them guidance, gave them confidence, and empowered them to continue in their careers. Similarly, even when they did not put a formal name to their role as a person of influence, each participant acknowledged aiding the development of their student athletes, too. The importance of giving and receiving support was clear, even if unacknowledged. As one woman described,

"I just feel like people need to be supported with the idea that they can learn and grow, make mistakes, and learn from those, and have a chance to, to build." (P12)

Summary

The women in this study described their initial participation in sport at a young age. With the support of their families, they continued their playing careers at the college level and with the suggestion and guidance of coaches, teachers, and other influential figures, they tried coaching, eventually deciding to work in intercollegiate athletics long term. Familial and partner support proved influential in the course of their careers, both in whether or not they remained coaches, as well as which jobs they considered and chose. Positive administrative support further gave the women in this study a sense of balance and reduced stress.

Developmental opportunities like coaching clinics, conferences, and conventions were important not only as ways to stay current in their respective sports, but as opportunities to connect with others and develop a professional network. Mentors, peer coaches, and inspiring women were important as they encouraged the women in this study and provided resources for learning and growing throughout their careers.

Finally, the participants commented on their roles as mentors to members of their staff and the student-athletes they interact with. Though the women held varying views on how and to what extent they should mentor, as well as whether or not they even were mentors, they all expressed an understanding that they were people of influence for those around them. One distinct idea ran through each of the four themes revealed in this study: people are influential. The themes of developmental pathway, gender inequity, attaining balance, and the supporting cast each demonstrated the direct and subtle ways that making a suggestion, offering support, or acting as a road block can do to women aiming to coach. As one woman stated:

"I just think it's important for the topic.... yes I am a woman coaching, and that yes it is because of other women who are coaches." (P7)

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The Institution

The purpose of this study was to better understand the factors that make a career in intercollegiate coaching seem like a viable and ideal option for women. In addition, this study investigated the role mentoring relationships play in creating opportunities for women in coaching. To accomplish these investigative goals, the researcher chose to focus on one particular institution based on the school's unique proportion of women in administration and women coaching women's sports. At the time of this study, the school competed in twelve men's varsity sports and fifteen women's varsity sports for a total of twenty-seven varsity programs. On the women's side, 73%, or eleven out of fifteen, women's teams had a woman for a head coach, a number much higher than both the rate of 47.3% within Division III and the national rate of 43.4% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). None of the men's teams were coached by a female head coach, so within the entire department, women made up 40.74% of all head coaches, distinguishing itself again from the national rate of 23% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

According to Acosta and Carpenter (2014), women make up 22.3% of athletic directors across divisions, 30.3% within Division III, and 29.9% in the Northeast. Further, women hold 36.2% of all jobs in athletic administration. At the time of this study, the athletic administration, made up of the athletic director and the associate athletic director, was comprised entirely of women, placing it high above the averages again. Because the goal of this study was to understand the factors that make women want to coach and remain in athletics, the markedly large proportion of women in

coaching and administrative positions made this institution an ideal case study. Understanding the reasons behind a woman's choice to work in athletics, as well as what if anything makes this particular institution friendly to women in athletics, can help guide future research in the general field of intercollegiate athletics.

One limitation of this study resulting from the selected institution is the homogeneity of the participants. All of the participants were white women, and therefore the results fail to include the voice of any racial minorities. That being said, this does not harm the generalizability of this study. According to Lapchick (2013), African-Americans comprise only 3.8% of head coaches of women's teams and 4.2% of men's teams in Division III. Those numbers improve slightly to 7.9% of women's teams and 8.3% of men's teams in Division I (Lapchick, 2013). These numbers reveal that, despite the homogeneity, the participants in this study represent that lack of racial diversity in intercollegiate athletics.

The Developmental Pathway

The first theme to emerge in the present study was the common pathway and developmental factors that guided the women in this study into coaching. The shared experience began with their early exposure to sport. Playing at a young age made sport a natural activity, and their supportive environments created a safe space for them to grow within their sports. After a childhood and adolescence of play, the women in this study all went on to compete in intercollegiate athletics. Often at the suggestion of a coach or other trusted advisor, many of these women attained coaching and graduate assistant positions after graduation, and after this first exposure, eventually decided to pursue coaching as a career. The final component in the pathway unearthed in this study was the opportunity to

pursue professional development. Clinics and a variety of conventions aided the participants' growth in the field, and through a series of career moves, all of these women found themselves working together, many for decades, at one common institution.

The mentors who encouraged their student-athletes to try coaching played a pivotal role in the direction of these women's lives. Many of these mentors were the participants' coaches, a finding that is unsurprising due to the nature of mentoring. Coaches not only invest their time and energy in the athletic growth of their student-athletes, but are one of the most consistent presences throughout a student's time in college, allowing them to also contribute to the personal growth of their student-athletes. Chao (2009) described informal mentoring as an intense relationship in which both parties are equally invested. Sport mimics this model, as coaches are invested in student-athlete development both on the field and off, while student-athletes are invested in learning and implementing what their coach teaches. In this way, informal mentoring relationships are a natural byproduct of sport coaching. Mentoring, then, is inherent in a coach's role. As someone who has earned the student-athlete's trust, a mentor's suggestion to try coaching carries significant weight.

Researchers have minimally addressed coaching pathways for women in sport, instead focusing on general coaching pathways, and results do not yet meet consensus. Nash and Sproule (2009) and Erickson et al. (2007) both asserted a formal sequential pathway into coaching, though the two models carry their distinctions. Nash and Sproule (2009) found that coaches competed in sport, began coaching while still playing, and aspired to become a coach. The women in the present study competed at a young age, but most did not describe coaching until after their own career was completed. They also

deviated from Nash and Sproule's (2009) findings in that most participants did not aspire to coach until they had tried it. One possible reason for this could be that the women in this study had little experience playing for women throughout their athletic careers. Griffin (1998) pointed to visibility as key in changing career expectations and conditions for women in athletics. Future research can address this by asking women who coach to reflect on the gender of their coaches growing up.

Another reason could be that a career in coaching does not necessitate a specific curriculum in college. Although some students pursue coaching minors, physical education or kinesiology majors, or sport related master's degrees, coaches are not required to study these specific topics at this point. In this way, there is no required formal educational path for intercollegiate coaches beyond a requirement to hold a bachelor's and often a master's degree. As a result, someone who studies physical education will not necessarily become a coach. Kamphoff and Gill (2008) found that women were less likely than men to express an interest in coaching. When women were interested in Kamphoff and Gill's (2008) study, they were motivated by outside interests such as empowering girls and women, working with youth, or helping female athletes reach their potential. Future research might also look more closely at career expectations and majors of women entering college and compare that to their expectations and majors upon graduation. Further, a survey gathering information regarding what degrees men and women coaches have earned could be enlightening as well, especially if a selected Master's degree is more common than others, as this would provide insight into what range of subject matter is important as identified by men and women after they begin coaching.

Erickson et al. (2007) took a more precise approach in their description of coaching pathways, blocking off age ranges for specific developmental experiences. As a result, their model emphasized the influence of early sport experience, tracking the coaching pathway from early exposure to numerous sports at age six to the high-performance head coach at age twenty-nine. Again, the early exposure to sport normalized competition for the women in this study, an important feat during a time for many of the participants before girls had significant opportunity to play sports beyond the backyard. Both Nash and Sproule's (2009) and Erickson et al.'s (2007) studies provided important insight, yet failed to explain why someone would follow their suggested pathway through to the end and not simply play sport growing up and in college and then take a job outside of athletics.

Both do make note of the presence of mentors, however. Nash and Sproule (2009) commented that their participants could point to a coach or physical education teacher who influenced their career choice or success, while Erickson et al. (2007) included mentoring in their model, noticing it's presence between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-eight. Their studies did not clearly indicate how these people were influential, though in the present study outside influences were the catalysts for women to take jobs in coaching, indicating that the onset of mentoring happened much before the age of twenty-four.

Two more researchers, Werthner and Trudel (2009), examined the developmental pathways for coaches, arguing that sequence of events was not as important as the ongoing presence of various learning situations. According to their research, coaches are lifelong learners, using formal educational experiences, athletic experiences, coaching

education, access to mentors, and self-reflection to grow and develop. Learning opportunities for the women in this study were certainly influential, as cited in their discussion of coaching clinics and attendance at professional conventions. However, these organized opportunities occurred after they began their coaching careers. Other learning opportunities could include their education or their sport participation, but again, though these are important commonalities, they do not distinguish those who coach from those who play sports and pursue other careers.

Previous research on coaching pathways contributes to the dialogue, but fails to offer an explanation for why anyone might choose to coach. Mirroring the collective findings of previous research, the women in this study grew up playing sports and went on to play competitively while completing their undergraduate education. Next, they often entered coaching, but here they differ from the previous findings: they coach not as a career move, but as a means to fund graduate school. Finally, after this initial exposure, they chose to continue coaching. They had the opportunity to learn both through their formal education, but also at the urging of coaches, teachers, and family. This outside support prompted the path to coaching and gave the women direction when they might have gone elsewhere. These findings address the blind spots of previous research, highlighting that exposure to sport and the availability of learning experiences are important, but the support and caring nudge of influential figures prompted the women in this study to try coaching where they might not have considered the opportunity otherwise.

Gender Inequity

Gender inequity emerged as the second theme in the present study. Though previous research suggested homophobia tended to occur alongside gender discrimination in sport (Griffin, 1998; Daniels, 2005), only one woman in this study recalled any instances of homophobic behavior. Some participants noted the growth in availability of sport opportunities for girls over time, and if they did experience setbacks due to gender or sexual orientation growing up, they did not seem to deem it relevant within the scope of their respective interviews. This could be because sexual orientation was not specifically discussed in the interview questions, nor were early childhood experiences with sport delved into in great detail. It could also be a reflection of comfort with school policy or the overall accepting culture in the surrounding community, or simply because the women in this study were well supported growing up.

It is important to note that the present study focused on what paths successfully bring women into coaching, and whatever their experiences were, the women in this study all coach as a living. A future study of women who ended their participation in sport competition as children might better highlight perceived barriers to coaching. A study in which questions specifically investigate instances of sexual orientation discrimination experienced by women who coach might clarify how prevalent such occurrences are.

That being said, the women in this study spoke most passionately about discriminatory practices after they entered the workforce. Those who had been in athletics for at least ten years were confronted with gender discrimination both within their respective sports as well as under the lens of institutional equity. The women

described their fight for equitable work expectations, but instead of complaining about unfair treatment, participants tended to frame their recollections of gender equity fights around what has improved and how their place of work has changed for the better over time. This positive outlook and visible change could contribute to why these women have coached at their institution for significant periods of time. As Anderson, Cheslock, and Ehrenberg (2006) pointed out, a majority of higher education institutions are not in compliance with Title IX. In this way, perhaps the women in this study recognized that, despite the battles they endured, their school made changes over time that others still have yet to accomplish.

On the other hand, the women reported instances of continued gender discrimination when they ventured from their home campus, with coaches and officials using derogatory language towards them or speaking ill of their personal lives because of their gender. The use of misogynistic language towards women fits with the historical context of women in sport (Griffin, 1998; Pelak, 2008) as well as the misogynistic norms conveyed by the portrayal of women in film (Daniels, 2005) and sports writing (Calhoun et al., 2011; Kian et al., 2011). Additionally, when women coaches attend sporting events, they are likely to be outnumbered by men coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), which in turn perpetuates a norm for student-athletes and other sport coaches that mistreatment of women is a part of the job. Just as greater visibility of women in leadership positions can help other women aspire to achieve, greater visibility of women facing verbal abuse normalizes misogyny. Although the women in the present study experienced improvements in their own school, their negative experiences on the road

and at previous institutions are supported by the findings of previous research and the continued need for improvement in the field.

A less expected but unsurprising form of discrimination came from the attitudes of female athletes towards their same gender coaches. The interviews revealed that women athletes were harder on women coaches than male coaches, and some female athletes hesitated to play for women because they had not played for women growing up. Pelak (2008) pointed out that sport is inherently segregated by gender in its organization of men's and women's teams, so a woman coaching a women's team should be an expectation. Yet, as Cunningham and Singer (2010) showed, women coaches in their study were aware of a difference in their treatment based on gender. However, other studies have revealed that athletes are comfortable with personnel that they are used to (Ensign et al, 2011; Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Norwood et al., 2014).

Interestingly, the finding that female athletes are harder on their same gender coaches is striking, as one might expect girls who play sport to rally behind women who coach, as both parties experience discrimination based on their shared gender. Women in coaching and in other professional fields face a lack of clear career paths, a lack of formal hiring practices, lower compensation (Drago et al., 2005), fewer promotions (Schweitzer et al., 2011), and occupational barriers (Bradford & Keshock, 2009) that men do not struggle with. When young women become overly critical of women in authority positions, they perpetuate the very social structures that will eventually keep them from rising to their potential as well. The more women who coach at all levels and, further, apply to coach both men's and women's teams, the better the outlook for changing the social expectations that women will be less than in their future careers. When women do

not open themselves to the professional possibility of coaching all genders, they are keeping themselves leashed, strangling the already slow growth of women's presence in the coaching world.

The participants in this study were aware of the impact of powerful women in visible positions. They pointed to coaches, teachers, advisors, and strong women who they had the opportunity to interact with and feel inspired by. The women highlighted inspirational moments when they saw other women break down barriers both in athletics and in other fields of work, noting the influence this had on them as they developed. Sartore and Cunningham (2009a) suggested that the presence of heterosexual coaching environments for kids growing up would make them and their parents more likely to choose to play for a heterosexual coach. The same logic could be applied to gender expectations; the more young athletes are exposed to women as coaches, the more likely they will be to choose to play for a woman who coaches in college. Marin Burton Nelson suggested that women who participate in sport inherently commit a feminist act (Griffin, 1998), and for the women in this study, being around and seeing the example of strong women inspired them, and by simply being women in athletics, they commit this act as well, over time changing the social expectations of women in sport.

Attaining Balance

The women in the current study consistently discussed the people in their lives who influenced their path. From the beginning, they each grew up surrounded by the support of their parents and siblings to play and experience sport regardless of the surrounding gender climate. After they became coaches, the women described the newfound challenges they faced in striking a balance between their work and personal

lives. This manifested as a struggle to find an adequate job close to family, managing distance from loved ones, transitioning to building a family, and dealing with unconventional time demands of working in athletics. However, they managed to find sustainable lifestyles through the help of supportive partners.

Baker's (2010) and Lips' (2013) studies revealed that women struggle when they do not have positive female role models, a lack of family support, or a lack of partner support. In academia specifically, women in their studies were more likely to be divorced or separated than men, illustrating the challenge and perceived choice of choosing work or family. In the current study, the women differed from Baker's (2010) and Lips' (2013) participants, in that the coaches here had a number of positive female role models as well as family support, especially growing up. Overall, the women in this study shared an overwhelming understanding that their career choice required family and partner support. Dealing with distance or time apart was an expectation of the job.

The women with partners commented on their partner support, recalling the willingness to move for a better coaching positions and the understanding of the time demands of the job. Even the few women who left coaching briefly to move for a partner later ended those relationships and returned to their careers, finding more supportive relationships along the way. In academia, Baker's (2010) participants seemed faced with the uncompromising task of choosing a partner or a good job, while the women in this study understood that they could have both. This finding could be due to the mentor support the participants had throughout their development. By seeing women in functional relationships and successful careers, the participants likely learned not only

that they could have both, but how they wanted and needed to be treated and supported to sustain their careers as well.

Some participants in this study discussed their decision to have children while working. They worked with their partners to find a sustainable division of labor so that both parties could work and care for their children. While the time demands of sport pulled the participants away, they felt less stress knowing that their partner shared the load and normalized the family dynamic for their children. Again, the women in this study distinguished themselves from previous research in that they were not forced out of their jobs because of their family expansion (Bailyn, 2011; Zhao et al., 2011). In addition, their partner support came into play again, as both parties took on household responsibilities to allow the women to remain in athletics. Navigating this territory is not easy, but the present study showed sustainable efforts from supportive partners that allowed them to address work-life balance without feeling consumed by traditional gender roles.

The Community

Finally, in addition to the important role of family and partner support, the women in this study commented on a number of influential people in their lives that aided in their development as coaches and women in athletics. In effect, outside people were influential in each of the previous themes so far, revealing the underlying importance of outside figures in the ongoing decision women make to pursue and continue work in coaching and athletics. This is consistent with the findings of previous research in which coaches and teachers were influential in developing athletes into coaches (Erickson et al., 2007; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Werthner & Trudel, 2009).

In addition to the family and partner support already discussed, administrative support impacted longevity in coaching as well. The participants described anecdotes from their careers when simple actions from their administration empowered them and made them feel encouraged to aim higher. Conversely, when Title IX issues were unresolved, participants recalled the feeling of going to battle with their administration. Bruening and Dixon (2008) found that women in coaching value support from an administrator almost as highly as support from a partner. Further, when athletic administration allowed for a flexible schedule, and provided assistant coaches, Bruening and Dixon (2008) found that coaches who are mothers were more likely to remain in the field. The women in the present study were able to band together to prompt change within their departments when needed, and positively reported the support from their administration as reasons for pushing forward during difficult times.

The participants also noted their relationships with their staff, student-athletes, and coaching colleagues. Not all of the women understood their relationships to be mentoring relationships, but all women did have these at some point in their careers. One reason for this unwillingness to call someone a mentor could be that the working definition held by the participants is different than the definition of mentoring as used in this research. For example, some participants discussed their perception that a mentoring relationship should consist of a complete, undying trust between the parties involved, and anything less than this could not be defined as mentoring. In this case, a party who provided networking opportunities or offered advice, no matter how crucial, would not be a mentor. However, providing support in a less formal manner and enabling networking opportunities are both roles of mentors, and not all mentoring relationships must be

rooted in intense personal relationships (Haring-Hidore, 1987). In fact, networking mentoring seemed to be the most prevalent type after the women in this study developed in their careers.

Whether the participants had the language to describe their relationships or not, if viewing mentoring by the definition offered in this study, as a relationship in which a more experienced mentor offers support or guidance to a less experienced mentee or protégé, then the relationships described by the participants in this study were mentoring relationships. In this light, consistent with previous research, mentoring helped the participants to form career expectations (Schweitzer et al., 2011) and overcome obstacles and stressors like balance and family support (Baker, 2010; Wilson, 2014). Common arrangements occurred within a team staff, where assistants could learn from their head coaches. Other mentoring occurred when more experienced coaches took an interest in rising coaches, offering them guidance and encouragement over time.

Mentors also offered career and psychosocial support. Though previous research valued career support over psychosocial support (Beres & Dixon, 2014; Chao, 2009; Tharenou, 2005), women in this study required both from their mentors to help them not only develop as coaches, but to help them understand how to make coaching a sustainable lifestyle. Over time, peer coaches took over the role of psychosocial support, marking the continued importance of well-rounded resources. In fact, the women who took a break from coaching left because they could not balance the personal pressures that relate to sport.

By creating a strong network, the women in this study were sought after for job opportunities, and they had coaches at other institutions who they could call for help or

guidance regarding all aspects of sport. None of the participants mentioned any formal or required mentoring relationships. Instead, all relationships seemed to form based on proximity or through introductions from other professionals. Not only does this reveal the changing role of mentoring over the course of a career, but it uncovers the role the participants play in the careers of others.

Although mentoring was a key element in career development, the participants' incomplete understanding of what mentoring fully entails highlights serious implications for this study. Participants who refused to say they mentored their assistants or student-athletes might not understand the extent of their role as a person of influence. This study revealed the importance of mentors not only throughout a woman's career, but especially in her primary consideration of coaching. Without a trusted mentor figure suggesting coaching as an option, the women in this study likely would not have tried coaching until later, if at all. Women in coaching should be educated on their role as mentors to their student-athletes, assistant coaches, and other members of the athletic community. Further, they should encourage their student-athletes to try coaching at any level, thereby enhancing the visibility of women in sport. In this way, women can take hold of their collective future in athletics, engaging in the effort to increase the opportunity for women in sport and specifically, in coaching.

Summary

Results from the present study elicited four major themes: the developmental pathway, gender inequity, attaining balance, and the community. While previous research began the conversation surrounding the experiences of women who coach, the themes from this study both complimented and expanded the existing understanding. First, while

past studies have outlined a career path for coaches, they tended to discuss development and career progression while overlooking the point at which women decide to coach. Conversely, the present study revealed the common lack of long-term intention behind the decision that is untold in previous research. Next, the present study did not find gender discrimination to prevail as a current problem, with the women focusing more on how the climate has improved. This does not necessarily indicate that the environment for women in coaching is equitable, as described by the women's interactions outside of their place of employment.

Third, the theme of attaining balance highlighted strategies used by the participants to make their work and home life sustainable, while previous studies focused on work-life balance as a reason women leave work. Finally, the present study found peers and administrators to be incredibly influential in enhancing the workplace environment. Previous research indicated that mentoring is a strong tool for integrating women into gendered workplaces. The women in this study resisted describing any relationships as mentoring. However, their descriptions of influential people who guided their athletic development, encouraged them to pursue coaching, and provided the tools to advance within the field were clearly mentoring relationships.

In light of these findings, women in coaching should receive mentoring education. This would help them not only understand that they are mentors to others, but would help them learn how to best offer guidance to their student-athletes and assistant coaches. By sharing their vast experience and knowledge, women in coaching can demystify the challenge of work-life balance and provide strategies for overcoming inequitable practices. When women in coaching understand the potential influence they wield, they

can take purposeful action in creating visibility and opportunity for other women to build a career in sport.

Future research should investigate the role of mentoring in athletics at other institutions. After performing case studies at institutions from varying geographic locations and divisions, a meta-analysis can reveal greater trends that make women successful in coaching and give further direction for mentoring recommendations. A study in which women who leave coaching would be informative as well, as it would reveal possible warning signs or turning points that could lead women to quit. By understanding the reasons women leave coaching, researchers can recommend effective interventions or trainings to help women find solutions within their careers.

Another future direction would be to investigate women with large coaching trees: women who have a large amount of former student-athletes and assistants who went on to become head coaches. This would help to identify ideal mentoring strategies and styles that encourage and enable women to pursue and achieve head coaching positions. Finally, future research might follow up with the participants in the present study to identify any changes in role, job status, or perspective over time. While previous research focused on the barriers to women in coaching, the present study evaluated pathways and mentoring strategies that promoted coaching as a career option for women. Further research will continue to provide effective strategies, allowing women continual career growth and expansion within intercollegiate athletics.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The present study sought to address a gap in the current research. Specifically, this study aimed to better understand what factors allow women to consider coaching as a viable career choice. In addition, this study sought to understand the role mentoring played in creating opportunities for women who coach. Previous research surrounding women in coaching listed countless barriers to women based on their gender alone, including historical barriers to women in sport (Griffin, 1998), unclear paths, inconsistent hiring practices, a scarcity of role models, unequal wages (Drago et al., 2005), and discriminatory practices (Hemphill & Symons, 2009; Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Muir & Saltz, 2004). By focusing on reasons women choose not to coach or choose to leave coaching, researchers made valuable strides. Yet, previous studies overlooked the mechanisms at play that do on occasion inspire a woman to coach and work in athletics.

Meanwhile, literature from other professions touted the benefits of mentoring for women entering historically male dominated workspaces. Mentoring has been shown to promote the advancement of women in other professions and is therefore a viable option for women in sport (Tharenou, 2005). However, minimal research has investigated to what extent mentoring has been used to promote the advancement of women in coaching. As a result, a tool that has been effective elsewhere could be a key in revealing opportunities in athletics for other women.

The present study investigated the lived experiences of women at a single institution. The interviews with head coaches, assistant coaches, and administrators revealed four overarching themes: the developmental pathway, gender inequity, attaining balance, and the community. Through the influence of supportive families, teachers, and coaches, women in this study became coaches and remained in the profession over time. Though they experienced different levels of discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender, they found support from peers and mentors to push through and see improvement. Their families, partners, and children worked with them to attain a sustainable balance, allowing them to have both their careers and their personal lives. Finally, throughout their careers, they had mentors, acted as mentors, and built peer relationships that provided the tools to push through the barriers and continue coaching.

These findings support research from other fields specific to mentoring. Mentors were immensely important not only in career development for the participants in this study, but were the reason for many of them to begin coaching as a career. By investigating the ways in which the women in this study entered coaching and subsequently pursued a career in the field of athletics, this study provides solutions to the current, problem-focused body of research.

Conclusions

The results of this study yielded the following conclusions:

1. Although some women become coaches based on their own career goals, more often they are first exposed to intercollegiate coaching roles as a result of prompting from a trusted advisor.

2. Mentoring is critical both for prompting women to try coaching and for providing the

support necessary to keep women working in athletics.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for further study were made after the completion of this investigation:

1. Future research should investigate career expectations and area of study for female athletes at the start and finish of college. Such research could reveal correlations between academic interest and preparation for coaching. Additionally, a study in which current male and female coaches are surveyed regarding area of study for Master's programs would provide insight into academic areas deemed valuable to the profession.

2. Future research should investigate the impact of gender, sexual orientation, and race of mentor coaches on a student-athlete's decision to coach. Researchers should survey coaches to inquire about their playing experience, gathering demographic information about their coaches. This information can then be compared to participant gender, race, and sexual orientation to determine the degree of correlation between the coaches student-athletes are exposed to and their eventual decision to coach.

3. A future study of women who ended their participation in sport competition at an earlier age might better highlight perceived barriers to coaching. Such a study could specifically investigate instances of sexual orientation discrimination experienced by women who coach to clarify how prevalent such occurrences are.

4. Future research should investigate the role of mentoring in athletics at other institutions. After performing case studies at institutions from varying geographic locations and divisions, a meta-analysis could reveal greater trends that make women successful in coaching and give further direction for mentoring recommendations. A

study in which women who leave coaching would be informative as well, as it would reveal possible warning signs or turning points that could lead women to quit. By understanding the final reasons women leave coaching, researchers can recommend effective interventions or trainings to help women find solutions within their careers.

5. Another future direction would be to investigate women with large coaching trees: women who have a large amount of former student-athletes and assistants who went on to become head coaches. This would bolster the literature on mentoring in athletics, revealing ideal mentoring strategies, styles, and circumstances that encourage and enable women to pursue and achieve head coaching positions.

6. Finally, future research should follow up with the participants in the present study to identify any changes in role, job status, or perspective over time. Taking a longitudinal approach would identify how the conclusions from the present study relate to future outcomes for the participants.

Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Role of Mentoring in the Advancement of Women in Coaching

1. Purpose of the Study
   The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of women in coaching. Specifically, this study will examine what factors influence women to enter and remain in the field of coaching.

2. Benefits of the Study
   The results of this study will provide greater insight into the lived experience of women in coaching, in addition to providing recommendations for increasing the opportunity for women to enter and remain in the field of coaching. The participants in this study will benefit, as the interview process will allow them to reflect on their experiences, understanding their career paths and as a result, the role that they might play in other coaches' career development.

3. What You Will Be Asked to Do
   You will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. This interview will take approximately 90 minutes.

4. Risks
   There are little to no risks associated with participation in this study. You will be asked to state your knowledge, opinions, and experiences related to coaching. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. All answers will remain confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Justine Vosloo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Ithaca College at jvosloo@ithaca.edu or by calling 607-274-5190.

5. Compensation for Injury
   If you suffer an injury that requires any treatment or hospitalization as a direct result of this study, the cost for such care will be charged to you. If you have insurance, you may bill your insurance company. You will be responsible to pay all costs not covered by your insurance. Ithaca College will not pay for any care, lost wages, or provide other financial compensation.

6. If You Would Like More Information about the Study
   If you would like more information about the study at anytime, please contact Justine Vosloo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Ithaca College at jvosloo@ithaca.edu or by calling 607-274-5190.

7. Withdraw from the Study
   You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and can refuse to answer any question that you are not comfortable answering.

8. How the Data will be Maintained in Confidence
   Participant's responses will be kept confidential, and any identifying information about the participants will be kept confidential as well. The audio files of the interviews will be kept and stored on the researcher's password protected computer, and only the researcher will have access. Files will be destroyed after five years.

I have read the above and I understand its contents. I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

____

Print or Type Name

____ _______________

Signature Date

I give my permission to be audiotaped.

____ ____________________
Signature Date

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Coaches

Thank you for your participation in this study. I am going to ask you a series of background questions followed by open-ended questions about your experiences as a coach. Please answer honestly. Your answers are confidential and any specific identifying information will be kept out of the final writing of this study. This interview is being recorded.

1. How long have you been coaching at the college level?
2. How long have you served as a head coach at the college level?
3. How long have you served as an assistant coach at the college level?
4. How long have you been in your current position?
5. Tell me about your career path.
6. Tell me about your current position.
7. Tell me about factors that you think have been influential in your development as a coach.

Administrators

Thank you for your participation in this study. I am going to ask you a series of background questions followed by open-ended questions about your experiences as an administrator. Please answer honestly. Your answers are confidential and any specific identifying information will be kept out of the final writing of this study. This interview is being recorded.

1. How long have you been and administrator at the college level?
2. How long have you been in your current position?
3. Tell me about your career path.
4. Tell me about your current position.
5. Tell me about your perspective on the climate for women in coaching.
6. Tell me about factors that you think are influential in the development of women as coaches.

Appendix C

PILOT STUDY – 2013

Methods

Introduction

In this section, the participants of this study, procedures used to conduct the study, and instrumentation and analysis used will be discussed.

Participants

Participants were female head and assistant varsity coaches in a Division III athletic department ($N = 18$) in the Northeastern United States. All participants were over the age of 18. Each participant received an email informing them about the nature of the study and were asked to complete a survey pertaining to their experience with mentoring in the advancement of women in the coaching profession. Participants were informed that their responses would be anonymous and confidential.

Measurements

Participants in this study were asked to complete an online survey created by the researcher. Questions pertained to the participant's length of experience coaching at the intercollegiate level, her perception of the role that mentoring has played in her career, and whether or not she currently mentors another coach. See survey below (Appendix A).

Procedure

An email containing information about the study and the link to the online survey was sent to each of the female head and assistant coaches. Participants gave their informed consent by reading the informed consent information on the first page of the survey and clicking to proceed. A follow up email was sent after a week to thank those

who had participated and entreating those who had not completed the survey to take a moment to fill it out.

Results

Of the 18 head and assistant female coaches in the Ithaca College varsity athletic department, eight coaches completed the entire survey ($N = 8$,). Of those respondents, four were currently head coaches and four were currently assistant coaches. The number of years of experience at the college level ranged from 1 year to 32 years ($M = 14.38$ years). Specifically, the number of years of experience as an assistant coach ranged from one year to six years ($M = 2.88$), and the number of years of experience as a head coach ranged from 0 years to 29 years ($M = 11.5$).

Seven of the eight respondents reported that another coach had mentored them. Further, among those who reported having a mentor, six currently reported that they still had this relationship. Mentoring relationships lasted from 2 years to 17 years ($M = 8.14$). Three participants reported that their mentor was female, while four reported that their mentor was male. Six of the mentors coached the same sport as the mentee. The participant who did not have a mentor responded that she believes having a mentor would be helpful as she continues her career in coaching.

More often than not, the mentor was a coach that the participant had worked directly with ($N = 5$). In addition, respondents generally reported that they had played for the coach who became their mentor. Assigned mentors, athletic administrators, former coworkers, and other coaches in the same athletic department were not found to be mentors.

SPSS was used to run a correlation to examine the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between satisfaction with mentor support and the belief that the mentor will aid in the mentee's future career advancement. The average response for satisfaction with mentoring was 4.14 (*N* = 7, *SD* = .69; Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). The average response for career advancement was 3.71 (*N* = 3.71, *SD* = .76; Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). An analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient indicated that there is not a significant relationship between the satisfaction with a mentor and the perceived role that a mentor will have in advancing the mentee's future career ($r(7) = .09$, $p = .85$). Figure 1 shows the scatterplot of the relationship between satisfaction and advancement.

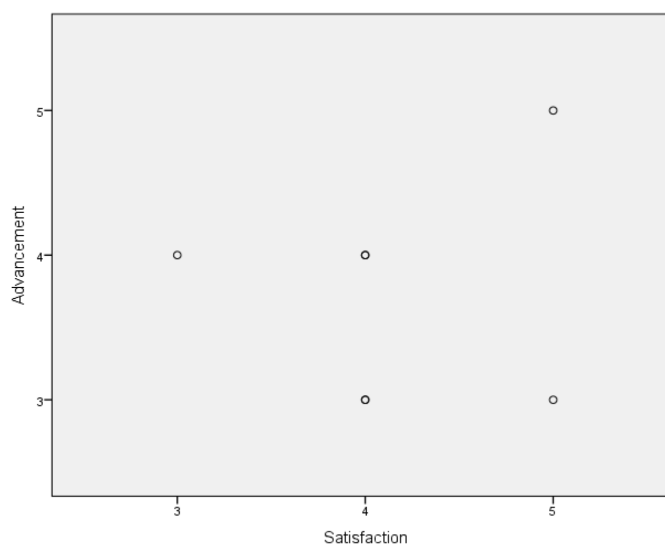

Figure 1. *Mentor satisfaction and the role of a mentor in career advancement*

A correlation was also run to examine the relationship between mentor satisfaction and the role a mentor played in getting the respondent to their current

position. The average response for the role a mentor played in getting the respondent to their current position was 4.57 (*N* = 7, *SD* = .54; Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). An analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient indicated that there is not a significant relationship between the satisfaction with a mentor and the role that a mentor played in getting the respondent to her current position ($r(7) = .19$, $p = .67$). Figure 2 shows the scatterplot of the relationship between satisfaction and role that a mentor played.

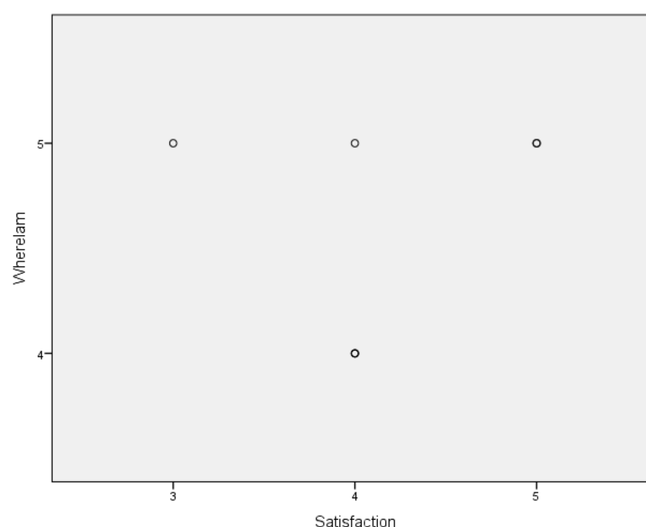

Figure 2. *Mentor satisfaction and the role a mentor played in a coach's current position*

Discussion

Almost all of the participants in this study reported having a mentor. This is not surprising, as the literature supports the idea that mentoring has helped women advance in other professions. More information about how these mentoring relationships occurred would be interesting. Specifically, if the mentee more often initiates a relationship,

professionals could encourage female athletes to seek out support and be proactive in their fields. On the other hand, if a mentor tends to be the one initiating a relationship, future research could ask mentors what determines who they select as mentees – information that, in turn, could be given to female athletes as recommendations of specific skill sets to work on to make themselves more appealing as mentees.

` The lack of relationship between satisfaction with a mentor and with the perceived role a mentor will play in future career advancement, as well as the lack of relationship between satisfaction with a mentor and the role a mentor played in getting a respondent where she currently is was surprising. However, if a coach is currently satisfied with her position, she might not plan to coach elsewhere or make large career moves that a mentor could help with.

A limitation of this study is the small sample size and homogeneity of the respondents. Respondents in this study were all from the same institution. Future research should be expanded to survey coaches from a variety of geographical locations and Divisions. This will increase the sample size and hopefully allow patterns and significant conclusions to be drawn from the data received. A question asking the number of different colleges a coach has worked at would be interesting in indicating what goes into career advancement as well.

In addition, it would be interesting to survey male coaches as well to understand how males climb the career ladder in intercollegiate coaching. By comparing the process of mentoring for males and females, perhaps better policy recommendations can be implemented to increase the percentage of females coaching female sports. Additionally, more questions regarding the specific value of mentoring would be helpful. Future

studies could ask participants to rank the importance of various forms of mentor support that they received, as well as the importance of what they did not receive. A larger sample size would also help to answer whether or not mentor gender matters. While the small sample size served as a limitation to this study, by continuing to research the role of mentoring in the career advancement of women in coaching, researchers will be able to help increase the percentage of women coaching women's sports, thereby increasing the amount of gender equity in the field of intercollegiate athletics.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (located on 1st page of survey)

(THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN COACHING)

4. Purpose of the Study
   The purpose of this study is to explore the role of mentoring in career advancement as perceived by female coaches at Ithaca College.

5. Benefits of the Study
   Information collected in this study will be valuable in identifying practices that help women to advance in the coaching profession. These practices in turn can be promoted and implemented to increase the number of women coaching women's sports.

6. What You Will Be Asked to Do
   You will be asked to complete a survey regarding your experiences in the field of athletics. This survey will be completed online, and will begin when you click to advance to the next page. The survey will take between approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

7. Risks
   There are little to no risks associated with participation in this study. You will be asked to state your knowledge, opinions, and experiences related to coaching and mentorship. You can choose to omit any question you do not wish to answer and are free to withdraw at any time. All answers will remain anonymous and confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Justine Vosloo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Ithaca College at jvosloo@ithaca.edu or by calling 607-274-5190.

9. Compensation for Injury
   If you suffer an injury that requires any treatment or hospitalization as a direct result of this study, the cost for such care will be charged to you. If you have insurance, you may bill your insurance company. You will be responsible to pay all costs not covered by your insurance. Ithaca College will not pay for any care, lost wages, or provide other financial compensation.

10. If You Would Like More Information about the Study
    If you would like more information about the study at anytime, please contact Justine Vosloo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Ithaca College at jvosloo@ithaca.edu or by calling 607-274-5190.

11. Withdraw from the Study
    You can choose to omit any question that you do not wish to answer and are free to withdraw at any time. All answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

12. How the Data will be Maintained in Confidence
    All surveys will remain completely anonymous and confidential. You are reminded that you should not identify yourself at any point during the survey. No IP addresses from the computer participants use to take the survey will be recorded or documented. There is always potential for loss of anonymity, confidentiality, or privacy resulting from the technology used to collect the data.

I have read the above and I understand its contents. By clicking "Proceed to Survey", you agree to participate in the study.

Note: This information may be used for archival research in the future

1. What is your current position
    a. Head coach
    b. Assistant coach
2. How many years have you been coaching at the college level?
3. How many years of experience do you have as an assistant coach?
4. How many years of experience do you have as a head coach?
5. Have you been mentored by another coach?
    a. Yes
    b. No
        i. If yes
            1. What was the duration of this relationship (in years)
            2. Do you consider this person a mentor currently?
                a. Yes
                b. No
            3. My mentor was/is
                a. Female
                b. Male
            4. My mentor was/is
                a. A coach of the same sport
                b. A coach of a different sport
            5. My mentor was/is
                a. A coach I work directly with (eg. head coach)
                b. Another coach in the athletic department
                c. A former coworker
                d. A member of athletic administration
                e. Someone I met through a formal mentoring program
                f. Other (fill in blank)
            6. Please describe how the mentoring relationship arose
            7. I believe my mentor played a role in getting me where I am now (Likert scale 1-5)
                a. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).
            8. Which of the following did a mentor do for you (check all that apply)
                a. Provided career support
                b. Provided emotional support
                c. Aided in my personal development
                d. Helped me with networking
                e. Increased my knowledge of coaching
                f. Challenged me to develop new skills
            9. I am satisfied with the support I have received from my mentor (Likert scale 1-5)
                a. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).

10. I believe my mentor will play a significant role in advancing my career (Likert scale 1-5)
    a. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).
11. What could your mentor do to provide better support to you and your career?
12. What sort of challenging situations has your mentor helped you to overcome or address?

ii. If no
1. Do you think having a mentor would be helpful as you continue a career in coaching?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. Do you currently act as a mentor for a female coach?
    a. Yes
    b. No
        i. If yes
            1. How long have you acted as a mentor?
                a. Fill in blank
            2. I enjoy mentoring other coaches (Likert scale 1-5)
                a. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).
            3. Which of the following have you done for a mentee?
                a. Provided career support
                b. Provided emotional support
                c. Aided in personal development
                d. Helped with networking
                e. Increased knowledge of coaching
                f. Challenged to develop new skills
        ii. If no
            1. Why not?
            2. Would you be willing to mentor another coach?
                a. Yes
                b. No
7. As an assistant coach, do you expect the head coach to play an active role in your professional development?
    a. Yes
    b. No
8. As a head coach, do you feel you have an obligation to act as a mentor for your assistant(s)?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Please write any other comments you have on your experiences with mentoring relationships in college athletics.

Appendix D

SAMPLE EVIDENCE FOR THEMES

Theme	Subtheme	Example Quotation
The Developmental Pathway	"I grew up playing sports"	"Well, I grew up playing sports. I grew up with an older brother. I grew up with my Dad coaching, and then his teaching me and my brother taught me, so I grew up around athletics." (P8)
		"I was the youngest of 4 so I always, when I was born I was in this environment and my.... siblings were all very engaged in athletics, and I'm like 4 years behind....so they were really competitive as I was growing up, and I would just pick up the sports as they did it, because they were doing it." (P11)
	"I just never thought it was a possibility"	"I mean, it's not that I didn't want to coach, in the beginning, I just never thought it was a possibility." (P7)
		"I didn't know where anything was going to go, but I.... still wanted to be competitive, and so coaching was a draw, because it was a way to still be competitive and not be an athlete." (P3)
	"If you're not	"[A]t the convention....I met a lot of other people

	getting better, you're already worse"	in coaching so I got involved in more camps and throughout the country and stuff, which was good." (P10)
		"The small close knit group of the coaches academy....is really unique, and then you have, this helps you develop a network because you spend an intense amount of time in a short period, going over all aspects of coaching, with a group where it's immediately set up as this trusting environment, and then you know, you get into it, and I think that allows you to develop.... a system of at least a few people out of that group where you can have a close, respected, support network moving on." (P14)
Gender Inequity	"What's changed? Everything"	"What's changed? Everything. Nothing has stayed the same....What has changed? Well.... gender equity, you know, that whole process, where you know the coaches are on more equal terms as far as workloads for coaching, and workloads for teaching, 'cause that was very skewed back when I first started." (P8)

		"I take it personal, you know, I really take a lot of pride in the fact that I don't think I'm, I am that way, like I just coach the sport, and it has nothing to do with who I am as a person, you know and of course the whole, 'well that's why you're not married because you're just a bitch,' I mean I've gotten that a couple of times, and I'm like, 'well, no I'm not married because I choose not to be married,' you know." (P6)
	"I've never played for a female"	"[W]e had a kid here once say, 'I was actually worried about playing for you because I've never played for a female.'" (P7)
		"I have a friend that's applying for jobs and I playfully asked are you applying for men's jobs as well and it was just a 'No.' It wasn't even a consideration as an option. So it's interesting. Men don't use gender as a barrier when applying for jobs and women do." (P14)
Attaining Balance	"I packed my bags and moved"	"I had four nieces and nephews born in the year I was out west.... I couldn't see them until a month or two later, and I realized gosh, family is really important to me, it's more important than I thought

		it was, you know." (P13)
		"I met my husband not long after that, and I thought this would be a great place to.... have a career, I can get everything I want as far as career, I've got my family, and a great environment, so that's kind of how I came to stay here." (P13)
	"You give up a lot of family life when you become a coach"	"During the summer it's a little different but, even then it's still time that you're traveling and you're away from home and I think that definitely takes its toll after a while." (P5)
		"[I]t's never going to be a fair balance, but it's going to, you're going to have some, I want some kind of personal life." (P15)
	"I've got a partner in that"	"That doesn't make me feel any better, as a person, that I have to miss things. You know what I'm saying? And to have that repeated several times is like, ok I get it." (P15)
		"It's hard because I give up a lot of, a lot of my family time, a lot of my family life.... I saw [my child] maybe playing 1 or 2 basketball games, all of [the] whole basketball season, you know and I

		was, I was here….That end makes it, makes it a lot trickier....[I]f I didn't have a supportive husband, I wouldn't, I wouldn't be able to, I would have had to quit my job." (P9)
	"They give you the utilities to succeed"	"[The administration is] not only supportive but they give you the utilities to be able to succeed. So they're not saying yea, go to the coach's convention, but they give you the funds to go. You know, so I think that's what's different here is, they believe in what they're saying, and they're willing to help you find the ways to get there." (P4)
		"It's really cool to have someone that has that much passion and drive and vision, and the energy to make it happen, versus someone that had no vision, not a bad, not bad people, just visionless." (P8)
The Community	"There's just a lot of experience in this campus"	"I haven't taken advantage of that as much, but boy I tell ya, you know, just walking around and sitting down in a coach's office and having a conversation could be really valuable, even a different sport." (P3)

		“I just think because so many of the coaches here have been here for a while, they see your development just as they see their own development, and you share a lot in that growth experience and stuff, like that’s been a constant, beautiful thing about working here.” (P10)
	“They genuinely wanted me to become a better coach”	“It made me feel pretty good, that she thought I could be decent. Because it’s very empowering when someone of her stature thinks I might be ok. Like oh, alright, well maybe I’ll stick this out.” (P8)
		“They genuinely wanted me to become a better coach. They were so open to sharing ideas, like I worked I’ll never forget the camp I worked....everything she said I was like, ‘Oh my God,’ or.... I’d go up to them at a recruiting event, and I’d go up to them and be like, ‘Hey, how do you approach this issue’....and they’d be more than willing to share. They have been awesome. They really have.” (P7)
	“Showing people pathways	“I wanted to see if I could coach in a way that gave people that, where people could find their

	to success is really important”	own worth without having to necessarily have the medal to prove it….I wanted....to help people find their worth from the inside.” (P2)
		“I just feel like people need to be supported with the idea that they can learn and grow, make mistakes, and learn from those, and have a chance to, to build.” (P12)

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