

We Have Contact! **Women, girls and boys** **playing Australian Rules** **Football**

**Combat Sports, Gendered Embodiment and the
Gender Order**

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This thesis is dedicated to Jackie, Jo and Darcy. Three brave females.

Not to have confidence in one's body is to lose confidence in oneself ... It is precisely the female athletes, who being positively interested in their own game, feel least handicapped in comparison with the male. Let her swim, climb mountain peaks, pilot an airplane, batter against the elements, take risks, go out for adventure and she will not feel before the world, timidity

(Simone de Beauvoir, 1952, The Second Sex).

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Glossary

AFL	Australian Football League - the elite national competition
Amateurs	West Australian Amateur Football League
ARU	Australian Rugby Union
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
FDT	Football Development Trust
MFLC	Metropolitan Football Leagues Council
NSW	New South Wales
SAFA	South Australian Football Association
SFL	Sunday Football League
SSSC	Smarter Than Smoking Schoolgirls Cup
SWAFA	Saturday West Australian Football Association
TEE	Tertiary Entrance Examination
VAFA	Victorian Amateur Football Association
VFA	Victorian Football Association
VFL	Victorian Football League
VWFL	Victorian Women's Football League
WA	Western Australia
WAFA	Western Australian Football Association
WAFC	West Australian Football Commission
WAFL	West Australian Football League (now Westar Rules)
WARU	West Australian Rugby Union
WAWFL	Western Australian Women's Football League
WAWRU	Western Australian Women's Rugby Union
Colts	The under-19s team in a club.
Gender Order	'Gender order' is defined as "a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity" (Connell 1987: 98-9).
Gender Regime	'Gender regime' describes the state of play in sexual politics within an institution, such as a school or, on a smaller scale for example, within a family (Connell 1987: 99).
Hegemonic Masculinity	A hegemonic form of masculinity is culturally exalted and its exaltation stabilises a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole (Connell 1990: 94).

High Mark	The high mark, unique to Australian Rules, involves a player using "the body of an opponent to propel himself into the air to capture the ball, thus adding to the potential for injury, both mid-air and landing" (Shawdon 1994: 59). Colloquially referred to as a "specy"/spectacular mark.
League Team	The league team is the top team in a club, usually made up of the best senior players (over 19).
Legal Contact	Players may tackle opponents anywhere from below the neck to the hips if they are in possession of the ball. An opponent not in possession of the ball, may be shepherded - knocked side-on with one's hip and shoulder.
Mark	Taking clean and clear possession of the ball after it has been kicked and before it touches the ground or a player.
Reserve Team	The reserves team is the team above the colts team and below the league (or top) team in a club. It is usually made up of senior players (over 19) and is sometimes drawn on by the club's league team when they are short of players. Also, sometimes league players doing badly are 'dropped' down to the reserves team for a spell.
Ruck/Rucking	At the beginning of each quarter and after each goal has been kicked, play is started/resumed by the ball being bounced very high in the centre of the ground by an umpire. Players known as rucks compete for the ball by jumping high in the air and attempting to tap the ball in the direction of a teammate, known as rucking.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
1 LITERATURE REVIEW	2
Mind, Body and Society	2
Philosophical Theories of the Body.....	2
Sociological Theories of the Body.....	5
Anthropological Theories of the Body	8
Feminist Theories of the Body	9
Connell's Theory of Embodiment.....	15
Women in Sport.....	17
Sex Roles and the 'Problem' of Female Participation.....	17
Male Sport and Women's Oppression.....	19
Women's Sport and Resistance to Male Domination.....	20
Women Participating in Male Dominated Sports.....	23
Women and Australian Rules Football.....	27
Men in Sport.....	33
Sport and Masculinity Construction.....	34
Complexities in the Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity in Sport.....	38
Gender and Physical Education.....	41
The Equal Opportunities Debate	41
Mapping Gender Differences	46
Gender Construction	48
Schooling the Body and PE	52
Learning the Body	53
Towards a Better Understanding.....	56
2 METHOD.....	58
First Field Trip - Women's Team.....	58
Focussed Interviews.....	58
Participant Observation.....	60
Life History Interviews.....	63
Second Field Trip - Girls' and Boys' Teams	64
Life History Interviews.....	65
Participant Observation.....	66

Reflections on Method.....	67
Boy! What a Problem!	68
Out of Bounds	69
Female Bonding.....	70
Non-Discursive Data	70
Personal Politics.....	71
A Prickly Issue.....	72
Research Fatigue.....	72
Outside the Closet Looking In	72
3 BACKGROUND.....	74
Women and Australian Rules Football.....	74
Pre-Conditions for Women's Football.....	75
Feminism and Women Playing Men's Sports	75
Nationalisation of Australian Rules football.....	80
The WAWFL's Early Days	81
Funding	83
Initial Relations with Men's Football Organisations	83
WAWFL's Current Status.....	87
Current Relations with Male Organisations	87
Funding	89
Schoolgirls' Football.....	90
Relations with Men's Football Organisations.....	94
Summary	96
4 WOMEN'S FOOTBALL.....	97
Setting the Scene	97
The League.....	97
The Team	100
The Game.....	100
The Coach.....	101
Early Gender Patterns.....	104
Sporty Childhoods.....	104
Tomboys	104
Fathers and Football.....	105
Marginal Involvement in Male Football.....	107
Motivations to Play Football.....	107
Love of the Game	107
Contact	108
A Gay Environment	111

Sexuality.....	112
Football and Homosexuality.....	112
"Butch" Embodiment.....	114
Football, Marriage and Heterosexuality.....	116
Homo-hetero Relations.....	120
Gendered Embodiment.....	122
Attitudes to Contact.....	122
Reactions from Outsiders.....	127
5 SCHOOLGIRL FOOTBALL.....	133
Setting the Scene.....	133
The Coach.....	133
The Team.....	137
Gender Patterns.....	138
Traditional Gender Regimes.....	139
Disrupted Traditional Gender Regimes.....	140
Why Do Girls Play Football?.....	142
Playing with Brothers.....	142
Sporty History.....	142
Playing Football with Family/Community.....	143
Inspired by Male Football.....	143
Rebelling Against Traditional Femininity.....	144
Daddy's Girls.....	148
Encouragement and Support from School and Peers.....	148
Meeting Young Men.....	149
Gendered Embodiment.....	149
Sporty/Tomboy Group.....	150
Feminine Group.....	151
Bigendered Embodiment.....	153
Sexuality.....	156
Good Girls.....	158
Bad Girls.....	161
Students Policing Sexuality.....	162
Negotiating Gender Contradictions.....	162
Football and Femininity.....	162
Physical Contact, Violence and Femininity.....	165
Reactions from Peers.....	167
Signs of Change.....	168
Defending the Gender Order.....	169
Connecting with Males.....	171

6 SCHOOLBOY FOOTBALL.....	173
Setting the Scene	174
The Competition	174
The Coach.....	174
The Team	177
Patterns of Masculinity	180
Hegemonic Masculinity.....	180
Defensive Masculinity.....	182
Contradictory Masculinity.....	183
Fathers and Football	184
Emotional Proxy	186
Nexus Problematicus.....	187
Exceptions.....	188
Gender Demarcation.....	189
Football and Gendered Embodiment.....	190
Physical Contact, Violence and Masculinity.....	190
Injuries.....	193
Football and Peer Relations	194
Male Rivalry	194
Male Football and Cathexis	197
Trespassers.....	198
Boys' Attitudes to Girls' Football Team	198
Staff vs Students Football Match.....	200
7 CONCLUSIONS	207
Football and Gendered Embodiment.....	207
Resistance or Complicity?	208
Defending the Gender Order	209
Football and Hegemonic Masculinity.....	212
Internal Contradictions.....	213
Future Research.....	213
Practical Applications.....	214
Personal Note.....	215

TABLES.....	216
Table 1 - Women's Interview Data.....	216
Table 2 - Girls' Interview Data.....	219
Table 3 - Boys' Interview Data.....	221
FIGURES.....	223
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	242
APPENDICES.....	266
Appendix A.....	267

Preface

[Abstract]

This study investigates both the reproduction and subversion of patriarchal gender relations in sport, with a particular focus on gendered embodiment. The research is fuelled by feminist concerns, especially women's embodied resistance to male domination. It is comprised of case studies of three Australian Rules football teams - a women's, a schoolgirls' and a schoolboys' team. The case studies are based on life-history interviews with players. Data was also collected through participant observation with all three teams. The data are analysed as both individual case studies and also in groups and the analysis is informed by Connell's (1995) theories of gender construction and gendered embodiment.

Because Australian Rules football is a male-dominated full-contact sport, it is often concluded or assumed that the game unproblematically and universally reproduces hegemonic masculinity. This study suggests that hegemonic masculinity is reproduced neither unproblematically nor universally in Australian Rules football teams. Indeed, very small signs of an emerging post-feminist masculinity were detected in the study.

The study's focus on gendered embodiment reveals a fluidity which is impossible, or at least fruitless, to analyse or explain away using the dichotomous categories masculine/feminine. Combat sports are shown to be emancipatory and empowering for females, though it is difficult to show just how much such new-found embodied confidence in individual players spills over into non-sporting contexts of their everyday lives.

Females playing the game present a potential challenge to the current gender order and highlight or bring to the fore issues of gendered embodiment which often go unnoticed or are taken for granted. Undoubtedly, this challenge is in some ways simply recuperated or incorporated but there are also some positive, heartening signs that advances are being made on this feminist front. Furthermore, such changes appear to be slow but of a more permanent nature than more short-lived forays into male dominated combat sports in pre-feminist times.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Because this project is concerned with several broad theoretical fields, namely embodiment, gender and sport and schooling the body, the literature review is divided into several sections. Firstly, an examination of the various ways in which philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists and feminists have theorised the elusive relationship between the mind, body and society, the central theoretical concern of this study. Then, having established Connell's work (1995, 1987) as the major theoretical influence on the research, I look at four areas within the sociology of sport most relevant to this study: men in sport, women in sport, gender and physical education, and schooling the body.

Mind, Body and Society

Philosophical Theories of the Body

In 1637 Descartes wrote *The Discourse on Method* in which, among other things, he explored the relationship of mind, soul and body. His work was part of a general movement within religious cultures which stressed the rational capacity of humans to understand the world through nonreligious means (Turner 1996[1984]). Having first established that all which he conceives can be produced by God (for he was a religious man living in religious times), he made the radical assertion that the human mind and body are two entirely distinct but interacting substances and that the mind can exist without the body. "I rightly conclude", he said, "that my essence consists only in my being a thinking thing" (Descartes 1912[1637]: 27). His theory was somewhat contradictory however, as he also acknowledged the undeniable union of the two: "I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but... so intimately conjoined... with it, that my mind and body compose a certain unity. For if this were not the case, I should not feel pain" (*Ibid*: 135).

Descartes also asserted that, because his mind frequently produced ideas without him contributing to those thoughts, such as in dreams, that his mind must "exist in some substance different from me... and... is either a body... or it is God himself, or some other creature, of a rank superior to body" (*Ibid*: 132). This view of the mind as separate from and superior to the body has become "inscribed in much of Western culture" (Crossley 1994: 14). Descartes also suggested that medicine would be advanced by regarding the bodies of

humans and animals as machines because all their behaviours could be explained 'mechanically' (Baker and Morris 1996: 87).

Cartesian dualism was evolved by the natural sciences into "a unitary and positivistic perspective of materialism in which... body and mind were both isolated and specialized" (Turner 1996[1984]: 9). It has also heavily influenced the social sciences. As recently as 1984, Turner bemoaned that "much of sociology is still essentially Cartesian in implicitly accepting a rigid mind/body dichotomy" (*Ibid*: 38). This is despite, several concerted efforts to discredit Cartesianist views of the body within the social sciences.

For example, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty developed a theory of intersubjectivity directly challenging Cartesian dualism (Merleau-Ponty 1962[1945]). He insisted that it is the body, not the mind, through which a person has their very first relation to the world, challenging Descartes' famous catchphrase "I think therefore I am", on the basis that consciousness is not a matter of 'I think' but of 'I can'" (*Ibid*: 137). He refuted that the mind can exist prior to and separate from the body, insisting they are neither two separate entities nor "closely conjoined", rather they are inseparable: "I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it" (*Ibid*: 150). Thus, action and perception are mutually informing (Crossley 1994: 15-16). He discredited the idea of the body-as-machine and dereified the concept of mind, challenging both mechanistic and objectivist reductions of the body (*Ibid*: 17).

Crossley praises Merleau-Ponty's philosophy as a sophisticated and comprehensive theory for providing an understanding of human agents as intersubjective beings situated in relations to a historical, material-symbolic world (*Ibid*: 8). However, she notes his work on emotions is underdeveloped and he fails to consider gendered, raced, handicapped, young, old or diseased bodies. This is not to say his theory does not allow for such an analysis, just that he presents an "overly homogenous account of embodied agency" in his own analysis (*Ibid*: 38-9).

Foucault had in the late 1940s and early 1950s been heavily influenced by Merleau-Ponty's work but later came to develop a post-structuralist argument which directly criticised and rejected existential-phenomenology (*Ibid*: 5). Foucault consciously avoided "giving primacy to the ideas of 'the individual' and of 'subjectivity'" (McHoul and Grace 1993).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that the classical age "discovered the body as object and target of power" (Foucault 1979 [1975]: 181), citing as an example, criminal bodies tortured and killed in public under monarchical rule. Thus the body had always been an object of strict control, he argues, but as governments began to take over from monarchs during the nineteenth century, the scale, object and modality of the control began changing. This Foucault illustrates using Bentham's design of the Panopticon, a circular prison in which a central tower overlooking all of the cells at once, ensures constant one-way surveillance of every inmate by wardens. The twist in this form of control is that the external gaze is internalised by the body being gazed upon, thereby doing away with the use of weapons, physical constraints or violence. The prisoner "inscribes in himself [sic] the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (*Ibid*: 202-3). A subtle form of discipline which "produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (*Ibid*: 138). The modern human body was "entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" (*Ibid*:).

The principle of this model of control was extended into schools, army barracks, hospitals and other institutions, as the transition from traditional to modern societies shifted government concern from controlling relatively anonymous bodies to regulating whole populations (Shilling 1993a: 77). Unlike sovereign power, modern power is not imposed by force, threat or violence yet it "produces and normalises bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination" (Bordo 1988: 190). These new disciplinary practices rendered the individual more powerful, productive and useful at the same time as more docile (Sawicki 1991: 22,67).

A major criticism of Foucault's work is that he assumes discourse operates almost independently of the social groups which are its primary carriers (Turner 1996[1984]). Also, by treating 'the individual' as an effect of power relations he denies human subjectivity, resulting in a limited account of individual identity and agency (Harstock 1990; McNay 1991). Thus the Foucauldian body is passive, a social surface of inscription (Grosz 1994: 121), equally available as a site which receives meaning from, and is constituted by, external forces (discourse), irrespective of time or the place (Shilling 1993a: 79-80). Even when he does make "the occasional reference to the body putting up resistances to power and dominant discourses, he cannot say what it is about the body that resists" (*Ibid*: 81). Thus, Foucault illustrates how discourse

affects bodies but not how bodies affect discourse. For instance, he treats *the* body "as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life" (Bartky 1988: 63-4).

Foucault has added significantly to our understanding of the relationship between mind, body and society with his radical assertion about the social construction of bodies. But in consciously rejecting Merleau-Ponty's theory of phenomenology in the process, he ignored the everyday lived experiences of flesh and blood bodies, thus throwing the theoretical baby out with the bath water. Ironically, the body "is present as a topic of discussion, but is absent as a focus of investigation... as a real, material object of analysis" (*Ibid*: 80).

Sociological Theories of the Body

Unlike Foucault's analysis, bodies are very much present as objects of analysis in Goffman's sociology. For example, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* he studies "impression management", that is, the manner, appearance, actions and gestures of individuals in ordinary situations (Goffman 1956). Though there is no systematic attempt at theory-building in his work, his emphasis on the intentions, ambitions, and reflexive actions of agentic individuals is essentially a critique of functionalist sociology (Baert 1998; Manning 1992).

Goffman takes what he calls a "dramaturgical approach" to his analysis, arguing people are "social actors" and their presentation of themselves to others is "theatrical performance". His focus on the way in which the social is lived in and through our bodies and sometimes entails "acting the part", accurately illustrates many aspects of everyday social life. Yet, his approach is essentially problematic. As Goffman himself points out, "[t]he stage presents things that are make-believe; presumably life presents things that are real and sometimes not well rehearsed" (*Ibid*: preface). Presumably, also, people invest their lives with far more meaning than a series of one act plays with scripts written by an anonymous author, "society". The major theoretical stumbling block, however, is that society exists "out there" somewhere, writing scripts and yet is, at the same time, reproduced by the actors for whom the scripts have been written, that is, through their bodies. Little is known about society, or to continue Goffman's theatrical analogy, the script. How is it written (structured?) Does it change from one period in history to another? When

agentic bodies "ad lib" (resist social norms), how does this affect the script (broader social structures)? In contrast with Foucault, who gives primacy to social discourse at the expense of the body, Goffman gives primacy to the body at the expense of historically specific social structures.

Like Goffman, Bourdieu is interested in everyday gestures of the body and the presentation of the self through one's body in seemingly insignificant actions and choices. However, Bourdieu is more aware than Goffman of the broader social structures involved in and reproduced through the "sign-bearing, sign-wearing body", in particular, class structures. For example, "the valorization of virility, expressed in a use of the mouth or a pitch of the voice, can determine the whole of working-class pronunciation" (Bourdieu 1984: 192).

Bourdieu developed the concept of "cultural capital" to explain class differences in educational performance and cultural practices which cannot be ascribed solely to economic inequalities (Brubaker 1985). He suggests capital is not merely manifest in one form but in three: economic, cultural and social and that cultural capital exists in three states: embodied, objectified and institutionalised (Bourdieu 1986: 243). He defines cultural capital as external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a "habitus" which in its fundamental state presupposes embodiment (*Ibid*: 244-5). Bourdieu stresses that the schemes of the habitus "owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will" (Bourdieu 1984: 466). The work involved in the management and presentation of the body in everyday life is "[m]ore like a class unconscious than a "class consciousness" in the Marxist sense" (Bourdieu 1985: 728).

For Bourdieu the body is "a social product" (1984: 192) which is "integral to the maintenance of social inequalities" (Shilling 1993a: 127). In *Distinction*, his empirical study of the reproduction of class in contemporary France, he shows how "privileged status groups tend to legitimize their privilege through the cultivation of a sense of 'natural' dignity and excellence" (Brubaker 1985: 761). That is, through 'taste', which he defines as "a class culture turned into nature, that is, *embodied*, [which] helps to shape the class body" (Bourdieu 1984: 190, original emphasis).

Though Bourdieu has not proposed a comprehensive theory of embodiment, his work has influenced much research on the body, in particular the sociology

of sport (Clement 1995; Wacquant 1995; Bourdieu 1978, 1990). His bodies are both social and physical and he has an interest in the unfinishedness of the body, thus maintaining a more comprehensive view of the materiality of human embodiment than theorists who focus exclusively on language, consciousness, or even the body as flesh (Shilling 1993a: 128).

Shilling notes, however, that historical change enters into Bourdieu's analysis only at a descriptive level (*Ibid*: 146). Bourdieu (1992) has defended such charges but because habitus operates at the level of the subconscious, it is difficult to see how people are able to exercise enough agency "to 'break out' of the corporeal trajectories assigned to them by their social location, habitus and taste" (Shilling 1993a: 146).

Laberge believes Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital can be of interest to feminists but few have used it because of its androcentrism (Laberge 1995: 132). Shilling maintains Bourdieu does not neglect gender, race and ethnicity altogether but that "women are analysed in terms of belonging to class categories defined *in opposition* to other class categories" (1993: 147, original emphasis). Thus the extreme generality of Bourdieu's conception of class structure becomes synonymous with social structure and class struggles are assimilated to sexual, generational, regional, ethnic and occupational struggles (Brubaker 1985: 770).

A major criticism of Bourdieu's analysis of embodied or physical capital is that it is a subsection of cultural capital. Shilling believes that the body is too important to be seen merely as a component of another form of capital, arguing the "management and development of the body is central *in its own right* to human agency in general" (Shilling 1991: 654).

The publication of Turner's *The Body and Society* in 1984 had an enormous and positive influence on sociology, by highlighting the Cartesian dualism implicit in much of sociology and calling for sociologists to acknowledge that the "body is always socially formed and located" (Turner 1996[1984]). It heralded the start of a steady stream of social studies of the body, yet to abate.

In *The Body and Society*, Turner also develops a model for studying and theorising the body which he describes as "Neo-Hobbesian" because it focuses on the classical Hobbesian problem of the body in space and time but rejects Hobbesian materialism and mechanistic views of the body. Turner's Bodily

Order model is based on four main areas of research: the reproduction of populations through time; the regulation of populations in space; the restraint of desire as an interior body problem; and the representation of bodies in social space as an issue concerning the surface of the body (*Ibid*: 107). This model, he argues, "brings into focus the fact that all social structures which institutionalize inequality and dependency are fought out at the level of a micro-politics of deviance and disease" (*Ibid*: 125). For Turner, the body is the most potent metaphor of society and therefore "disease is the most salient metaphor of structural crisis. All disease is disorder - metaphorically, literally, socially and politically " (*Ibid*). He sees 'illnesses', such as agoraphobia and Anorexia nervosa as manifestations of the social location of female sexuality and women's subordinate social roles.

By showing how the body may break down and become ill as a result of the modes of control imposed on it by society, Turner provides a clear sense of how the material, physical body is implicated in structures of sexuality and socially acceptable modes of presentation (Shilling 1993a: 93). Turner's Bodily Order model does "bring the body back" into sociology but, as Shilling points out, provides only a partial view of the material body because it "is important only in so far as it presents a problem to be managed by social systems" (*Ibid*).

Anthropological Theories of the Body

In 1934 the French anthropologist, Mauss, coined the phrase "techniques of the body" to connote "the ways in which from society to society men [sic] know how to use their bodies" (Mauss 1973[1934]: 70). He used the notion of the "habitus" to stress the acquired ability of physical habits which do not simply vary between individuals but "are learned through education from others in one's society" (*Ibid*: 73). Mauss was certainly on the right track when he asserted that the art of using the human body is conditioned by three elements indissolubly mixed together: the biological, sociological and psychological. Yet he did not provide a comprehensive theory of the body, mind and society to account for the ways in which these three aspects of humanity interact.

Another anthropologist, Mary Douglas, theorised the body as a symbolic medium which mirrors society. In *Natural Symbols*, she asserts there are two kinds of bodily experience - the physical and the social - between which there is a continual exchange of meanings, each reinforcing the categories of the other (Douglas 1973[1970]: 93). The 'social body', she says, constrains the way the

'physical body' is perceived and the physical body, which is always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society (*Ibid*: 93). "The physical body is a microcosm of society" (*Ibid*: 101).

In *Purity and Danger*, she analyses concepts of pollution and taboo, arguing the physical body's boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious (Douglas 1966: 115). Orifices of the body symbolise a society's specially vulnerable points and any matter issuing from them traverses the boundary of the body (*Ibid*: 121). For example, the Israelites, historically a hard-pressed minority, believed all bodily issues, such as blood, pus, excreta and semen, were polluting. "The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity and purity of the physical body" (*Ibid*: 124). But symbolism is also worked upon the body more literally. Douglas argues tribal circumcision performed in male initiation rites is an image of society being carved in human flesh (*Ibid*: 116). Such rituals give social relations visible expression, thus "enable people to know their own society. The rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body" (*Ibid*: 128).

In *Purity & Danger* Douglas "made society sound more systematic than it really is" because "ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience" (*Ibid*: 4). Thus, the body is explored phenomenologically only when being inscribed upon by society, not when it successfully resists inscription. She wisely rejects universal psychoanalytic (Western) categories on the basis they are not applicable to anthropological studies of the Dinka, Swazi, Coorg and so on. However in denying them individual agency and critique, Douglas's bodies are essentially as docile as Foucault's.

Feminist Theories of the Body

Despite being criticised for treating the body as though it were gender-neutral, Foucault has been popular among feminist writers on the body. Sawicki points out that the attraction of Foucault's poststructuralist discourse for some feminists is his attention to the productive nature of power, and his emphasis on the body as a target and vehicle of modern disciplinary practices (1991: 95). Though Bartky and Bordo are not the only Foucauldian feminists, they provide excellent examples of some of the important insights to be gained from a Foucauldian analysis of female embodiment.

Bartky develops an account of the disciplinary practices which produce female bodies more docile than male bodies by cleverly reconceptualising Foucault's gender-neutral concept of discipline into a type of "manopticon", which she argues resides within the consciousness of most women: "they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives her body as seen by... an anonymous patriarchal Other" (Bartky 1988: 72).

Taking her lead from *Discipline and Punish*, she argues that older forms of male domination, such as the domestication of women, are eroded in modern industrial, post-feminist societies but are replaced by new, more subtle forms: "normative femininity is coming more and more to be centred on woman's body - not its duties and obligations or even its capacity to bear children, but its ... presumed heterosexuality and its appearance" (*Ibid*: 81). There is subtlety and effectiveness in the new disciplinary power, which "represents a saving in the economy of enforcement: since it is women themselves who practice this discipline on and against their own bodies (*Ibid*: 81). They constantly discipline their bodies with exercises, surgery, make-up, hair-products, hair-removal, diets, skin products and clothing fashions. A process continually reinforced by media images of perfect female beauty, which bombard women daily, leaving most feeling inadequate. Despite women's enormous and time-consuming efforts to master feminine body discipline, they are ridiculed and dismissed for their interest in such 'trivial' things as clothes and makeup.

Here, Bartky differs from Foucault, arguing that he overlooks "the extent to which discipline can be institutionally *unbound* as well as institutionally bound", insisting the disciplining of feminine bodies occurs at both these levels (*Ibid*: 75). No one, she says, "is marched off for electrolysis at gunpoint" but electrolysis and other beauty regimes "must be understood as aspects of a far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination" which, she says, "aims at turning women into the docile and compliant companions of men just as surely as the army aims to turn its raw recruits into soldiers" (*Ibid*: 75). The reason why not all women are feminists, argues Bartky, is that their very subjectivities are constituted in and through the disciplinary practices that construct the feminine body (*Ibid*: 78).

Bordo also bases her studies on Foucault's concept of "docile bodies" (Bordo, 1988, 1990, 1992). She identifies two waves of feminist interpretations of Foucault's works, the first focussed on his concepts of domination, like discipline, docile bodies and normalisation and the second post-modern wave,

focussed more on his concepts of resistance like intervention, contestation and subversion (Bordo 1988: 193). Bordo argues that for an adequate theoretical understanding of power and the body, an understanding of both how systemic power works on bodies and of how bodies resist systemic power is necessary but advocates an emphasis on the former. She disagrees with those who argue that cosmetic surgery like breast implants, nose jobs and liposuction are a matter of 'self-determination' and 'choice', questioning whether people really 'choose' the appearances they seek to construct or whether they are 'normalising' themselves according to dominant discourses of female beauty. Poignantly she asks "does anyone in this culture have her nose re-shaped to look more 'African' or 'Jewish'?" (*Ibid*: 197).

She also combines Foucault's "docile body" with Douglas' symbolic body to "read" some dominant meanings of the modern preoccupation with fat, diet, and slenderness from photographs in contemporary magazines (Bordo 1990). Bordo suggests the female hourglass figure ideal of the fifties emphasises breasts and hips, the markers of reproductive femaleness, whereas, the recent shift to the lanky, 'androgynous' slender look of "today's boyish body ideals, as in the 1920s, symbolize a new freedom, a casting off of the encumbrance of domestic, reproductive femininity" (*Ibid*: 86). However, the slender body not only symbolises qualities such as detachment, self-containment, self-mastery and control but also carries connotations of fragility, defencelessness, and lack of power against a decisive male occupation of social space. This is dramatically represented in fashion poses which continually juxtapose the new slender female body against the resurgent muscularity and bulk of the current male body-ideal. Bordo argues that the fact that the slender female body can carry both these seemingly contradictory meanings is one reason for its compelling attraction in periods of gender-change.

Like Turner, Bordo analyses a group of gender-related and historically localized disorders which all occurred during "periods of cultural backlash against attempts at reorganization and redefinition of male and female roles" - hysteria in the late nineteenth century, agoraphobia in the post-World War II period and anorexia nervosa in the late twentieth century (Bordo 1992: 16). She analyses these disorders as a form of embodied female protest which function paradoxically "as if in collusion with the cultural conditions that produce them, reproducing rather than transforming precisely that which is being protested" (*Ibid*: 22).

These examples illustrate "feminist appropriations of Foucault have resulted in path-breaking and provocative social and cultural criticism" (Sawicki 1991: 95). Yet, even having rectified some Foucauldian deficiencies, they are unable to overcome all the difficulties inherent in his approach to the body. Still missing in action are real bodies living out their lives.

One outstanding exception to this is an English study based on interviews with 148 young women and 46 young men as part of an AIDS project aimed at building up a detailed picture of young people's sexual practices, beliefs and understandings of HIV and safe sex (Holland, et al. 1998). A major finding is that unprotected heterosexual practices continue despite common knowledge of AIDS because of collusion by many females with their male sexual partners in the reproduction of male power. Adapting Foucault's panoptical self-surveillance concept, they argue there is a 'male-in-the-head' of young women which silences their sexual pleasures and desires, inhibiting open communication and negotiation about safe sex (*Ibid*: 147).

Despite Merleau-Ponty's failure to consider gendered embodiment, Young (1990) has modified his phenomenology of the body to accommodate gendered bodies in her excellent piece "Throwing Like a Girl". She fruitfully combines the insights of his theory with de Beauvoir's argument that female behaviour and psychology are defined, not by a mysterious essence that all women have by virtue of being female, but by the historical, cultural, social and economic limits of their situation in a sexist society.

Unlike Merleau-Ponty's neutral (read: male) body, which he argues cannot be an object but is a subject referred not onto itself but onto the world's possibilities, Young argues that a woman frequently lives her body as both object and subject. This is from living in a society with the ever-present possibility of being gazed upon as "the potential object of another subject's intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention" (*Ibid*: 155). The gaze of others is internalised and she herself often "takes up her body as a mere thing. She gazes at it in the mirror, worries about how it looks to others, prunes it, shapes it, molds and decorates it" (*Ibid*).

Young describes three contradictory modalities of feminine bodily existence. The first is that women's bodies exist not just as a transcendence and openness to the world like men's, but are also laden with immanence, what she calls "an ambiguous transcendence" (*Ibid*: 148). Thus, women typically use much less

space than is available to them in their everyday movements, such as sitting, standing and walking with their limbs close to or closed around them. "The timidity, immobility, and uncertainty that frequently characterize feminine movement project a limited space for the feminine 'I can'" (*Ibid*: 151-2). In playing sport, many women constrict their movements rather than move freely in the space available. Whereas men usually move out to meet a ball coming towards them to "confront it with their own countermotion", women tend to wait for and react to a ball, often as if it were coming at them rather than to them by fleeing, ducking or protecting themselves (*Ibid*: 146).

The second modality is discontinuous unity. Females typically refrain from using their whole bodies in a task. A woman's body is *discontinuous* with itself because "[t]he part of the body that is transcending toward an aim is in relative disunity from those that remain immobile" (*Ibid*: 149-150). When throwing, kicking or hitting a ball, they usually concentrate motion in the part of the body most directly connected to the task, such as the arm while throwing, while the rest of the body remains relatively immobile. Females do not tend "to reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of [their] intention" (*Ibid*: 146). This is known as "throwing like a girl".

The third modality is inhibited intentionality. Females often assume they are unable to accomplish easy tasks, even before attempting them, in particular, those involving the use of force, like lifting and carrying heavy objects. When attempting such tasks, women often underuse and underestimate their potential physical power and skills and, in giving less than their full effort, often fulfil their own prophecy of incompetence. "Feminine bodily existence is an *inhibited intentionality*, which simultaneously reaches toward a projected end with an 'I can' and withholds its full bodily commitment to that end in a self-imposed 'I cannot'" (*Ibid*: 148, original emphasis). Approaching tasks with timidity, uncertainty and hesitancy is also due to a fear of getting hurt, greater in women than men. "We often experience our bodies as a fragile encumbrance, rather than the media for the enactment of our aims" (*Ibid*: 146-7). Young concludes that "the general lack of confidence that we frequently have about our cognitive or leadership abilities is traceable in part to an original doubt of our body's capacity" (*Ibid*: 156).

This seminal paper contains valuable insights on gendered embodiment. However it is not, nor is it meant to be, a comprehensive theory of the relationship between the mind and body. Such a theory would need to

account for men as well as women and sporty females, as well as women who "throw like a girl". Furthermore, Grosz (1994) questions whether phenomenological descriptions are adequate for understanding the differences between the sexes, on the basis that desire does not have a central enough role and because sexuality may be the one arena in which intentionality breaks down and no longer functions adequately.

Unlike those feminists who merely adjust existing embodiment theories to accommodate sex and gender, in *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz (1994) reformulates the important elements of previous theories into a new theoretical approach. She uses the Lacanian concept of the Möbius strip, an inverted three-dimensional figure-eight, to symbolically represent minds and bodies not as two distinct substances nor two kinds of attributes of a single substance but something in between. The Möbius strip, she argues, shows "the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another", thus providing "a way of problematizing and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exterior" (*Ibid*: xii).

Grosz is one of the few theorists of the body who stresses the importance of psychoanalysis in aiding our understanding of the mind/body relationship, in particular, "how the body functions, not simply as a biological entity but as a psychical, lived relation, and the way in which the psyche is a projection of the body's form" (*Ibid*: 27). Grosz argues that the body is "literally written on, inscribed by desire and signification, at the anatomical, physiological, and neurological levels" (*Ibid*: 60). Thus, gendered embodiment and sexuality are neither predetermined purely by anatomy nor by social discourses but by a relationship between them.

Theorising the body as a geometrical concept radically oversimplifies the fascinating complexity that is the lived human subject and, simultaneously, unnecessarily complicates an already complex living organism by conceptualising it in abstract terms. Grosz is aware her model is "not well suited for representing modes of becoming... But... the trajectories of becoming, do not lend themselves readily to representation, to handy models" (*Ibid*: 210). This is the central problem. Her Möbius strip is a model for theory's sake, rather than one which deepens our understanding of human embodiment. It is more productive to develop theories out of social research

as Connell has done (below), than out of a critique of social theory. In short, theory should not be imposed upon social analyses but must grow dialectically out of, or be informed by, social analyses.

Also, though women's bodies are undeniably a primary site of male domination, it is senseless to neglect half of the gender embodiment equation. Focussing only on female embodiment downplays the constructedness of the male body at the top of the gender hierarchy and also the crucial role some male bodies play in maintaining the gender order. Berger points out that the social presence of a man is different than a woman's because it is dependent on the promise of embodied power and agency - "what he can do to you or for you" (Berger 1977[1973]: 45-7).

Connell's Theory of Embodiment

In his book, *Masculinities*, the sociologist Robert Connell (1995) brings male bodies into the theoretical foreground and sets out a comprehensive theory of gender in which the relationship between the body and mind is central to his understanding of sex, sexuality and gender. His attempt to overcome the recurring problem of other theories of the body based either on biological or sociological determinism or an unsatisfactory compromise between the two, forms the major methodological and theoretical foundation of my research.

The theory of the body which Connell formulates in *Masculinities* is based on the Merleau-Pontian premise that bodies are both objects and agents of practice. The relationship between the body and the social is two-way and simultaneous. Practice itself forms and is formed by the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined (*Ibid*: 61). Because practice is "onto-formative" not only individual lives but a social world is formed through "body-reflexive practices" (*Ibid*: 64-5). Thus, powerful social structures remain visible but, in contrast to Foucauldian theory, so too do flesh and blood bodies. However, unlike Foucault's bodies, Connell's bodies are not always docile, they are not blank pages on which cultural messages are written (*Ibid*: 26). They are "addressed by social process and drawn into history, without ceasing to be bodies. They do not turn into symbols, signs or positions in discourse" (*Ibid*: 64-5). Their "materiality (including material capacities to engender, to give birth, to give milk, to menstruate, to open, to penetrate, to ejaculate)" continue to matter (*Ibid*). They also have "various forms of recalcitrance to social symbolism and control... Ways are proposed for bodies to participate in

social life, and the bodies often refuse" (*Ibid*: 56-7). For example, women are culturally defined by their reproductive capacities but some women constantly miscarry. Thus, bodies share "in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct" (*Ibid*: 60). They neither stand outside of nor prior to history but are open to change through social processes.

Connell improves upon Merleau-Ponty's approach to the body by taking into account the many different ways in which people are embodied, in particular focussing on gender but not to the exclusion of race, class, age, ethnicity or other factors. "In gender (as in other social structures) social practice draws bodies into a historical process in which bodies are materially transformed" (Connell 1998: 9). Like Grosz, Connell stresses the importance of psychoanalysis, in particular with regards to sexuality but, unlike Grosz, his theoretical approach to embodiment grows out of his research on real people and thus is informed by practice, rather than pure theory. Connell's (1987, 1990, 1995) focus on individual life histories, allows him to avoid abstract models in theoretically accounting for the nexus of body, mind and sexuality. This is what keeps Connell's bodies alive and anchored in their own worlds.

Freud's understanding of sexuality and gender, though incomplete, provides the theoretical and methodological foundation of Connell's approach to studying gender. In particular, Freud's hypothesis that humans are constitutionally bisexual, that masculine and feminine currents coexist in both men and women, and that adult sexuality and gender are not fixed by nature but constructed through a long and conflict-ridden process (Connell 1995: 9). This process is illuminated through Freud's clinical method - the psychoanalytic case study of the *individual*. When done correctly, the case study teases out the layers of emotion which coexist in each person and contradict each other, uncovering the relationships which "constitute the person, the prohibitions and possibilities that emerge in that most extraordinary and complex of social processes, the raising of one generation of humans by another" (Connell 1994: 33-4).

Freud developed the concept of the dynamic unconscious - "a system of mental activity of which the person is unaware but which yet exerts a powerful influence on her life" (Connell 1983a: 6). He also formulated the concept of repression, a mechanism which "operates in every person's life in the process of psychosexual development, and takes effect at the level of the individual unconscious" [Connell, 1987 #63: 197-8]. Repression operates simultaneously

at a macro-social and individual level. Thus, what is culturally taboo or prohibited in society, such as homosexuality, becomes psychologically repressed in the individual (who is constitutionally bisexual). Psychoanalysis "forces one to recognize that the social is present in the person - it does not end at the skin - and that power invests desire in its very foundations" (Connell 1994: 34). It allows a much more powerful connection between the social and the unconscious than those theories which, for instance, simply tack psychodynamic notions such as 'identification' onto a sociology of social control (Connell 1987: 198-9). Repression takes definite form and intensity in specifiable historical contexts, thus the "Oedipus complex can be seen as a product of a definite historical type of the family" (*Ibid*). It is this connection between the individual and society in the Freudian concept of psycho-sexual development, which Connell develops into a theory of gendered embodiment based on life-history interviews.

The remainder of this review attends to the literature on gender and sport, with a particular emphasis on issues of embodiment.

Women in Sport

It was not until after the women's liberation movement had begun in the 1960s and female participation rates in sport and physical education (PE) began to increase that academics (mostly female) began to question, investigate and theorise about the disparity in the rates and patterns of women's involvement in sport compared with men's (Birrell 1988: 459). The following is a review of the major theoretical trends since the 1970s in research on women and sport in Western societies.

Sex Roles and the 'Problem' of Female Participation

Though female participation rates in sport and PE had reached unprecedented levels in Western countries by the 1970s, they were still generally lower than those of males. This was perceived as a problem by liberal feminists and some PE teachers and researchers. From the 1970s to the early 1980s this problem was addressed by researchers mostly through psychological studies. These were informed by sex-role (Butt and Schroeder 1980; Colley, et al. 1985; King and Chi 1979; Ugucioni and Ballantyne 1980) and socialisation (Greendorfer 1977, 1978, 1979; Kennedy 1977) theories. Many were based on surveys using

the Bem Sex Role Inventory and other psychological devices to rate the personality traits of male and female athletes and non-athletes as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. Female athletes with high masculine and feminine ratings (as defined by those who designed the tests) were defined psychologically androgynous (Chalip, et al. 1980; Duquin 1978; Myers and Lips 1978). Such studies were based on the assumption of an incompatibility between the role of woman and that of athlete, termed "role conflict" (Bell 1980; Sage and Loudermilk 1979; Smith 1975). Female athletes who dealt with this 'role conflict' by compensating for their masculine behaviour with hyper-feminine dress or other behaviour were defined as "female apologetics (Del Rey 1978).

There are a number of theoretical and methodological weaknesses in this literature. First, in asking why females do not participate in sport to the same extent as men, the problem is perceived to be one of female deficiency as measured against the male 'norm'. Thus, the research focuses on female behaviour and psychology, which is seen as problematic and in need of correction or, in some cases, in conflict with sport. Male behaviour is taken as the norm and therefore does not require examination or analysis.

Second, the methodology is unsound. Birrell lists the major methodological inadequacies of 1970s psychological studies on female athletes as being: poor operationalisation and statistical analysis, inadequate sampling, use of inappropriate instruments, generalising beyond the data, and inferring causal relationships from weak correlational patterns (1988: 464).

Third, sex role theorists exaggerate the degree to which social behaviour is prescribed, underplay conflict and contradiction and often explain away "variations from the presumed norms of male behaviour in terms of 'deviance' as a 'failure' in the socialization" (Carrigan, et al. 1985: 578). Significantly, "[s]ex differences, on almost every psychological trait measured, are either non-existent or fairly small" (Connell 1995: 21).

Fourth, not only do social definitions of masculinity and femininity remain largely unproblematic and under-examined but they shape the very questions asked by researchers and filter their analyses. For example, the role conflict approach ignores "the manner in which socialization into sport is less a process of taking on roles than of actively creating them" (Theberge 1985: 199). Despite these serious inadequacies, sex role research on female athletes continue (Andre and Holland 1995).

Male Sport and Women's Oppression

During the 1970s and 1980s, as drugs and hooliganism in sport became public issues, "the significance of sports as a *social* phenomena captured the imagination of theorists with a more critical orientation" (Hargreaves 1994: 6). Social theorists such as Giddens, Bourdieu, Willis and Gramsci were beginning to apply "theories of power, social reproduction and practice, and cultural struggle and production to an analysis of the historical and cultural construction of modern sport" (Hall 1996: 7). In a seminal paper Bryson declared her interest "not in the liberating possibilities of sport for women, but rather in its potential to oppress" (Bryson 1983: 414). Sport, she said, serves to ritually support an aura of male competence and superiority in publicly acclaimed skills and a male monopoly of aggression and violence while at the same time inferiorising women and their skills (*Ibid*: 413). This was followed by calls for sociologists to look beyond sexual inequalities within the sporting arena to the role of sport in the reproduction of the patriarchal order (Hall 1985; Whitson 1986). Theberge (1985) recommended conceptualising sport as a dynamic social practice which contributes to the maintenance of male domination beyond sport itself.

The 1980s saw increased sociological scrutiny of sport as a source of oppression for women. Historical studies began to document the role of sport in constructing sexual difference, for example, the ways in which, from Australia's earliest colonial years, sport "has been a major determinant of how men and women see themselves in relation to each other" (Stoddart 1986: 135). Sport was shown to be coopted in the service of 'compulsory heterosexuality', effectively dividing and silencing sportswomen (Lenskyj 1987: 386). Analyses of sports media showed sportswomen to be marginalised, sexualised, trivialised or ignored (Hilliard 1984; Theberge and Cronk 1986; Williams, et al. 1986).

As more and more evidence was produced of the many ways in which sport serves to reproduce patriarchal relations and ideologies, it was seen by some feminists to have no redeeming features and calls to abandon rather than continue to colonise this male domain were made. Typically, the logic went as follows: Women should reject traditional sports because they are sexist and emphasise male values, such as winning at all costs, competition, aggression and elitism. Equality, it was argued, does not consist merely of being free to do whatever men have done, it is first necessary to question the moral and

human consequences of the structures and procedures which have been created by a patriarchal society (Talbot 1988: 32). Some feminists called for the development of women-centred, counter-hegemonic sporting practices (Birke and Vines 1987; Bloch 1987; Lenskyj 1987; Willis 1982). Most of these suggestions were abstract and it was unclear how they would be put into practice. For example, Willis suggested women "offer more strongly their own version of sports reality which undercuts altogether the issues of male supremacy and the standards which measure it" by a selective reinforcement of women's own strengths (Willis 1982: 134). Others were even more obscure.

Some concrete suggestions were made, based on experimentation and practice. One such experiment involved developing a women's recreational softball league which was process oriented, collective, inclusive, supportive and infused with an ethic of care (Birrell and Richter 1987). Though deemed successful, they noted "transformative efforts of this particular feminist community may appear isolated from the mainstream of sport and culture" (*Ibid*: 408). This was a major problem with the separatist approach. A lack of empirical research led to romanticising and plucking "solutions" out of thin air which were ideologically sound but unlikely to work in practice, at least not on a broad social scale.

Also, there still remained the problem of male sports. Men's sports were shown to be serviced through the domestic labour of wives and mothers, who wash sports clothes, mind children and ferry them to and from sporting venues, leaving little or no time for their own leisure pursuits (Deem 1987; Thompson 1990, 1992). Birrell & Cole (1990) argued sport not only celebrates and confirms, but constructs, sexual difference and is therefore a difference and power producing system. Bryson (1991) told the Australian House of Representatives "Essentially the problem for women's sport is men's sport *per se*, and the way sporting performances are measured against this standard". She changed her position from being unconvinced of the wisdom of women's involvement in sport (above) to "being convinced that if we vacate the scene, we merely support masculine hegemony" (Bryson 1987: 359).

Women's Sport and Resistance to Male Domination

Meanwhile some sociologists were beginning to acknowledge the role of sport in women's oppression but also attend to its transformative possibilities, like Theberge (1985), who argued sport is an agent of women's oppression but has

the potential also to transform gender relations and contribute to women's liberation.

Sports sociologists were beginning to see female athletes as 'contested ideological terrain' (Messner 1988) and producing studies highlighting their resistance as well as their compliance to patriarchal discourses. For instance, in her study of female sporting practices in England from the 19th century onwards, Hargreaves (1994) emphasised sports are part of an ongoing social struggle for control of the physical body. During Victorian times male scientists and doctors 'proved' that physical exertion during sport would interfere with women's primary function of reproduction, an ideology which has restricted and shaped the development of women's sports ever since. Nevertheless, Hargreaves argued women are not "simply passive recipients of culture, duped by men, or impossibly constrained by circumstances" (*Ibid*: 289). Her study showed that, although sports do tend to reproduce dominant culture, they are deeply contradictory and have the potential to transform culture. Women, she says, "are involved in the dialectic of cultural struggle - they are manipulated *and* resistant, determined by circumstances *and* active agents in the transformation of culture" (*Ibid*).

A study of Canadian women's historical sporting practices, revealed there have always been some women who have ignored medical myths which deemed females too frail to participate in vigorous sports, refusing to be victims of a biology designed only for motherhood (Lenskyj 1986: 139). Smith's analysis of control over the female body in three New Zealand girls' high schools between the 1880s and 1920s, reveals the students "created their own meanings by achieving personal enjoyment and status in physical education, sometimes accepting and at other times by resisting the dominant discourses of femininity and health" (Smith 1997: 70). Similarly, a study of the League of German Girls founded in 1930 by the National Socialist government, revealed that although the reconstruction of sports through the League reflected National Socialist eugenics and gender ideologies "the girls and women involved were also able to imbue sports with their own significance and needs" (Pfister and Reese 1995: 114).

By the late 1980s it was becoming clear to a number of feminists and sociologists that the emancipatory potential of sport and physical activity for females lies not in proving women are men's physical equals, nor in dismantling the existing male-dominated institution of sport and replacing it

with a Utopian dream, but as a form of embodied resistance and source of personal empowerment. By defying the traditional view of women as fragile, defenceless, weak, sexual objects, sports participation can give females "a sense of an actuality of our bodies as our own rather than primarily as an instrument to communicate sexual availability" thus in a broader feminist context helps women reclaim their bodies in physical relations with other people (Mackinnon 1987: 122-3). More specifically, sport can be liberating for females when it helps them to develop: a more positive sense of self and physical well-being; physical skills; a positive attitude about their bodies; a sense of power derived from the experience of bodily competence (Theberge 1987). Bennett *et al.*, add to this list "the discovery of potential for total self-determination" and "the development of support systems and deep bonding among women" (Bennett, et al. 1987: 377).

However, advances for women in sport are not inevitable or without contradiction, nor do they come without a struggle: "Sport is a site for freedom and constraint: it produces new opportunities and meanings for women and it reproduces prejudices and oppression (Hargreaves 1990: 300). For example, a study based on questionnaires and interviews exploring the link between women doing physical activities and developing skills which boost confidence, found little evidence of women using the skills or capital gained through those activities in other areas of their lives (Gilroy 1997).

Furthermore, an empirical study of a Canadian Ringette camp revealed, although organised sports provide opportunities for females to develop female subcultures, the 'hidden curriculum' of heterosexual hegemony serves "to reproduce the inequalities in gender relations, and inhibit the creation of group solidarity among girls and women" (Varpalotai 1987: 418). Theberge, however, found that, despite the elite women's ice hockey team she studied being made up of women from diverse racial, ethnic, sexual and class backgrounds, the most significant aspect of team membership was that it offered a context in which its members could "collectively affirm their skills, commitment, and passion for their sport" (1995: 401). Differences in players' sexualities were acknowledged but rarely discussed and several gay and heterosexual players were close friends. Lesbian players and their partners were fully members of the team community and "sexuality seems to be irrelevant to the dynamics of team relations" (*Ibid*: 398). Thus, empirical research and the use of life-history interviews is particularly important in providing a deeper understanding of the complexities and contradictions of

female sporting practices.

Women Participating in Male Dominated Sports

There are not many studies of women in male dominated sports but they are particularly illuminating with regards to how much of a challenge women's entry into the sports arena actually presents to the gender order. For instance, although female bodybuilders threaten "not only current socially constructed definitions of femininity and masculinity, but the system of sexual difference itself" (Schulze 1990) several studies have shown this challenge to be incorporated and recuperated into the existing system of sexual difference. The 'pseudocumentary' film "Pumping Iron II" shows Bev Francis being beaten by seven less muscular competitors in a bodybuilding competition because they are prettier, sexier, smaller and more shapely (Balsamo 1994). When assessing female competitors, judges are instructed to take into account that females must not carry muscular development "to excess where it resembles the massive muscularity of the male physique" (*Ibid*: 346). It was concluded that the challenge which women bodybuilders present to male domination is recuperated through the subculture's focus on hyper-feminine beauty.

The findings of a study, based on in-depth interviews with eight elite female bodybuilders revealed a more complex picture (Guthrie and Castelnovo 1992). They found evidence of both resistance and compliance to dominant discourses of feminine beauty. Emphasised femininity is a critical component for winning bodybuilding competitions and some of the women invested much energy in controlling their shape, weight and fat to obtain the 'body beautiful'. Yet, others were resisting narrow definitions of femininity by constructing their bodies according to their own criteria and some were committed to actively transforming how women are perceived. They concluded that marginalised practices like women's bodybuilding offer greater opportunities for resistance than those supported by dominant power/knowledge discourses.

Contact sports also have great subversive and empowering potential for female participants. The patriarchal definition of women as object, rather than subject or agent is reproduced through the specific removal of physical contact from all "female sports". Hall believes the prohibition against body contact sports for females has impeded their bodily freedom, while boys have learned to assert themselves through their bodies, thus gain confidence in themselves

(Hall 1979: 41). Moreover, while the majority of females in our society are discouraged from thinking of, or using, their bodies in powerful, agentic, confident, invasive or defensive ways, the majority of males learn to tackle and be tackled through contact sports from a very young age. This has sinister implications with regards to the high levels of domestic violence and rape in our society.

Bart & O'Brien's (1985) interviews with 43 women who had been raped and 51 who successfully defended themselves from being raped revealed some interesting trends. Both groups of women were equally likely to play with dolls and read and participate in noncontact sports, behaviours traditionally associated with growing up female. However, almost half (21) of those who avoided being raped were substantially more likely to engage in sports regularly, compared with around a quarter (10) of the raped women. Those women in the survey who played gridiron football when growing up and who engaged in sports regularly as adults were more likely to avoid rape (*Ibid*: 121). The causal links are difficult to establish but they speculate that:

Football teaches women that physical contact - being knocked down, even hurt - is not the end of the world, something that most boys but few girls learn. It seems logical that such experience is helpful when a woman is attacked in less benign contexts (*Ibid*: 106).

The parents of those who were raped were more likely to have intervened and punished their daughters for fighting and less likely to have advised them to fight back when quarrelling (*Ibid*: 58). These findings indicate the importance of furthering our knowledge of female experiences of combat sports. Yet only a handful of studies have been done and few of the findings have been published.

A rare empirical study of women's participation in a contact sport is Theberge's (1995) research based on interviews and fieldwork with the members of an elite women's ice hockey team in Canada. The team constructed a community different from men's athletic subcultures "grounded in an oppositional project that objectifies and degrades women and gay men" (*Ibid*: 401). Women rarely deride, ridicule or objectify men in their locker room talk and jokes about men's sexual performance are rare and generalised, rather than about a particular man known to the players. Thus, women do not necessarily reproduce or promote dominant male values when they

appropriate male-dominated practices. Unfortunately the paper did not cover the issue of body-contact in ice-hockey.

Another Canadian study involved observation and in-depth interviews about physical contact in a women's university basketball team (Rail 1990; Rail 1992). The analysis focussed on the phenomena of physical contact and the players' emotions without addressing them as social beings. There was no discussion of the cultural anomaly of females being physically violent, nor any discussion of their sexuality, gender, race, class or personal histories. The team, it would appear, though embodied, existed in a social vacuum.

More recently, an Australian study was carried out on a women's rugby team, based on participant observation, including participating in training by one of the authors and interviews with team and club members (Carle and Nauright 1999). It was concluded the players do not simply play rugby to resist male domination but their involvement is more complex because players "conform to male expectations of how they should 'perform' their roles in rugby on and off the field" (*Ibid:* 71). They maintain the female players adopt and emulate the post-match party-animal culture of male rugby to be accepted as 'one of the boys'. This, they say, is different to the American female rugby players Wheatley studied (below), who were not under the authority of male clubs and whose behaviour serves to separate and distinguish them from male rugby culture. Their argument that copying and excusing male rugby player behaviour "reinforces the gender order and escalates existing male dominance" (*Ibid:* 66) may be over-stated in light of the truly subversive character of females playing contact sports and the negative reaction of many male players in their club to the female players.

Carle & Nauright say their study "answers Ann Hall's call for more 'studies in which women athletes are asked to reflect on the significance of the body and the physicality to their experience of sport'" (*Ibid:* 56). However, discussions of embodiment do not go beyond issues such as the camaraderie engendered through physically protecting one another on-field, their parents worrying about them being injured and male players being less attracted to women "in footy gear, covered in dirt, bashing the shit out of each other" (*Ibid:* 65).

Also, they are deafeningly silent on the issue of homosexuality and barely audible on issues of heterosexuality, which they allude to as 'femininity'. The club accepts the women "as long as they try to look feminine whilst

conforming to dominant behaviours within the rugby culture" (*Ibid*: 64). Even if the team is, as one player put it 'a little more feminine than for some of the girls in the other clubs', ('feminine' being code for heterosexual), then this in itself needs to be explored, specifically in the context of the 'less feminine' (read: homosexual) players in the other clubs to which the player quoted above alludes.

One ethnographic study of women playing a male-dominated combat sport which does not sweep the embarrassing issue of women's homosexuality under the research carpet is Wheatley's (1994[1990]) comparison of men's and women's rugby songs. Her paper is based on evidence gathered as a team member and participant observer in three women's rugby teams over three years. She looks at how rugby men's songs which degrade, ridicule and sexually objectify women, are reworked and reworded by women's rugby teams to establish "a cultural space in which lesbian identity, culture, and style are constructed, lived out, struggled over, and sometimes resisted in complex and contradictory ways" (*Ibid*: 94). Though Wheatley acknowledges lesbian culture as a defining feature of women's rugby in the US, her focus in this paper on songs as cultural and subcultural 'styles', leaves little scope to further explore women's rugby as a site of resistance to 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich 1980) nor the significance and complexities of the strong association between gay subcultures and male-dominated sports. Also missing is a discussion of embodiment issues raised by women playing a contact sport.

The association of female sport with homosexuality is often neglected yet very important. Firstly, because it functions as a strong deterrent to both heterosexual and homosexual female participation in sport (Bennett, Whitaker, Woolley, Smith & Sablove, 1987), particularly sports considered masculine, such as cricket (Burroughs, Seebohm & Ashburn, 1995). Secondly, homophobia and heterosexism are a form of patriarchal control over male and female bodies. Thirdly, male power is central to the popular association between female homosexuality and sport because "regardless of sexual preference, women who reject the traditional feminine role... pose a threat to existing power relations between the sexes" (Lenskyj 1987: 383-4). Fourthly, because of the homophobia and heterosexism in sport, many lesbian sportswomen "remain largely 'in the closet' while heterosexuality continues to be exploited in the name of 'selling sport'" (Lenskyj 1995). Also, homophobia towards women in sport has caused many heterosexual sportswomen to try to "prove their femininity and heterosexuality at every

opportunity" (Lenskyj 1987: 384). Few studies, however, have been carried out which have made the connection between sport and homosexuality a central concern, notably very little empirical research.

An excellent exception is *Strong Women, Deep Closets* which not only acknowledges the long and strong connection between lesbians and sport but puts forward a strong case for making this connection more open and explicit, in other words to "out" women's sport as well as sportswomen (Griffin 1998). The book is based partly on informal material, such as Griffin's own experiences as a lesbian, coach, athlete and as a leader of workshops on heterosexism and homophobia for 15 years and partly on previous academic research and interviews conducted specifically for the book with lesbian athletes, coaches and sport administrators.

Griffin shows sport to have been both a protective safe-haven and an oppressive heterosexist closet for lesbians over the last century in the US. She stresses that the association of sport and lesbians is not simply a stereotype used to control and intimidate both homosexual and heterosexual women. It is also an arena within which many lesbians "find community" by developing a network of friends with whom they feel safe and affirmed by as "families of choice" (Ibid: 190). For many lesbians such families of choice "serve the functions that their birth families fail to provide: love, care, acceptance, stability" (Ibid). Sports groups also provide an opportunity for gay women to: meet and fall in love; talk openly about their experiences; develop a sense of pride and empowerment and; party together with a group of like-minded people (Ibid: 183). The explicit connection between sexuality, gender, sport and male domination that Griffin explores is important. Though the connection with gendered embodiment is not tackled the book is nevertheless an important resource and is potentially empowering and emancipatory for gay and heterosexual sportswomen alike.

Women and Australian Rules Football

Given that formally organised women's Australian Rules football has only existed for just over a decade and that very few people play or even know of its existence, it is no surprise very little research has been done on the topic. To my knowledge, no research based on systematic ethnography has been done on women's Australian Rules football. Even women's involvement in the game as spectators, supporters, football-wives and other marginal, supportive roles

has attracted little academic attention. Hess provides an exception with his excellent historical paper on women and Australian Rules football in colonial Melbourne (Hess 1996). Based on his analyses of media coverage from 1896 to 1914, Hess considers female spectators in various roles: passive onlookers, voyeurs, socialites, barrackers and civilisers. He shows Australian Rules football has in all aspects except playing the game always been less gendered, less misogynist and exclusive of women than rugby. Right from the beginning women from different classes have made up a greater proportion of the crowd than at any other football code in the world and not simply as "ornamental figures, socialites or voyeurs (*Ibid*: 360-1). They have always taken football very seriously, attending matches as "interested, passionate observers of the game, with knowledge of how the code is played and an interest in the fortunes of particular teams" (*Ibid*). Some colonial female spectators were reported to have even spat in the faces of players or stabbed them with long hat-pins (*Ibid*: 361).

Two popular, rather than academic, studies have been produced on women's roles in men's football. One is a film "documenting" their slowly changing roles from volunteers helping their club behind the scenes or supporting from the sidelines, to those who play 'thoroughly modern' roles in the game (Cannell 1997). But even female AFL club directors, team trainers, physiotherapists, umpires, football reporters or coaches of young boys' teams are merely supportive of male football. The "docile female bodies" of Foucauldian feminism spring to mind. No mention is made of female footballers.

The other is a book based on interviews, which gives overdue thanks and praise to the thousands of Australian women who service men's football, through their relationships with footballers, as spectators or volunteers (Sheedy and Brown 1998). Ironically, in doing so, women's marginal roles within men's football are highlighted. However, one chapter is about the Victorian Women's Football League (VWFL), relating both the joys of playing and the sexism female footballers have faced. The authors do not go beyond liberal feminist issues of equal access. There is no consideration of how playing football may be beneficial to females or what, if any, challenge it represents to the current gender order. To the contrary, the VWFL President is quoted assuring readers: "We're not trying to prove anything by playing football; we're just trying to play. We don't want to try to make it into AFL clubs, or even local district levels" (*Ibid*: 193-4). Being a popular book, silence

on the part of the authors and footballers on the "gay issue" is probably a well-intentioned decision to promote women's football, or at least not further marginalise it, by 'inviting' heterosexist criticism and condemnation.

Vanessa Chrisp, Captain of the WAWFL State team, carried out a small study as part of her Leisure Science degree, based on a brainstorming session with four young women who play in the schoolgirl football competition in WA (Chrisp 1997). She found they were influenced to play by friends, family and/or teachers. All played because it was fun, they had always loved the game and because it was different. Most enjoyed and were attracted by the contact element, which gave them a rare opportunity to release tension and relieve stress. The aspects of the competition they disliked included: lack of commitment of teammates; discriminatory and negative comments from some male teachers and students; lack of support and recognition of their sport by their Principal; parents not watching their games; the short season, short games, lack of opportunities to develop skills; and the continual comparing of girls' football to boys' football rather than it being accepted on its own merit. This study is limited by its scope but points towards some interesting issues needing further and more in-depth research and analysis.

Kate Lawrence, VWFL competition coordinator and footballer, has written a paper which looks more closely at some of these issues, based on her own experiences (Lawrence 1998). She addresses women's past exclusion and continuing discouragement from the football field not just as an issue of unequal access but as part of a much broader system of male domination. She discusses parents preventing daughters playing for fear of injury, women's football being ignored by the media and reactions of disbelief, laughter and derision from outsiders. Another interesting issue is raised about football and family dynamics when she notes some players "go to extraordinary lengths to show their loyalty and enthusiasm for football, with the hope of winning Dad's approval (true approval always being denied)" (*Ibid*: 117).

Lawrence also tackles the social stigma of football's association with masculinity, the greatest barrier to playing football. A woman who plays football, she says, "threatens to undermine a core value of masculinity. She then becomes tainted with masculinity and is therefore less feminine and less attractive" (*Ibid*: 119-20). Here, Lawrence is skirting the issue of homosexuality. This is avoided again when she discusses the culture of women's football, much of which, she says, is adopted from the culture of

men's football, like drinking beer after a game. She does eventually raise the issue of homosexuality:

As some women footballers are lesbian, there can be an added intensity and intimacy to team dynamics, often not found in men's teams. This also ensures the team develops acceptance and understanding of individual differences and so gives depth to the team bond. Football becomes a way of life with friendships, relationships and enemies are all centred around the team. It can be a heady cocktail of football passion, sporting courage and the politics of gossip" (Lawrence 1998: 121).

The article is as much a PR exercise for women's football as it is an academic exercise and because it is based on her view as an insider, rather than systematic sociological research, her analysis does not go far. For example, she quotes a player describing finally being able to play football as "like being let out of a cage" but does not pursue it as an issue of gendered embodiment.

In summary, little has been written about women playing Australian Rules football and the few studies of women playing contact sports overlook major issues such as gendered embodiment and lesbian subcultures. Ironically, while the gender-subversive practice of homosexuality is swept under the carpet, heterosexuality is not even seen to exist. The 'normative' glasses worn when doing such studies must be removed to see the reproduction of the gender order in the most taken-for-granted, everyday practices like heterosexuality.

Messner advocates 'studying up' the social construction of heterosexuality in sport to expose the "heterosexist system of power relations that serves to construct the heterosexual as a privileged historical identity category" (1996: 222). This focuses attention on the reproduction of male privilege within the 'naturalised' institution of heterosexuality. As Holland *et al.* explain "heterosexuality is social, institutionalised, structural, experiential, embodied, discursive, historically specific and subject to change and... male power is constituted simultaneously at all these levels" (1998: 149). Connell stresses, "the practices that shape and realise desire are... an aspect of the gender order" (1995: 74). The following is a review of the small literature on the sexual attraction of male Australian Rules footballers.

It has been suggested that one reason Australian Rules football attracts around 30% more female spectators than soccer and rugby is that the players' tight shorts and sleeveless jumpers attract the sexual attention of women (McAsey

1997). However, not all women who have an interest in men's football are sexually motivated and Hess wisely warns against women's interest in football being trivialised and reduced "to a discussion of the delights of male bodies in tight shorts" (1996: 357). Nevertheless, to ignore or play down the sexual aspect of football for some women, is to overlook a crucial connection between football, cathexis and the reproduction of the patriarchal gender order.

Poynton & Hartley note that the way in which the "barely clad, eyeable Aussie male bodies in top anatomical nick" are televised, with the cameras following "their rough and tumble disport with a relentless precision, in wide-angle, close-up and slow-motion replay" is "flagrantly masculine, and erotic" (1990: 150). They maintain that in being gazed upon while displaying their physical prowess, male footballers are objectified yet retain their subjective dominance because they, not women, are the spectators and audience (*Ibid*: 150). Their claim that televised football is not designed for the gratification of voyeuristic women is based solely on the fact that beer commercials during televised games are pitched at a male audience. Certainly the marketing of beer during football matches "serves to illustrate the alliance between sport, media, capital and a specifically Australian representation of masculinity" (*Ibid*: 145). However, it is a leap of faith to conclude that football is therefore pitched by promoters primarily at a male audience. They give evidence to the contrary themselves when talking about one footballer, Capper, "of the short, tight shorts, flowing blond locks and pout" whom they acknowledge to be "the object of media promotion by his club's advertising agency, not for his obvious, match-winning skills, but for his good looks, his sex appeal" (*Ibid*: 151). It is doubtful that the AFL were setting out to tantalise a male audience with this promotional exercise. Poynton & Hartley do not produce statistics on the number of women who watch football. Up to 46% of the crowd at live matches (Sheedy and Brown 1998: 286) and around 44% of audiences of televised games (A C Nielsen 2000) are female. Those involved in promoting and televising the game are well aware of this enormous "market" (Richardson 1999; Sexton 1999).

To say that "[s]ex and sport just do not mix, except in jest" (*Ibid*: 152) is to miss another very important gendered element of the game. Many women are attracted by the homoerotic element of football (Lindley, 1995, 1997; McAsey 1997). In *Game Girls*, one female supporter in her forties is very up-front about what attracts her to the game: "I just love the macho atmosphere. I love the men, I love their oily bodies. I love watching them run around, it's just

they look fantastic " (Cannell 1997).

Not only do Poynton & Hartley misjudge the gender demographics of football viewers but they confuse sexual attraction with sexual objectification. Lindley argues eloquently against the assertion that male footballers are objectified:

a footballer is not a stationary object, and not being stationary is actually very important... A moving object that is powerful, that is surging, and that moreover is moving not for the sake of the observers - none of those players are moving for our sake, for our pleasure, they are doing something for their own, their team's purposes... You can't objectify a footballer... You can be privileged to watch their activity, but they're nobody's object (Lindley 1997).

I would push this point a little further. When Poynton & Hartley acknowledge that numerous Aboriginal footballers provide a symbolic "show of strength" for the whole indigenous population and that football is represented as "the locus of essentialised Australian masculinity" (1990: 155), they narrowly miss the point that football is a celebration of male physical superiority.

What football has to say about men and the male body is a message intended for both a male and female audience. "The sporting body is a metaphor for male power, and a form of collateral which can be disciplined against opponents for the gaze of spectators, male and female" (Giulianotti and Armstrong 1997: 7). Elaine Canty, the only female member of the AFL tribunal, says "I think the reason that women enjoy going to football is that it is the definitive male sport. I think women get a thrill out of watching men in combat" (Sheedy and Brown 1998: 293). It is this element of male power which attracts some women specifically to elite footballers. That is, their emotional energy has been attached to those men in our community who embody hegemonic masculinity. Some want to do more than just gaze at and admire footballers, they specifically want to marry an elite footballer.

The attraction of footballers to women who service their football careers is just as telling as the attraction some women have to footballers. Most elite footballers, knowing they are a sought after commodity, especially since the advent of the highly commercialised AFL, treat women as either sex objects or devotees of their football career. In *Football's Women* interviews with the mothers, wives and girlfriends of AFL footballers are full of evidence of the

marginal, supportive, decorative, nurturing and second-class role these women play in their husband's football careers (Sheedy and Brown 1998). Brady, who was married to a League footballer for 21 years, says that, in marrying elite footballers, women become mere appendages to the male-dominated game of Australian Rules, their role in football is to be passive, supportive *and* decorative (Brady 1981: 248).

Heterosexual relations based on the selection criteria of, for a woman, whether or not a man plays football, and, for a male footballer, whether or not a woman will unselfishly service his career and look attractive while doing so, reproduces the current gender order. The strong but taken-for-granted relationship between male-dominated sports and heterosexuality has been overlooked but should become a central concern in studies of sport and gender.

Men in Sport

In 1985 the seminal paper "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity" was published, heralding a new era in studying men (Carrigan, et al. 1985). It was to become the prototype of Connell's book *Masculinities* but, more importantly, it turned the sociological spotlight onto men, the other half of the gender relations equation. This is essential in the study of gender, since "[m]asculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition" (Connell 1995: 44).

This new approach was distinctly feminist, unlike the competing-victims approach of men's liberation writings of the 1970s, and overcame the social determinism of sex-role theory, entrenched in the social sciences at the time. Instead of studying men as a group, they advocated the study of historically specific masculinities, introducing the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*, a culturally exalted form at the top of a hierarchy of masculinities. They also argued the domination of women is not an inevitable universal trait of all men. Rather, male domination is a dynamic system constantly reproduced and re-constituted through gender relations under changing conditions, including resistance by subordinate groups (*Ibid*: 598). Thus, they argue, "violence in gender relations is not part of the essence of masculinity... so much as a measure of the bitterness of this struggle" (*Ibid*). The most radical

and enlightening element of their new approach to studying men was their focus on the psychodynamics of gender, which they insisted are inseparable from the social relations that invest and construct masculinity. Furthermore, men's bodies were made visible not "[n]ot as a 'base,' but as an *object of practice*" (*Ibid*: 595).

In the mid 1980s not only was the field of masculinity studies in its infancy but Turner was calling for sociologists to make the body a focus of sociological enquiry (1996[1984]: 43) and more social scientists were turning their attention to sport. The culmination of these three developments resulted in the production of a number of feminist analyses of the role of sport in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. Focusing on men was a radically new approach to the study of gender in sport because until then men had been "so thoroughly dominant, so much in the foreground of organized sports, that their experiences in sport *as men* [had] been obscured" (Messner 1992: 3). The following review of this literature is by no means exhaustive but serves to outline its theoretical trends, major findings and shortcomings.

Sport and Masculinity Construction

A number of historical studies have explored the important role of organised sport in the construction of masculinity in Western society. Mangan shows that between 1850 and 1940 a 'cult of manliness' developed in Britain and America which encouraged males of all social classes to participate in 'manly pursuits' such as sport (Mangan 1987: 2). This reflected, he argues, mounting concern at the time over the physical and psychological condition of a highly urbanised plebian life where physical and social deprivation was widespread (*Ibid*: 4).

Dunning argues that in the 19th century, as folk games were transformed into modern combat sports such as rugby, they were promoted in British public schools to train boys to become military leaders, colonial administrators and gentlemen (Dunning 1986). Thus, modern sport was a 'male preserve' from its inception developing at a time when British men, in particular those of the middle classes from which the suffragettes also sprung, were threatened by an increase in women's social power.

Similarly in America, the closing of the frontier at the end of the 19th century and the subsequent migration to cities and industrialisation, meant men were

cut off from the physical demands of everyday outdoor life, through which their manhood had been routinely confirmed (Oriard 1993: 191). A fear developed that American culture had become 'feminised' and sports, particularly manly sports like football, were promoted as 'manly' pursuits. "A preoccupation with the male body and a shift toward a more muscular ideal arose... when physical prowess ironically had become largely irrelevant to real economic power (*Ibid*: 190). Along with the establishment of the YMCA, the Boy Scout and muscular Christianity movements, the development of baseball as a major participatory and spectator sport facilitated "the reproduction of a society based upon gender, racial, and class hierarchies" by reconstituting white, middle class American masculinity as hegemonic (Kimmel 1990: 65). By providing men with "psychological separation from the perceived feminization of society while also providing dramatic symbolic proof of the 'natural superiority' of men over women" organised sports become particularly important during a 'crisis of masculinity' (Messner 1988). One such crisis resulted, once more, from a further decline in relevance of physical strength in work and warfare after World War II, and was heightened by the challenges made to male power by feminism (*Ibid*: 201-2). Thus, in recent times sport has come to be the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture (Connell 1995: 54).

One of the few studies which explores the relationship between masculinity and Australian Rules football is Moroney's research based on interviews with an unspecified number of "players at various levels and ages" (Moroney 1998). He argues that the violent participation (defined as playing outside the rules of the game) of men and boys can be understood as a masculinising practice. Another study compares instances of violence/dysfunctional behaviour among AFL players with extracts from a diary of the coach of an under 15 boys' team, demonstrating many of the behaviours which become manifest in the world of adult football "are rehearsed in the world of junior sport" (Fitzclarence and Hickey 1998: 75). They argue that masculine values inscribed in the dominant discourses of football "are often at the root of socially deviant and violent male behaviour" (*Ibid*: 68-9).

However, it is problematic to view footballers as cultural dupes uniformly inculcated with an ethic of violence. Not all males are comfortable with committing acts of violence, a learned behaviour, which some individual men learn better than others (Messner 1990: 205). Furthermore, Messner's interviews with former professional male athletes revealed "the body-as-

weapon ultimately results in violence against one's own body" (*Ibid*: 211). For example, lower than average life expectancy (*Ibid*: 211), chronic and permanent physical pain (Sabo 1994; Young, et al. 1994) and sometimes even accidental death (Wacquant 1995b) can be the price of putting one's body on the line in violent organised sport.

Rates of male-on-female sexual violence, including gang rape, have been high among male athletes, in particular those involved in team sports (Burton Nelson 1994; Crosset, et al. 1995; Kane and Disch 1993; Messner 1994a), and combat sports like boxing have been associated with domestic violence (Messner and Solomon 1993). Nevertheless, the association of masculinity, violence, sport and male domination of women is neither simple nor unproblematic. To begin with, in male combat sports it is other males who are physically dominated. Violence in sport plays an important role in the construction of difference among men, for example, between upper and working class, black and white, heterosexual and homosexual men (Hilliard 1983; Majors 1990; Messner 1992; Messner and Sabo 1994; Pronger 1990). Violence in male sport is also socially and historically constructed thus has had different meanings and influences in different cultures and at various points in time. For example, the increase in violence in Canadian ice hockey since the 1960s has been affected by various factors. For example, post-war prosperity and dietary awareness increasing player size, rule changes designed to increase the speed of the game and the needs of expansion teams to put a competitive product on display (Gruneau and Whitson 1993). This is particularly true in socio-historical contexts in which hegemonic forms of masculinity are re-shaped by major social upheavals, such as in times of war or leading up to war (Crotty 1998). Thus, violence in male sports is not a straightforward matter of the unproblematic reproduction of hegemonic masculinity.

Messner believes "the major ideological salience of sport as mediated spectacle may lie not so much in violence as it does in male spectators having the opportunity to identify with the muscular male body" (Messner 1990: 214). Through sport, ritual displays of men's bodies being agentic, forceful, strong, aggressive, invasive and often violent, not only develop men's and boys' muscles and skills in physical domination but also provide constant reminders that male physical strength easily translates into social power over women. For example, the Australian sports media's positive sanctioning of male physical violence and domination in rugby league legitimises naturalised ways of performing masculinity which serve to maintain both male power and the

inferiorisation and marginalisation of women and their activities (Hutchins and Mikosza 1998).

American gridiron football has been analysed as a patriarchal initiation ritual which "contains elements of gender socialization that promote and express institutionalized patterns of both sex segregation and male dominance" in boys (Sabo and Panepinto 1990: 116). American College rugby has been shown to provide the opportunity for some White, middle class men to physically demonstrate their masculine superiority over women and to distance themselves from all aspects of femininity through various forms of misogynist denigration (Schacht 1996: 562).

In *Making Men* various authors explore the links between rugby and the social construction of masculine identities in the UK and outposts of the British Empire since the development of the game in the 19th century (Nauright and Chandler 1996). They show this link is neither given nor a transhistorical constant (Nauright 1996b: 227). Rugby has been prominent in the construction of masculinities of different, sometimes opposing, classes from its development in English public schools as a promoter of manliness, nationalism, morality and health in the sons of the nineteenth century elite (Chandler and Nauright 1996) to its appropriation as an expression of working class masculinity in Northern England (Martens 1996). Also, the rugby union versus league debate has been the focus and vehicle of a "class war" in Australia during World War I (Phillips 1996a).

In the colonies, rugby has been inscribed with the values of British ruling class men in Colonial Natal (Morrell 1996) but has also been seen as proof of the virility of colonial manhood in New Zealand (Phillips 1996b) and other British colonies (Nauright 1996a), when pitted against the deteriorating imperial English manhood. Rugby has also been appropriated by several countries or communities to assert their nationality, for example, it became "the" Welsh masculine national pastime (Andrews 1996) but also helped to shape Afrikaner nationalist masculinity during their political ascendancy in South Africa (Grundlingh 1996).

Analyses such as these provide great insights into the historically specific mechanisms and reproduction of power of dominant groups. However, even when they show cases of resistance (Nauright 1996b; Nauright and Black 1996), hegemonic masculinity is always successfully recuperated. More distressing is

their conscious neglect of women's rugby on the basis "women's teams are generally coached by males and tend to have their schedules set around the men's" which they interpret as the continued marginalisation of women and promotion of male hegemony (Nauright and Chandler 1996: 245). If hegemonic masculinity were so uniformly produced and defended, feminist resistance to male domination would be futile. Perversely, the concept of hegemonic masculinity as the dominant masculinity among many has been simplified to the point of almost returning to the 1970s conceptualisation of men as a group universally dominating all women, which Carrigan *et al.*, had undermined with their new approach to studying men.

Complexities in the Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity in Sport

The reproduction of hegemonic masculinity through sport is not as successful and complete as such studies would have us believe. Two empirical studies of Australian Rules football illustrate this point. In an "ethnographic fiction" based on his memories of playing club football as a teenager, Swan (1998) illustrates that the seemingly universal practices of football that teach boys 'how to become men' are not uniformly successful. He found the enormous pressure to prove himself masculine and being constantly judged on a masculinity scale and compared with others, turned him off playing. He suggests it is likely that many other boys and men silently experience similar struggles and that the way in which they make sense of this will vary from one individual to another (*Ibid*: 152-3). Similarly, Prain (1998) describes a young man selected to play in an AFL team but who does not participate in any acts of male domination, such as put-downs, physical intimidation, pranks, illegal violence, nor denigrating female peers who play the sport. However, he does not explain why this young man has rejected hegemonic masculinity, nor how he survives, having done so, in the male hierarchy of his peers.

Few studies of the relationship between sport and masculinity focus on the power struggles which produce non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. An exception is an ethnographic study of a group of young Australian-born men of Croatian background "who use the soccer terrace as an arena to parade a subculturally stylised version of nationalistic celebration of their parent's homeland" (Hughson 1997: 1). Machismo, chauvinism, misogyny and homophobia provide the basis of their marginalised male identity (*Ibid*: 3).

What is missing in many studies of the relationship between masculinity and sport is the gendered individual, even in some psychoanalytic studies, such as the study of rugby in Victorian boarding schools in 19th century based on Chodorow's theory of young boys' separation anxiety from their mothers (White and Vagi 1990). It is argued boys developed intimate relationships with one other through playing rugby to compensate for the loss of nurturance from the primary parent (*Ibid*: 89). Rugby "served both to institutionalize these relationships and provide a context within which boys could act out ambivalent feelings toward the females who abandoned them" (*Ibid*: 75). This analysis asserts a continuity in psycho-sexual development only possible if biologically determined and thus ultimately results in a reassertion of the completeness of hegemonic masculinity. The individual male once more disappears in the group labelled "men".

Another element missing in most of these analyses is the body, even though the particular importance of sport in masculinity construction is that "[w]hat it means to be masculine is, quite literally, to embody force, to embody competence (Connell 1983b: 27). Even studies which stress the importance of studying embodiment "offer precious few insights into the actual practices and representations that constitute the human body" (Wacquant 1995b: 65). Wacquant notes ironically "how rarely one encounters... actual living bodies of flesh and blood" in recent social studies of the body. He provides a welcome exception in his ethnographic study of a boxing gym in Chicago where, over four years, he trained as an apprentice-boxer and carried out in-depth interviews with over fifty professional boxers and nearly forty coaches and managers (*Ibid*). His analysis is based on Bourdieu's concept of body capital. The fighter's body, he says, "is simultaneously his means of production, the raw materials he and his handlers... have to work with and... the somatized product of his past training" (*Ibid*: 67). Boxing provides "a scaffolding for the public erection of a heroic hypermasculine self" but is mainly a working class male occupation because, although boxing is physically gruelling and dangerous, the body is one of the few forms of capital working class men own (Wacquant 1995a: 530).

There have been some studies of men and sport based on life-history interviews which go beyond simply reasserting that sport is a major site of the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity to develop a deeper analysis. Messner (1992) provides an outstanding example with his book *Power at Play*, based on life-history interviews with 30 male former professional athletes, focusing in

particular on the meanings of success and failure for each of the men in their relationships with their families, other males, women and their own bodies. Messner is also concerned with particular differences among individual boys and men, based on class and racial inequalities. He showed that the athletes in his study were not simply socialised into the value-system of the sportsworld but brought their developing masculine identities to their experiences in athletics (*Ibid:* 47). Furthermore, while stressing sport's role in constructing and legitimising a male homosocial world Messner illustrates masculine power, and male heterosexuality being continually contested (*Ibid:* 16).

Klein's (1985, 1987, 1990) four year ethnographic study of bodybuilding in a California gym looks at individuals, as well as the subculture as a whole. By interviewing male bodybuilders, Klein (1990) develops a case study of the social and psychological dimensions of masculinity within the subculture. He found a major reason many bodybuilders take up the sport is low self-esteem thus, he argues, the institutionalised narcissism of bodybuilding, hypermasculinity and homophobia is partly a reaction against feelings of powerlessness. He reveals the social-psychological complexities go even deeper, as hustling (selling sex to gay men) is rife among male bodybuilders.

Connell (1990) illustrates the application and usefulness of life-history interviews in his study of an Australian "Iron Man", exploring in detail the interplay between the body and social process in the constitution of masculinity in one man's life. He stresses that when handled properly, "the theorized life history can be a powerful tool for the study of social structures and their dynamics as they impinge on (and are reconstituted in) personal life (*Ibid:* 84). He also applies his own embodiment theory to reveal that, as an iron-man, hegemonic masculinity appropriates his body and gives it a social definition but in ways that are full of contradiction and enmeshed in structures of consumer capitalism (*Ibid:* 95).

In summary, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a stream of studies that no longer perceived sport simply as a male-dominated arena but as a social institution within which hegemonic masculinity is defended and reproduced. However, by the late 1990s this had become repetitious. It is important to go beyond merely pointing at men's sports and saying "Look! There is hegemonic masculinity". The reproduction of hegemonic masculinity in sport is neither unproblematic nor universal. Clearly, more in-depth knowledge is needed to find out where the tensions and the internal contradictions are and

what has been the impact of forty years of feminism. To increase and deepen our knowledge of sporting practices, more studies such as those of Klein, Messner and Connell are needed which take into account embodied, gendered, sexual individuals within the broader social structures of the male-dominated sporting world.

Gender and Physical Education

The final section of this chapter provides an overview of the major theoretical trends in Australian, British and North American research dealing with the thorny issue of PE and gender from the 1970s to the present. This is important because two of the football teams studied in this project are school teams.

The Equal Opportunities Debate

The study of gender in PE began in the same way and around the same time as the study of women in sport. The initial academic focus was on females and why their participation in school sport and PE was qualitatively and quantitatively different. Underlying this approach was a liberal feminist concern with equal opportunities and equal access, which fuelled a debate among PE practitioners and academics alike about whether single- or mixed-sex PE was more beneficial for girls. The equal opportunities debate mirrored the "beat 'em or join 'em" debate discussed above.

The debate was fuelled by the introduction of anti-sexist legislation in many Western countries in the 1970s and 1980s. In the US, Title IX, the federal law prohibiting gender discrimination in any educational program receiving federal funding, was introduced in 1972. In Canada, gender discrimination was prohibited in the 1970s by provincial antidiscrimination laws, the Canadian Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms (Vertinsky 1992: 377). In Britain, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 made it illegal to discriminate against women in education, establishing an Equal Opportunities Commission to enforce the legislation and promote equality of opportunity between the sexes (Vertinsky 1983: 231). In 1984 the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act finally made it unlawful for an Australian school to deny a student access to any benefit on the basis of sex.

The application of these new laws was neither uniform nor unproblematic. In

England the debate was not just over whether PE *classes* should be mixed sex but whether there should be two PE *departments* (Leaman 1986: 123). This reflects a long history of separate male and female traditions in British PE (Kirk 1992; Kirk and Tinning 1990; Sherlock 1987). The laws could also be interpreted differently, for example, the British Commission did not view single-sex classes as illegal as long as the facilities and options available to each class were equal (Vertinsky 1983: 231).

Responses from PE teachers also varied. Title IX in the US has elicited an enormous range of reactions from teachers (Griffin 1984a, 1985a, 1989a). Some refused to teach co-ed classes saying it makes teaching and controlling classes more difficult or that girls' lower skill levels hold the boys back, that the girls will not really try in a game or that boys cause too many discipline problems and play too rough for the girls. Others questioned if it was 'healthy' or 'natural'. Many had difficulty understanding what was wrong with single-sex classes because it meant rethinking sex-stereotypes. Even some of those who could see the negative effects of sex stereotyping and segregating, felt a sense of powerlessness to significantly change the behaviour of students they teach only once a week, especially without peer support and encouragement. A minority enthusiastically endorsed and implemented gender equity principles within co-ed classes. English research also indicates varied reactions from individual PE teachers (Evans, et al. 1987). Furthermore, in Britain female PE teachers' careers are threatened by co-educational PE, as formerly separate male and female PE departments amalgamate with male teachers usually heading the resulting co-educational departments (Scruton 1993).

Not surprisingly then, the introduction of these laws triggered an enormous and protracted mixed- versus single-sex debate among PE teachers, as well as among feminist researchers. An example of one such debate in Australia was published in the ACHPER National Journal (Browne 1988; Burden 1988; Evans 1989; Macdonald 1989a; Paddick 1988). A large volume of research and literature was stimulated by this debate.

The tendency in this research is to divide those it studies into two homogeneous categories - girls and boys - and then make sweeping generalisations about "the" behaviour of each category. For example, a survey of 51 teachers and 2,964 school girls aged 10-12 from 73 Australian primary schools concluded positive outcomes of single-sex PE far outweigh the negative (Sale 1994). The positive outcomes were: increasing opportunities for

girls to play the sport of their choice, even girls with low skill levels and low self-esteem; reducing the drop out rate of girls; providing a positive and safe learning environment to enhance skill development; increasing confidence; improving the quality of coaching for girls; increasing opportunities for social interaction; and increasing the likelihood of life-long participation. Negative outcomes of mixed-sex competition were: boys being too rough, physical, aggressive and competitive; embarrassment and feeling inferior to boys; harassment from boys, who perceive themselves as more able than girls in sports; and boys dominating play. Although the more confident and skilled young women in the study preferred mixed-sex teams because they provided more variety and a greater challenge, Sale argued against the provision of mixed sport on the basis that it would only cater for a minority.

Similarly, most of the studies of mixed-sex PE, concluded that it advantaged boys at the expense of girls. The South Australian Junior Sports Unit piloted a mixed-sex competition in organised sport for children under twelve but despite imposed limits on the number of girls and boys in teams, the boys quickly took over (Ey 1991). Only the very talented girls earned a place or took leading roles in a team, while the majority felt inadequate and preferred not to even try for a team. It was concluded that overall, girls had been unable to move into traditional boys' sports in a meaningful way while boys forced many girls out of the teams of traditional girls' sports. Because these surveys are designed to produce only one answer - that mixed-sex PE is either good or bad for girls - the experiences of young women who do not fit this stereotype are marginalised or discounted. The same is true for boys who are not sporty.

Male behaviour is seen as consistently problematic for girls. For example, an Australian study of 1,140 high school girls who were surveyed and participated in brainstorming sessions, reported that boys: let girls know they think girls are no good at sport; make fun of or use put-downs, especially when a girl does something well; brag about being good at sport; do not include girls in informal games/sports; dislike playing with girls but when forced to do so often avoid kicking or passing to girls or treat girls differently by not tackling them (Malaxos and Wedgwood 1997). An English study, based on observations of 28 mixed-sex PE lessons at a 11-16 comprehensive school, found boys are noisier, seek more teacher attention, receive more contact time than girls and dominate play in mixed-team games by not passing to girls (Turvey and Laws 1988). An American study based on observations and interviews of eight 11-12 year old girls found that boys in PE classes criticised girls' physical skills as

inferior to boys' and did not pass the ball to girls in flag football unless forced to and then only to very skilled girls (Kunesh, et al. 1992). Boys, it would seem, "are all the same".

Studies which have asked students whether they prefer single- or mixed-sex PE, yield varied and inconsistent responses which cannot be explained by sex alone. In one such survey of four hundred 14-15 year old Australian PE students, both boys and girls reported mixed-sex PE more enjoyable, except when playing sports typically thought to be appropriate only for one sex (Macdonald 1989b). One Australian survey found many girls wanted single-sex PE classes but some were adamant mixed-sex sport was better (Malaxos and Wedgwood 1997). While another Australian study of Year 9 students during a change from co-ed to single sex PE, indicated boys enjoyed single-sex PE classes more and girls enjoyed co-ed classes more (Gibson 1994). These results were similar to that of an American study of 199 middle school and 190 high school students participating in a 10 lesson unit of basketball (Lirgg 1993). They observed that males in single-sex classes were significantly more confident than males in co-ed classes but middle-school students preferred same-sex classes and high school students preferred co-ed classes.

Such studies indicate differences within the sexes as well as between them but fail to explore the factors which might affect the variety of responses. Though gender is unavoidably involved with other social structures such as race and class (Connell 1995: 75), the majority of these studies also ignore any differences along the lines of race, sexuality, physical disability, ethnicity, class and so on. Their behaviour and experiences in PE seem almost biologically determined according to their sex.

Despite the almost overwhelming "evidence" of the disadvantages of mixed-sex PE for many (but by no means all) girls, some PE teachers and researchers remained convinced of its potential advantages, suggesting changes in the content, delivery and structure of PE would negate any disadvantages girls may have in a mixed setting. For instance, recommending conditional games to neutralise the "several athletic advantages" the "average male" holds over the "average female", including superior coordination and ball-throwing ability (a highly contentious assertion) (Hoppes 1987: 67). Or arguing PE can be made androgynous simply by: choosing one boy, one girl captain; encouraging girls to wear active wear for PE; alternating which positions students play during a game; running co-ed tournaments; giving participation-based awards; creating

a non-exclusive environment; using non-exclusive language; and providing examples of females playing male-dominated sports and visa versa (Ignico 1989). Many similar suggestions were made for teachers to revise: expectations, instructional styles, language, attitudes/gender stereotypes, grouping strategies, types of games and activities taught (Burrows 1996; Cooper 1986; Creighton 1992; Hutchinson 1995; Leaman 1986; Nilges 1996; Northcote 1992; Oldenhove 1987; Talbot 1993; Turvey and Laws 1988). Griffin (1981) made such suggestions herself but later stressed that, although these are all excellent teaching strategies, they are "superficial changes without an accompanying shift in how teachers conceptualize gender and the role of PE and sport in gender construction" (Griffin 1989b: 228).

Evans (1989) wisely urges that the issue not be simplified to an integration versus segregation debate. The equal opportunities debate illustrates the inadequacy of dealing with the problem of male domination in PE simply as one of equal access, which does not automatically result in equality in *outcome* and *practice*. Indeed, this route seems to lead, not to one but two, dead ends.

On the one hand, it is obvious that co-education in PE classes is not an effective tool, in and of itself, in eliminating sex stereotyping and discrimination in PE (Griffin 1983: 71). In practice, mixed-sex classes rarely mean coeducational teaching and/or learning (Scraton 1993). Single-sex grouping can still be produced within a particular activity and images of femininity and masculinity can be reinforced independent of grouping arrangements (Evans, et al. 1987; Scraton 1992). Pressures on pupils to conform to traditional sex-roles may be greater in mixed than in single-sex lessons (Carrington and Leaman 1986: 221). In short, equal access does not automatically result in equal participation.

On the other hand, single-sex PE not only fails to challenge patriarchal constructs and ideologies but also reproduces gender inequalities. The greatest danger of single-sex PE is that it de-emphasises commonalities and reinforces differences between the sexes which continue to be interpreted as evidence of the lower ability, skill, status and need of females (Evans and Davies 1993: 21). Segregating PE classes by sex is unlikely to challenge the way in which boys and girls think about each other (Evans, et al. 1987). Also, single-sex classes address only half the problem by treating girls as deficient while boys' behaviour is treated as unproblematic. Taking away boys serves to protect girls from their excesses but fails to challenge or question their dominant behaviour.

From a critical feminist perspective, asking whether single- or mixed-sex PE classes are more beneficial to girls is the wrong question because neither the concept of gender nor the structure of sport is examined (Griffin 1989b: 225). It adds little to our knowledge of why sporting practices are gendered or what role they play in the reproduction of male domination. It assumes gender-blindness, overlooking or ignoring the extent to which gender is embedded in the structure of the school, curriculum and society (Knoppers 1988: 56). Equal opportunities in PE "can only offer cosmetic change, particularly while attitudes and assumptions based on ideological constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are retained" (Scruton 1986: 89). As Griffin says, we "can no longer focus on interactions and teaching methods within the structure without thinking critically about the structure itself and its relationship to the larger society" (1989: 229). In summary, the equal opportunities debate is an analytical cul-de-sac down which many well-intentioned researchers have been lured.

Mapping Gender Differences

Most equal opportunities research was carried out in the 1980s. A quick look at PE journals, however, reveals liberal feminist concerns still dominate research on sex and gender. A major concern in much of this research is measuring participation rates and patterns, mostly of females, using quantitative research methods. One of the most consistent findings is that female participation rates remain lower than those of males in PE (Malaxos and Wedgwood 1997), school sport (Clough, et al. 1993) and community sport (James 1996: 1).

Some of this research goes beyond simply measuring participation rates by mapping patterns of participation to determine factors which motivate or deter females from participating in PE. For example, a survey of 1,048 young Australians found that girls viewed their involvement in sport of greatest value for its social interaction (Clough, et al. 1993). A Canadian survey of 376 girls concluded that parents and peers influenced the continuing involvement of adolescent females in sport (Brown, et al. 1989).

A survey of 358 students from four Australian high schools found girls preferred mostly individual activities, with only a few traditional games rating highly. Since the schools mostly offer games, this indicates a gap between what is offered and available to students and what students actually want (Sparks

and Webb 1993). A major survey of youth attitudes showed girls still perceive sport as a 'boys' game, which can narrow girls' opportunities and reduce their motivation to succeed (ASC 1991). This is supported by an American survey of 357 students from grades K, 2, 4 and 6 which found that females may be adversely affected by their own perceptions of gender stereotypes (Pellett and Harrison 1992). These findings, however, are contradicted by a survey of 1,140 girls from Australian high schools, in which an overwhelming number said they wanted to be allowed by teachers, parents and their male peers to play male dominated sports, in particular football (Malaxos and Wedgwood 1997). This study also found the girls surveyed wanted: to have a greater say in the selection of PE activities; better skills development earlier; a better attitude from boys; more support from parents and; better coverage of female sports and sports women in the media. They were deterred from playing sports by: the lack of variety of sports available to them; the attitude of boys; sports which were too time-consuming and serious; feeling inadequate due to lack of skills and low body image and; playing with boys or being watched by boys.

As concluded in an English study of 315 fourth year girls, the attitudes girls hold towards specific activities are highly diverse and variable in intensity (Cockerill and Hardy 1987). This highlights the first major shortfall of this body of research; studies which merely measure rates and patterns of female participation do not explain them. Such contradictory results reflect the need for research which looks in much greater depth at the issues raised by survey-style research. The second is the focus on specific sex inequalities in PE rather than PE as a site of the reproduction of male domination. For example, that football is often played by boys but rarely by girls is, as Connell says, "a trivial point; what counts is the way it serves as a focus for a whole programme of constructing masculinity, and subordinating some forms of it to others" (1982: 174). This relates closely to the third major problem with this research; that it is focused so much on females that male behaviour is both ignored and considered unproblematic, resulting in a "deficit" approach. For example, the Education Department of Tasmania produced a report entitled *Turning on the Turned-Off Girl in Physical Education* (Kudelka 1986). As the title indicates, the project aimed to find out why some girls do not like PE and to devise strategies that would encourage them to participate. It is their negative attitude toward PE which is framed as problematic. Yet, the participation rate of boys in formal and informal sports also begins to decline in early adolescence (Kirshnit, et al. 1989: 601). Thus, differences between males and females is emphasised and similarities are ignored or played down. In short,

this literature is limited both by the narrowness of its focus and the use of quantitative methodologies.

While the study of women in sport has become more and more influenced by the social sciences, the study of gender in PE remains heavily influenced by liberal feminist concerns of equity. The resistance of PE to the more "radical" feminist theories which have developed within the social sciences in the meantime, may be largely due to the conservative nature of the profession. PE teachers generally hold conservative views (Tinning 1988), especially with regards to gender (Abigail 1984; Acker 1988; Bloot and Browne 1996; Dewar 1990; Flintoff 1991; Miller 1982; Scraton 1992; Sherlock 1987; Skelton 1993). Moreover, studies of PE teacher training courses in Canada (Dewar 1987; Dewar 1990; Ross 1987), Australia (McKay, et al. 1990) and England (Flintoff 1993; Flintoff 1997) have been shown to privilege scientific knowledge in sport pedagogy, which in turn privileges biological explanations of gender differences.

This is not to say that PE is untouched by the social sciences. A small number of studies which focused not so much on the role which gender plays in the provision of PE but the role in which PE plays in the construction of gender began to appear in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These were mostly informed by social construction theory, which conceptualises gender as a socially constructed set of power relationships. This requires the collection of empirical rather than statistical data, thus most are based on ethnographic research. I now discuss major examples of this work and its findings.

Gender Construction

One of the advantages of social constructionist theory is that it can accommodate differences within the sexes as well as between them. Griffin's (1984b, 1985a, 1985b) three month case study of an American middle school PE program, involved the observation of team sport classes, informal discussions and formal interviews with the PE teachers. Six distinct styles of girls' participation patterns were identified: athlete, JV (junior varsity) player, cheerleader, femme fatale, lost soul, system beater and four kinds of nonassertive behaviour were also observed: giving up, giving away, hanging back and acquiescing (Griffin 1984b). Five distinct boys' participation styles were also identified: machos, junior machos, nice guys, invisible players and wimps (Griffin 1985a). Griffin concludes that while there may be some value

in presenting a generalised description of student interaction and participation by sex, it is also important for teachers to acknowledge the variety of participation styles within each gender, so that they do not place artificial expectations on some students and artificial limitations on others (Griffin, 1985a, 1985b).

Using evidence gathered during a three year ethnographic study of schoolgirls in an Australian high school, Diamond argues that PE is socially constructed as a masculine subject through: curriculum content; packaging of the subject as more closely related to aspects of adolescent masculinity; and daily interactions during PE lessons (1992b: 22). However, she reverts to role conflict theory to explain how this makes it difficult for girls to be successful in PE without adopting some behaviours, values and attitudes usually associated with the dominant form of masculinity (Diamond 1992a: 6).

Differences of social structures other than gender, such as class and race can be more easily observed and their influences acknowledged with the gender constructionist approach. A British study on the extent to which gender differences may be heightened by ethnicity, involving structured interviews with 114 Muslim, Hindu and Sikh students and their families, found that activities outside of the home were generally much more extensive for the males in the study than for the females (Carrington, et al. 1987). The females in the study were subjected to much greater parental control than the males and also had much of their leisure time appropriated by their family. A second study was carried out at a school implementing an anti-racist, multicultural education policy (Carrington and Williams 1988). This study consisted of unstructured interviews with teachers who were told the results of the first study and asked to comment on their own and the school's responses to equal opportunities and to identify any constraints upon innovation in this sphere. It was concluded that patriarchal relations reproduced through leisure may be accentuated within South Asian culture, and the implementation of the equal opportunities policy at the school did little to interrupt this process of socio-cultural reproduction (*Ibid*: 95).

A study of a comprehensive English high school with 11 per cent Pakistani and 37 per cent Bangladeshi pupils, based on observations and interviews, revealed that major issues for Muslim students in PE classes were PE kits, showers, playing sport during Ramadan and extra-curricular activities (Carroll and Hollinshead 1993). When the Muslim children first arrived at the school they

were expected to fit into the PE teachers' Eurocentric classes. This 'cultural deficit' approach, views the problem as lying in the Asian family and culture, created internal strife, pupil embarrassment, anger and hostility, and eventually brought open conflict between teachers and pupils. These issues also led to conflicts between pupils and their parents and the Asian community as well as intra-role conflict within the pupils themselves as they tried to please two parties and two cultures. For the teachers in the study, the situation was complicated by the "danger of being accused of being sexist if they accept cultural tradition and do not operate policies of equality and opportunity, and of being racist if they do not accept cultural tradition and go for equal opportunities" (*Ibid*: 165).

Gender constructionist research takes into account boys as well as girls, the other half of the gender equation and acknowledges not all males are dominant and powerful. In his ethnographic study of a high school in a south Texas town, Foley discovers that, despite the challenges of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the segregated racial order of White Americans and Mexicans in the town are still reproduced, along with class and gender inequalities, through many everyday activities (Foley 1990). Such activities include interactions with teachers, relationships with peers, dating and sport. He provides a cultural analysis of school football, concluding it is a complex ritual which promotes or reproduces various forms of social inequality along gender, class and race lines (*Ibid*: 62-3).

In his ethnographic study of boys attending an inner-urban boys' school in Australia, Walker (1988) discovered four key groups, of which, the hegemonic group were 'the footballers', whose most salient feature was that they nominated and dominated the most prestigious sport - rugby. The footballers, mostly white, working class Australians were very territorial at school, controlling and defending open spaces such as the football field, from other groups. The second most powerful group, 'The Greeks' was formed "mainly as a counter-assertion of Greek values and perspectives against what they saw as over-inflated, self-important 'Aussies'" (*Ibid*: 48). A third group, 'the handballers', mainly made up of twos and threes, enjoyed sports and games but "lacked the more tight knit history of the footballer core and the Greeks" (*Ibid*: 55). They were by far the most ethnically diverse group and the most tolerant, although complicitly went along with jokes about homosexuality. Some of the handballers felt rejected by the two stronger groups but were not persecuted like the fourth group, 'the three friends', who were so marginalised

they withdrew, literally, into a room where a teacher set them up with facilities to produce a school magazine. "Their control over inward space and their relative physical immobility was the inverse of the footballers' restless, sweeping surges to and fro and usurpation of large tracts of public space" (*Ibid*: 52). They won the admiration of those who otherwise despised theatrics, when they entered an inter-school drama festival with a very witty play. This did not amount to a challenge to the dominant footballing culture but they managed to carve a space for themselves on the margins of masculinity (*Ibid*: 54).

A British study based on participant observation and interviews by a researcher/PE teacher in a multiethnic, inner city high school involved two Year 9 PE classes of 25 students each (Parker 1996). Locating PE as a significant site in the construction of masculinities within schools, Parker identified three broad categories of pupil groups: the Hard Boys, the Conformists and the Victims. Violence was a taken-for-granted element of PE and schooling; a compulsory component of everyday life, around which individual pupils had to negotiate and construct their own masculine identity. The 'Hard Boys' used violence to structure their own educational agenda, rejecting middle-class criteria of academic success, claiming other sources of power, such as sporting prowess, physical aggressions and/or sexual conquest. They also used heterosexist labels to intimidate and dominate the Victims. Even though 80% of the students at the school were either South Asian (70%) or Afro-Caribbean, intra-group cohesion and shared perceptions of masculine identity and values amongst pupils appeared to override notions of ethnic loyalty.

Most social construction literature focuses on PE's potential to oppress young women and empower young men. There have been only a sprinkling of studies exploring the potential PE programs have to transform traditional gender relations. Such as the ethnographic study of Shotmoor, a British outdoor education centre which pursued a non-traditional PE program (Humberstone 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1993). The study, based on participant observation, informal talks with teachers and pupils and formal interviews with pupils, aged 9-16, showed that the material conditions, social relations and ethos prevailing at Shotmoor, provided for a shift in the construction of gender identities and relations from those generally experienced in mainstream PE (Humberstone 1990a: 199).

The child-centred, interpersonal and non-authoritarian teaching approach adopted by most of the teachers at Shotmoor encouraged collaboration between boys and girls and enabled boys to gain respect for and greater understanding of girls, other boys and themselves. Most of the teachers "conveyed messages significantly different from those perpetuated by the stereotypical aggressive, dominating, macho PE teacher" (Humberstone 1990b: 209). Girls were encouraged and enabled to participate alongside boys on equal terms. Teachers did not denigrate boys for showing emotions such as apprehension and fear but encouraged them to overcome their fears. Boys were surprised that girls frequently outshone most of the boys (*Ibid*: 205). Boys had the opportunity to experience nontraditional forms of physical activity which did not identify winners or losers but rather enabled them to experience personal and group success not at the expense of other boys or girls. "These kinds of experiences and insights contrast markedly with boys' standard perceptions of the traditional, sex-segregated British school PE curriculum of soccer, rugby, and cricket, which boys generally consider proper only for themselves" (*Ibid*). Most of the students preferred to work in mixed-sex groups and boys appeared to be supportive of and encouraging to girls (Humberstone 1986: 207).

Despite the potential indicated by Humberstone's research for adventure education to challenge traditional gender relations, it is rarely part of an ongoing PE curricula in British schools. Moreover, while a week at Shotmoor may foster collaboration and a greater degree of sociality between male and female students, there is no reason to suppose these new perspectives and attitudes will diffuse into their school or leisure activities (*Ibid*: 209).

In summary, studies based on the theory of gender construction have begun to further and deepen our understanding of the relationship between gender and PE. However, by conceptualising gender as socially constructed, the body all but vanishes and we are left, once more, with an empty vessel. Thus, by a rather circuitous route, this literature review returns to its central concern - the body, or more precisely, gendered embodiment.

Schooling the Body and PE

Referring to Mauss' observation in the 1930s that techniques of the body are learned activities, Kirk maintains that educational processes are central to the process of socially constructing and constituting the body (Kirk 1993: 2).

Following Foucault, he argues that schools are both constraining and facilitating because they discipline the body in ways which conform to cultural norms but also facilitate the achievement of acceptable social interaction. Thus, school sport and PE "constitute specialised sets of practices ... which make a crucial contribution to the social construction and normalisation of the body" (*Ibid*: 3).

Yet few studies of PE or school sport have taken the body into account, not least because the dominant scientific discourse of PE militates against understanding the ways in which people actually live in and through their bodies (*Ibid*: 30). Even sociological studies of PE rarely take into account the body, ironically marginalising the social significance of what is the very object of PE - the human body (Shilling 1993b: 56). Shilling sees the complete neglect of PE in many sociology of education texts symptomatic of the widely held but mistaken view "that schooling is concerned only with the mind, and with one sort of knowledge; the abstract and intellectual" (*Ibid*: 55). Though it is "the embodied person who is schooled, not the disembodied intellect", schools themselves "fail to acknowledge the fundamental part they play in shaping and harnessing the forces and energies of the bodies of their students" (Kirk 1993: 15-6). Instead, they "tend to homogenise and normalise bodies, denying and in some ways distorting the differences of race, gender, colour and class" (*Ibid*: 16).

There follows a review of the small amount of research which has been done on embodiment, PE and school sport.

Learning the Body

In 1986 John Hargreaves observed that "PE theory, its objectives and recommended practices, constitute a programme of control through sustained work on the body (163). Drawing on British research, he showed that, although PE is not consciously designed to further the interests of dominant groups, in the course of its implementation discrepancies arise between knowledge/ discourse and practice, resulting in the "schooling of bodies" in ways which reflect and reinforce existing class, gender and ethnic power relations (*Ibid*).

In his historical study of English and Welsh schools, Shilling (1993b) uses Bourdieu's concepts of body capital and habitus to illustrate how schools have

historically influenced the production of physical capital in relation to social class inequalities. He makes a very important observation. Schools are involved in the formation of bodies; and in the process, "they affect *differentially* the ability of pupils to recognize and develop specific forms of physical capital" (*Ibid*: 63). His study revealed educational inequalities, were, quite literally, embodied. Upper-class bodies were to lead whereas working-class bodies were to follow, middle-class women's bodies were fitted for and limited by reproduction and so on (*Ibid*: 66). Therefore, Shilling warns against the common assumption that "participation in sports/PE yields similar benefits to all sections of society" (*Ibid*: 56). Generally it favours the dominant class because of their ability to "define their orientations towards the body and lifestyle as superior, worthy of reward, and as, metaphorically and literally, the embodiment of class" (*Ibid*: 70). A process, he says, is always open to challenge and contestation. The same can be said of gender.

Kirk (1993) explores the connections between PE, the body and culture in his historical study of PE in government schools in Victoria. He concludes that the belief that the body is the primary site for expressing individuality and the essential self, has never been challenged by liberalised PE (*Ibid*: 51).

Very little research has been done on PE and gendered embodiment. Wright and Dewar (1997) interviewed Canadian and Australian women aged 35-78, both lesbian and heterosexual, to explore how sport, PE and physical activity are related to social power/powerlessness. Some of the lesbian women felt less constrained by heterosexual discourses about feminine bodies. Their major finding was that, generally "PE seemed to completely miss the point in terms of trying to connect people with their bodies and their bodies with their lives" (*Ibid*: 87). A major difficulty was the lack of words and concepts both researchers and participants had at their disposal to describe how we live and who we are through our bodies.

The year before Wright published a somewhat less promising paper based largely on gender constructionist theory, onto which she tacked gendered embodiment (Wright 1996). The research involved interviewing in pairs 49 female and 32 male student and six male and four female teachers from three Australian high schools. The interviews were open-ended and were about the students' relation to physical activity and their expectations of masculine and feminine bodies. Wright concluded that feminine and masculine subjectivities are constructed as complementary in PE - that is, they are defined

in opposition to one another as female incompetence and male superiority. The data collected from individuals is analysed in groups, that is "girls" and "boys". Also, she argues that in PE "bodies are *inscribed* with gender differences and... both male and female teachers and students are complicit in maintaining oppositions that *inscribe* the female body as lacking those qualities associated with the active body in sport" (*Ibid*: 76, emphasis added). Thus, although bodies are present, they are docile and socially constructed. There were no resistant bodies.

Scraton's (1992) focus on the relationship between sexuality and the body in her in-depth study of single-sex girls' PE classes in four English secondary schools is rare but welcome. Her research, based on teacher interviews and participant observation, examines how images of 'femininity' and the construction of gender-appropriate behaviour are reinforced and/or challenged by the structure, content and teaching of girls' PE. Scraton identifies the need to recognise and assess the importance of physical power relations as part of the social relations of gender. She shows single-sex PE to be a tradition underpinned by ideologies of gender which define girls in relation to femininity and incorporate expectations and assumptions about physical ability, motherhood/domesticity and sexuality.

Using McRobbie's (1978) concept of the 'culture of femininity', which highlights the importance for young women of fashion, make-up and boyfriends and revolves around the intense task of 'getting a man', Scraton argues that PE fails to provide 'meaningful experiences' for many adolescent women because it appears at odds with the culture of femininity and does not realistically link with women's future leisure participation (*Ibid*: 111). However, PE specifically designed to appeal to adolescent females, such as keep-fit or aerobics, reinforces the cultural expectations of femininity (Scraton 1987: 180), by transmitting the message they should not participate in physical activity "to develop strength, muscle and fitness, rather they should be concerned with enhancing their appearance (i.e. in making themselves more 'attractive' to men)" (Scraton 1992: 107).

The research also highlights aspects of girls' PE which involve resistance and negotiation to the structure of gender. Scraton believes that girls' PE has real potential to challenge contemporary patriarchal definitions of women's submissiveness, passivity and dependence, noting that when the young women in her research were not subjected to gender stereotyping they gained

confidence and a real acceptance of their abilities beyond the gender stereotype of femininity (*Ibid*: 84). However, it was the altering of the PE structure which facilitated change, there was no sense of individual students initiating embodied resistance.

Though some studies of boys' PE or school sport have begun to appear (above), little attention has been paid to embodiment. A rare exception is Tinning's (1998) autobiographical look at how his experiences in PE and school sport influenced his developing masculinity as a young boy. He concludes that PE can be "an important space in which the hegemonic masculinity practices can be exposed, challenged and changed" (*Ibid*: 118). Fitzclarence and Hickey rightly contend there is a broad lack of recognition among educators of the role of institutions like football in the formation of masculine identity, as "influential sites in which many young boys learn and hone their understandings of what it is to be male" (1998: 70).

This review reveals both the importance of gaining a greater knowledge of the ways in which schools are implicated in teaching young people "techniques of the body" and the remarkable neglect of such research. Acker cautions that not everything can be accomplished through education (1988: 320). Certainly, change within education alone will be insufficient to revolutionise gender relations, however PE, with its close link to the body, physicality and sexuality, must be centrally involved in this process (Flintoff 1993: 199).

Towards a Better Understanding

The current research project, an ethnographic study of three Australian Rules football teams: a women's, schoolgirls' and schoolboys' team, is an attempt to begin to fill the gaps in the literature highlighted in this review.

In the study of the two female teams, particular attention is paid to the following:

- Whether females who play combat sports have greater confidence in their bodies and sense of power than those who do not.
- Whether female footballers are simply celebrating hegemonic masculinity or whether they bring to the game their own meanings.
- How aware female footballers are of issues of embodiment, self defence

and other feminist issues.

- Whether only butch/gay women play football and what the connection is between male-dominated sports and female homosexuality.
- Whether playing football is bonding for females or whether homophobia makes it a divisive experience.
- Whether women playing combat sports disprove the myth of male physical superiority or whether the myth is recuperated in some way.
- What the various reactions are to female football from both males and other females.

In the study of schoolboy football, particular attention is paid to the following:

- Whether the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity through football is universally successful and unproblematic.
- What role combat sports play in the development of non-hegemonic masculinities.
- Whether all males, even those with small, weak bodies are capable of reproducing hegemonic masculinity through playing football.
- What evidence there is of the connection between male football, cathexis and the reproduction of the heterosexual gender order.
- What the various responses of schoolboy footballers are to their female peers playing the game.

Before presenting the findings the following chapter describes in detail the methods used to collect the data for the project.

2 METHOD

My original plan was to study gender relations in PE and I did my pilot study in a NSW government high school, observing mixed and single sex PE classes. Severely restricting ethical procedures and time restraints meant I was unable to interview students to test my interview method. I was disappointed to find the pilot study findings differed little from existing ethnographic research on PE and gender but hoped that doing interviews in the main project would yield more in-depth findings. However, my application to do my main research in three government high schools was delayed for several months. At this point I could have approached mixed-sex private schools to continue with my original research design but several factors influenced me to change the design more radically. Firstly, reviewing the literature on embodiment inspired me to look at gender-anomalous sporting activities. Secondly, neither my research design nor pilot findings were original. Thirdly, a year before I had met Kelly Hall¹, a female footballer and coordinator of the schoolgirl football competition in Perth. She was enthusiastic, helpful and approachable and immediately supported my proposal to study women footballers in Perth. I planned to study male dancers as the second part of my new research design but this was later abandoned when I became interested in the schoolgirls' competition through my interactions with Kelly and other women footballers.

The data for this research project were collected during two field trips to Perth. The first was in 1998 when I spent two months, the best part of a football season, with the West Australian Women's Football League (WAWFL). The second was in 1999 when I spent three months, a school term, with both a girls' and a boys' football team at a government high school. The study is based on two research methods; participant observation and interviews.

First Field Trip - Women's Team

Focussed Interviews

My initial contact, Kelly, was extremely enthusiastic about promoting women's and girl's football. Because I was keen to promote and study women's football as a positive activity and to help the League wherever I

¹ Pseudonyms are used for interviewees, their family members, clubs, suburbs and towns, to ensure confidentiality. Names of football organisations and competitions, remain unchanged.

could, Kelly gave me good press and introduced me to many of my first interviewees. Subsequently, the sample tends to include those players most committed to the League, like committee members. From there a snowball effect occurred. Many of my initial interviewees encouraged other footballers to have an interview. I also solicited interviews by asking players I met or was introduced to on match day. This attracted many gay players because few heterosexual players socialise at the bar after matches. I interviewed players from all seven teams but about a quarter were from the team with which I did my participant observation. As time went on it became more and more difficult to get interviews.

I interviewed 34 (14%) of the 242 players registered in 1998. Of these, 8 were heavily involved in the WAWFL Committee, one was the founder of the WAWFL and two were female football coaches (one current, one ex-coach/player). I also interviewed two retired players, two male coaches and three people in connection with the Magdalenes massage parlour sponsorship. This made a total of 41 interviews.

Interviews averaged about 52 minutes each, the shortest being 20 minutes, the longest over 90. Most took place either at the house where I was staying or the home of the interviewee but one took place in a coffee shop, one on a university oval and another in a massage parlour. All interviews were tape recorded. Interviewees were asked if they minded being taped. All agreed and only a few were nervous about being taped. Many of the gay footballers would begin to talk to me about their sexuality after the tapes were turned off, otherwise they seemed not to inhibit responses a great deal. Most interviews quickly became like informal conversations. This was probably helped a great deal by the domestic surroundings, the fact that I had been given "good press" by my initial contact and that I was generally perceived to be supportive of women's football (which I am). Another factor was that conversations occurring before, during and after interviews included self-disclosure on my part and encouragement of interviewees to ask questions. This not only helped interviewees to relax but also served to foster a more dialectical and reciprocal interviewee/interviewer relationship (Lather 1986: 265).

The semi-structured interviews carried out during the first field trip focussed mostly on football. I used the questions on the interview guide (see Appendix A) simply to prompt interviewees to open up and talk freely on the topic. Most of their answers led to other questions not on the interview guide. Since

embodiment is a difficult issue to discuss, I did not have one set question to cover this but waited for the topic to arise, then pursued it further. Typically this occurred when discussing the contact element of the game. When certain topics or issues arose frequently in interviews, I added these to the list as a general area of enquiry for subsequent interviews. For example, the study took place shortly after an interstate women's football competition and this was a popular topic at the time, along with the WAWFL's sponsorship for the competition by a massage parlour. Thus the interview guide was dynamic, rather than static.

Once transcribed, the interviews were coded into common themes emerging from the interviews, using the grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Some of the themes were: being attracted to the contact element in football; players having sporty or tomboy childhoods; the League's difficulty attracting players and media attention; positive and negative reactions from people outside of the League; the state competition; inadequate umpiring; team camaraderie and; injuries.

The coding process increasingly persuaded me of the need for a method that allowed links between the individual and society to emerge around issues of embodiment. As already explained in the discussion on Connell and psychoanalysis in chapter one, this indicates a need for life-history interviews. Life histories provide rich documentation of personal experience, ideology and subjectivity, at the same time as documenting social structures, social movements and institutions (Dollard 1949[1935]; Plummer 1983). The change in interview method is discussed fully below.

Interviews have limitations because they are bracketed off from everyday life. Thus participant observation was used as a complementary methodology to locate the social group being studied within its broader social context because it is well-established as the obvious method for studying semi-formal or informal cultures (Burawoy 1991; Gluckman 1961; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Mitchell 1983; van Velsen 1967).

Participant Observation

My initial contact, Kelly, introduced me to the team with which I did my participant observation; the Ridgley Park Raiders. The team was chosen pragmatically on the basis that they were located close to where I was staying

and I did not have regular access to a car. Ridgley Park is an older suburb of Perth, 15 minutes from the city. Being close to a light industrial area and having some public housing, it is a working class suburb.

The Raiders treated me as they did all newcomers, with respect and open arms. For example, on my first night at training the Team Manager asked me if I would like to borrow her spikes. Most players introduced themselves to me during the first drill and some of the older players, like Terri, were very helpful, telling me what to do, especially in the complicated drills. While training, most players yelled encouragement to one another and to me. During the warm-down lap at the end of my first training session I was out in front, as I did not realise the team were meant to stay together. Terri yelled out "Get her girls!" and when they caught up with me she asked me how I was going. Terri and Sue gave me a lift home and also to my first match that weekend. At half-time in the match Terri insisted I go into the changerooms with the team to get out of the cold and that no-one would mind. I was glad, as I wanted to know what went on but not unless I was welcome. At the bar afterwards, Terri introduced me to players to interview and reassured them her interview with me had been painless. Also, at training Terri and Sue, always looked out for me and if they could see my quadriceps injury was niggling me, would make me either stop training or use my left foot to kick.

There were two main reasons for participating in training. The first is that I did not want to make the players uneasy or suspicious of me by watching them and taking notes, thereby appearing to judge them from above. In fact, training did earn me respect from the players for "having a go". At the Grand Final party, after the year's trophies had been presented, Sue stood up and thanked me for helping them but especially for turning up to training to help make up the numbers. Also, after their Grand Final win the team were all given a 1998 Ridgley Raiders stubby-holder and I was chuffed to receive one because of the symbolic form of acceptance it represented.

The second reason for training was to experience playing football at the embodied level. It is particularly difficult in the case of sport for a researcher to understand all of the physical dimensions merely by interviewing or observing participants. This is partly because physical experiences are sometimes difficult to relate in words or at other times appear too mundane to warrant discussion. It is also because people are generally unaware of, let alone able to talk about, how bodies are gendered through what Connell calls "body-

reflexive practices". Having never played football before and having only been taught the basics of kicking by my partner a few months before the field trip, I was putting myself in a similar position to at least some of the women I was studying - the newcomers to the game, who are very common in women's football.

Training with the team certainly helped me remain aware that I was an embodied participant observer. I developed a bruise on my hand from hand-ball drills, which grew to cover the whole back of my hand and into the base of each finger and thumb, becoming very swollen. I also tore my right quadriceps. However, I did not play an actual game of football so did not experience the contact side of football. Thus, I did not put my body on the line to the extent that Chapkis did when she "turned a trick" as part of her study of sex workers (Chapkis 1997). Though I was not scared of the physical contact, I was petrified of making a fool of myself in public. In this respect, I understood the fears and courage of the novice footballers in the study.

Field notes were written either when I got home from training or first thing the next morning. In total, I trained with the Raiders on nine occasions. Unfortunately I missed four training sessions due to injury. I also participated in or observed other aspects of women's football. I watched the State team train and attended the State Guernsey Presentation. I observed 9 women's games, including two semi-finals, one preliminary final and the Grand Final. This involved watching from the sidelines as part of the Raiders' entourage, barracking loudly while taking field notes and going into the Raiders' change rooms before matches, at half time and full time, where I also took notes.

After their games I drank and socialised at the bar with people from all the teams in the League, making contact with interviewees in the process. I also travelled in the Raiders' bus to and from the Grand Final and joined in the celebrations after their win at their club rooms. I was always included or invited to social events/outings and went to the Raiders' celebratory Grand Final lunch the day after their victory. I did not go to any of the WAWFL meetings, due to lack of transport.

I see research as a two-way interaction and helped the Raiders where I could by. For example, doing the shopping for and helping to prepare their traditional Grand Final Breakfast. I also did duties behind the bar, when Ridgley had a bye and were rostered on for ground duties. I also took team photographs of the

Raiders, gave copies to all the players and had framed enlargements made. Later, during my fieldwork with the schoolgirls' team, I produced and distributed posters inviting schoolgirls from all SSSC teams to the women's interstate match held in Perth in 1999.

Life History Interviews

During my second field trip I did follow-up interviews with 11 women footballers using a life-history interview technique. These interviews were less structured and less focussed on football than the initial interviews. There was no fixed set of questions but, as per Connell's method in *Masculinities* (1995: 91-2), the interviews covered pre-determined topics. The following four themes were explored while eliciting a narrative story of the interviewee's life:

- i) practices in which relationships are constructed
- ii) transitions between institutions, such as entering high school
- iii) accounts of relationships within institutions, ie families, work, schools
- iv) evidence of the three structures of gender: a) power: gendered power relations; b) labour: relation to production and c) cathexis: relations of love/sexuality

The following topics were covered during each interview:

- Family background: Race, ethnicity, class, careers of parents, relationships with siblings and parents.
- Football: Motivations for playing; feelings and embodied experiences; problems or conflicts arising from playing football and; parents' and peers' responses to playing.
- Relationships with same-sex and different sex peers.
- Resistance or conformity to gender stereotypes in their careers, sports played and other pastimes.

Each interview was taped, transcribed *verbatim*, then written up into a case study to be examined from three points of view. Firstly, as a narrative sequence of events, summarising: the social milieu they grew up in (class, ethnicity, region, social ideology, politics and so on); their current social milieu; and their major life events.

Secondly, their experiences of and position in: a) the gender division of labour; b) gender power relations; c) gender emotional relations (family of

origin and sexuality); and d) gender ideologies and communication patterns were analysed. It was crucial in this phase to remember that what is most important about any statement contained in a source "is not whether it is true or false, but what it means... history is not written by copying out the testimony of the best sources, but by coming to your own conclusions" (Collingwood 1948: 200).

Thirdly, a dynamic analysis of the case studies traced the making and unmaking of masculinity/femininity to tease out the gender project involved. This included summarising the course of the person's involvement with sports and establishing whether playing football represents a disturbance in gender relations in their life history. That is, whether it is a continuation or change of direction in their life and, if so, how it has been handled.

Finally, the case studies were analysed as a group, exploring similarities and differences in their personal trajectories in order to gain an understanding of their collective social location. In this final phase of the analysis, the three structures of gender; power, labour and cathexis remain a central focus, thus providing both a portrait of individuals and evidence of broader social change.

Because I had abandoned my original research project design, the original pilot study had become defunct and the first field trip in some ways functioned as the pilot study for the new project, allowing me to fine-tune my research methods. Changing my interview method mid-stream added further time pressures and resulted in uneven data. Also, the life-history case study analysis, described above, is very time consuming. Other drawbacks which became apparent during the course of the research, in particular with regards to boys not opening up during interviews, are discussed below. However, this tumultuous period in the project represents an enormous learning curve and the ultimate benefits are reflected in the studies carried out during the second field trip.

Second Field Trip - Girls' and Boys' Teams

I spent a school term in 1999 with both a girls' and a boys' Australian Rules football team in Waratah High, a coeducational state high school. One of the largest secondary schools in WA, Waratah High is located in the developing outer suburbs of Perth. The school's catchment area is largely working class and has a slightly higher Aboriginal population than suburbs closer to the city.

The PE classes at Waratah High are co-educational in lower school (up to Year 10) and single-sex in upper school (Years 11 and 12). The school was chosen because it has a girls' and a boys' Australian Rules football team and because Kelly approached Janice Stephens, a PE teacher and schoolgirl football coach at Waratah High and asked if she would be willing to participate in the research, which she was. Thereafter, I negotiated the details of the study with Janice by phone and letter because I was located in Sydney. Janice helped me gain permission from the Waratah High Principal for the study and asked Tim Broad, coach of the boys' team, if he was happy to participate in the study. Tim agreed in theory but, as I was to discover later, not in practice.

Life History Interviews

Upon my arrival at Waratah High, I distributed consent forms to every member of both teams and Janice was very helpful in reminding the students to get them signed by their parents. Life-history style interviews were carried out with 19 members of each team. Only three young women from the girls' team and five young men from the boys' team did not consent to an interview. Most of the interviews lasted one school period (40 minutes). Only about five of the young men's interviews and one of the young women's were less than 40 minutes and about four of the young women's interviews were longer.

Life-history interviews were also carried out with the boys' coach (90 minutes) and the Principal (80 minutes). I had interviewed the girls' coach during my first field-trip for 60 minutes and her two follow-up interviews during my second field-trip totalled 130 minutes. I also had a quick, informal interview with the Chaplain about his involvement in the staff vs student match.

All of the interviews took place in an office kindly provided to me by the school. The interviews were carried out during school time, some during lunch but most during class. I was given permission and the facilities to select and withdraw students from their classes. All interviews were tape-recorded, after first asking whether the interviewee objected. None objected but it did seem to make most nervous at first. The students were generally more nervous about being interviewed than the women footballers or teachers. Conducting the interviews in school, during class time, in an office and with a tape recorder would have added to their nervousness, as well as the fact that I was an adult. There was also a gendered element to the interviews. Many of

the young women would talk naturally and excitedly with me once they had relaxed and forgotten about the tape recorder whereas most of the young men remained visibly tense and nervous throughout their interviews, though some opened up more than others.

Interviews were transcribed *verbatim*, using the same format described above. Case studies were developed while the fieldwork was in progress, so any gaps could be filled by doing follow-up interviews. Follow-ups were carried out with ten young women and three young men in cases where I felt there were gaps in the case study (mostly early interviews), or where I wanted to explore issues which had arisen since the first interview, such as the staff vs student match or issues raised with other students in subsequent interviews.

Participant Observation

The fieldwork consisted mostly of attending both teams' training sessions and matches. The boys' competition had only five teams in their region, thus only had four home and away matches, followed by semi finals, finals and the grand final. I attended three of the four home and away games, missing the first because it was held at the end of the previous school term, a month before I arrived. I also attended their semi-final. I only observed two training sessions because the boys' team only had one training session per week and one week was cancelled. They ceased training once they lost the semi-final.

The girls' competition had seven teams in its region. Of the six home and away games, I attended four, missing one due to illness and the other because it was cancelled. I also attended their semi-final, final and grand final. The girls' team trained twice a week and I observed, and sometimes participated in, six of these sessions, standing in as coach for one. I also missed one due to illness.

Participant observation with the two teams involved various activities which ranged from simply spectating, cheering and/or taking photographs from the sidelines, to minding jewellery and clothing, running water, carrying equipment and putting up goal post pads. Janice asked me to demonstrate to the girls' team how to kick and to give one or two lessons, as she has not played football herself and knew I had trained with a women's team. I was happy helping some of the young women with very basic kicking skills but felt ill-qualified to take a training session, as I was neither a trained PE teacher nor

a footballer. However, because I had promised to help out as much as I could I took one of the girls' training sessions when both coaches were in a meeting. It went surprisingly well and the young women responded positively. I was also occasionally invited to various school activities such as staff meetings, school assemblies, the staff vs student football match and I attended both the teams' end of season lunches. I wrote 75 pages of fieldnotes, usually on the same day either in "my" office at the school or at home after school.

Janice is in many ways quite conservative and therefore saw me as quite odd and my study as unconventional. However, she respected me for joining in rather than being a remote observer and for helping where I could. The positive response towards me from the young women also seemed to reassure her. At the girls' end of season luncheon, Janice presented me with a bottle of wine for "all my support". Then the girls' team sang "Oh Nikki you're so fine, you're so fine you blow my mind. Hey Nikki! Hey Nikki!" to the Cindy Lauper tune "Oh Micky You're so Fine". I was chuffed. Jade, the team Captain presented me with one of the footballs she won for being Best on Ground in the Semi Final and Grand Final, with signatures of all the team, coaches, umpires and a couple of the teachers. Afterwards, several of the young women came up to thank me for my support of their team and to ask when I was leaving. Unfortunately, my relationship with the young men was not nearly as close, nor as unproblematic.

The researcher/researched relationship was not all one-way. At the end of my study, I gave each player from both the girls' and boys' teams a copy of their team photograph. At the girls' end of season lunch, I presented the Principal with an enlarged, framed photograph of the victorious girls' team, with their names printed at the bottom. I also presented Janice with a photo album of photographs of the girls' team taken during my fieldwork and Tim with an album of photographs of the boys' team.

The following is a discussion of the advantages and limitations of the two methods employed in the study.

Reflections on Method

Firstly, I will follow other feminists who have rejected positivist methodologies and position myself in relation to the research (Grace 1997: 20).

I am a White, heterosexual, able-bodied Australian, originally from a working class background. Most importantly, I am a feminist and it is this which provides the primary motivation for this study and which informs the theoretical and methodological approaches I have taken.

Boy! What a Problem!

The traditional anthropology of the coloniser studying the colonised from a position of power is reversed when the oppressed (in this instance women) "studies-up" not only the oppressor (in this instance men) but also the production and reproduction of the inequality of power on which the relationship is based (Nader 1972: 289). This reversal of power, however, is not unproblematic. During my fieldwork at Waratah High I soon discovered that doing research on gender relations does not happen outside of gendered relations. I was "locked out" of the boys' team in many ways both by the boys' coach and the majority of the young men themselves.

Tim, coach of the boys' team, made his disapproval of my presence evident from the beginning. He did not introduce me to the boys' team and my offers of help were usually refused. Even attempts at polite, casual conversation with him often resulted in very little response or a put-down. I was not invited to travel with the boys' team in the bus to away games, as with the girls' team. Although I was given a written cordial invitation to the girls' end of season lunch, Tim did not invite me to the boys' end of season lunch. I found out about it when one of the young men on the team asked me if I was going. Tim seemed miffed that I turned up. During the Fairest & Best vote count, I stood with Janice and the girls' Captain, several metres away from where the young men sat. This contrasted sharply with my involvement in the girls' team lunch, where I was in the thick of things, sitting and talking with the team.

Tim's lack of acceptance of me and failure to explain my presence to the team did little to foster relations with them. However, difficulties in bonding with and gaining the trust of the young men were largely to do with the fact that they were adolescent men and I was an adult woman studying gender. I was not to be trusted. Not once did any of the boys take water from me when I ran water for their team - a symbolic form of rejection. Strangely, Tim opened up to me and even seemed to warm to me when I interviewed him at the end of the fieldwork but I doubt whether interviewing him towards the beginning

would have helped matters.

Once I started doing interviews with the young men, some acknowledged me by saying "Hello" or smiling discreetly when I was doing fieldwork with their team. Jimmy and Drew would occasionally talk to me when we met around the school but generally I had very few conversations with the young men outside of their interviews. Perhaps I could have initiated more contact with them but I did not want to force myself on anyone or embarrass them. This issue is ethnographic evidence in itself. I suspect many of the young men would have given fuller accounts to a male interviewer and felt much more at ease with a male participant observer, especially one who could play football. This is not to suggest such research would be entirely unproblematic for a feminist male researcher (Schacht 1997).

About five of the young men were very hard to draw out during their interviews, mostly giving monosyllabic answers and only really opening up when talking about football, whereas, only two of the young women failed to open up during their interviews. Despite explaining the nature of my research at the beginning of each interview, some of the young men seemed suspicious and annoyed when I asked them about matters other than football. This made it difficult to develop a life history case study. Others, particularly the Aboriginal students, were generally shy with strangers or loath to open up. This was true also of the Aboriginal girls but only until they got to know me, whereupon they opened up. Consequently, there is an uneven amount and depth of material from the young men in the study, particularly and unfortunately, on their sexuality, as I had great difficulty getting some of the young men to discuss their girlfriends.

Out of Bounds

Being a female researcher I did not go into the boys' change rooms, except to hear the Principal's talk after their semi-final loss. On that occasion, Tim was praising Scott, a tall, good-looking, popular and talented player, noting "There are some Year 10 girls waiting out there for you", which elicited laughter all-round. In not having access to the boys' change rooms I may have missed a lot more of such "locker room talk" more easily accessed by male researchers (Curry 1991; Messner 1994b). Flintoff (1997) also encountered difficulties doing feminist research involving participant observation and interviews in a male-dominated institution, such as gaining access to all-male areas and rituals.

Female Bonding

My experience with the young women in the girls' team was very different. Most of the girls' team befriended me straight away. Even those who were wary of me at first soon relaxed once they realised my non-teacher status. This was established at first by Janice, who gave me good press and told the young women exactly what I was doing when she introduced me. My non-teacher status was later confirmed by relating to them as equals and unintentionally enhanced when I wore name-brand sportswear to school, not knowing that teachers and students were not allowed to wear clothes with logos. Several of the young women liked to try on my jacket when we were standing around before training, particularly if there was a group of boys walking passed at the time. I also earned the young women's trust through my support of their team, though this was not the case with the young men.

The young women bonded with me in many ways. They would give me their jewellery and Ventolin to mind while they played or ask me to tape their injuries. Kelly once asked me to wear her ring while she played and as she slipped it on my finger I asked "Are we going steady now?" Some young women would say "Don't forget to interview me!" Once, Jade leaned on me to put on her socks and another time Natasha came up and stood close to me after one game when it had been raining, saying she was trying to get warm. Elli took longer to warm to me than most but showed her acceptance one training session by putting her jumper around my shoulders, indicating she wanted me to mind it while she trained.

Interviews with the young women served to enhance the relationship I was developing with them through participant observation. This is particularly true of life-history style interviews, which involve disclosing intimate details about one's life, since disclosure is a common way for females to develop friendships with one another.

Non-Discursive Data

As Darnton says, the anthropologist's task is "to show how people construe their world, invest it with meaning and infuse it with emotion, to show how they organise reality in their minds and express it in their behaviour (1985: 3). Participant observation helps researchers to understand the non-discursive

logic of people and societies evident in the mundane aspects of life, the day to day organisation of the football competitions, the discussions on the side-lines, who watches the games, who does not, the way participants play, how they make sense of their participation and so on.

For instance, some gender relations are embodied and are unlikely to be apparent during interviews. Walking across the school grounds at lunchtimes I noted boys took up the majority of space. During their lunchtime training sessions, the girls' team would colonise a pocket on the margins of the oval near the goal posts, hemmed in by a fence on one side and boys playing soccer and football on the other sides.

Also, reports made during interviews were sometimes contradicted by observations made in the field. Thus, participant observation serves to cross-check other types of interview data. For instance, Jimmy said of Janice taking over the coaching of the boys' team from Tim when he was injured: "Well at first the boys were thinking they weren't sure she would be a good coach but now they really respect her. I know that I respect her, she's a good coach." However, I observed at the end of one match when Janice was giving the boys' team her coaches' talk in Tim's absence that they seemed very uninterested in what she had to say, smirking, laughing and talking throughout. I concluded that Jimmy, a polite young man, was probably exaggerating the 'change' in attitude of his teammates because he was talking to a feminist researcher of gender relations in sport.

Personal Politics

It was impossible not to become involved in, or affected by, the personal politics of others during my fieldwork at Waratah High. There was a deep factional split in the PE Department, one lead by Brian Cox, the Head of Department and the other by Janice, both with competing agendas and interests in promoting different sports and physical activities. Janice, who has aspirations of becoming a Head of Department eventually, describes Brian as sexist and "severely threatened by a competent female Phys. Edder". She is frustrated that, despite there being five male and five female PE Teachers, Year 11 and 12 PE classes are taught mainly by men: "It's almost like saying that females aren't capable of doing that. You're good for Years 8, 9 and 10 but, oh, let you do the important stuff? Oh, I don't think so". The rivalry was so intense that the two factions sat at separate tables at morning tea. Thus, for me

to even talk to, let alone interview Brian to get the other side of the story, would have jeopardised my good working relationship with Janice.

A Prickly Issue

At the time of my first field trip, a prominent radio announcer and ex-AFL footballer made malicious homophobic remarks about an elite Australian women's sports team on a popular morning show. During an interstate women's football competition shortly after, he made an attack on the standard of skill in women's football, despite never having attended a match. Knowing that at least part of my thesis might be published, my first reaction was to "do the right thing" by the WAWFL by not exploring the issue of sexuality in interviews. This created a research dilemma because it was evident that homosexuality was a defining factor of the WAWFL. Therefore to ignore it or play it down would skew the research, to say the very least. Furthermore, most of the footballers with whom I discussed this research dilemma clearly indicated they did not care whether I wrote about their homosexuality or not. This is probably because the majority of gay footballers were very much "out" and there was very little attempt generally within the WAWFL to foster a heterosexual/feminine image, as is the case with many other women's sports plagued by this issue. By the second field trip, I reversed my decision, not least of all because I had decided to do life-history follow-up interviews and sexuality is a central concern of the type of Freudian analysis this involves.

Research Fatigue

During my second field trip, I discovered some of the women footballers were more than happy to have a second interview, some were less enthusiastic the second time and others, who had been very friendly and accommodating on my first field trip, were actively avoiding me. After discussions with some of those who were still happy to see me and talk to me, I concluded that some of the women were suffering from what I can only describe as "research fatigue".

Outside the Closet Looking In

During my fieldwork with the WAWFL, I only divulged my heterosexuality if asked or if I felt it would not make others uncomfortable. I dressed neutrally, as I often do anyway, wearing tracksuits or jeans so as not to stand out from the WAWFL crowd. I was not masquerading as a gay woman but did not mind if

people assumed I was homosexual because I did not want to make the gay footballers feel as though they were a sideshow attraction.

At the Grand Final party, I was dancing with a player from another team, when "We are a family" by the Pointer Sisters came on the jukebox. I suddenly found myself in a group of about six women, all with our arms around one another, singing at the top of our lungs "We are a family! I've got all my sisters and me!" (Yes, I had had a few drinks by this stage!) After the dance, one of the women in the group, Terri, said rather pointedly to me as we walked off the dance floor "You're *not* part of our family, you know". I must admit that even though I knew I was not one of the Raiders, I was disappointed Terri felt that way because she had taken me under her wing right from the start (see above). Then I realised that all the other women who had been dancing in the group were from different teams and that Terri had been referring to the gay "family" not the Raiders "family". I recalled that earlier that day I had made a comment about a cute male footballer and, on further reflection, realised Terri had been saying to me I did not belong because I was not "one of them". This was the only time I had been given this message, explicitly or otherwise, during my fieldwork but just for a moment or two I had experienced marginalisation on the basis of my sexuality.

The following chapter provides a brief history of the development of women's football in relation to male football in WA.

3 BACKGROUND

Women have supported men's football in WA for more than 100 years. They have waved banners and streamers, cheered in the outer, danced in club colours, hugged boundary fences for close-ups of their heroes, and volunteered to wash the gear, run the kiosks, nurse the injured and make the lamingtons... Often the first over the fence at half-time to kick the footy with brothers, fathers or other girls, these dyed-in-the-wool football fans have somehow missed out on the very essence of the game they love. They have never played it (Douge 1989: 45).

This chapter gives a brief history of the three competitions of which the teams in this study form a part: the women's football league (WAWFL), the schoolgirls' competition (SSSC) and the schoolboys' competition (Quit Cup). As well as "setting the scene" of the study, this chapter provides an analysis of the historical relationship between women's and men's football in WA.

Though I refer to newspaper articles from the WAWFL founder's scrap book and television coverage from her video of electronic media coverage of the WAWFL in its early years, the majority of this chapter is based on interviews with the founder and other current and ex-WAWFL committee members and players. Oral history has obvious shortcomings, such as the recounting of past events imperfectly, subjectively or romantically but there are two reasons for using it here. The first is pragmatic. Little media attention has been paid to women's football and the small amount of coverage it has received has tended to focus on: the novelty of women's football (Carbon 1998; Pendrill 1989); encouraging new recruits (Douge 1989), or on the details and results of games (*Women's Footy First Round Pleasing* 1989: 38). The second reason is that I wanted to go beyond the facts and dates of the association of women's and men's football, to tease out the dynamics of the relationship between the organisations. If two accounts of the same events differed, it was cross-checked with other interviewees until a more complete picture was obtained.

Women and Australian Rules Football

The first formal rules for Australian football, or Victorian football, as it was then, were drawn up at the Parade Hotel in East Melbourne in 1859 (Cashman 1995: 24). Soon after, competitive leagues were formed in some, though not all, Australian states. In Victoria the VFA was formed in 1877 (Hess 1998). In

South Australia the SAFA was established in 1877 and in Western Australia the WAFA was formed in 1885 (Vamplew 1994: 8-9). These, of course, were all men's leagues. Women, however, have been heavily involved in Australian Rules football variously as supporters (Hess 1996), decorative sex objects (Whimpress 1994: 30), footballers' wives and backstage helpers (Sheedy and Brown 1998), right from the inception of the male competitions.

Evidence suggests there have always been some Australian women wanting to play football. In 1876 it was reported in a school magazine that "one girl was bold enough to suggest that a 'football club be established' at school because she had observed how much 'fun, enjoyment and excitement' boys seem to have in that game" (Crawford 1987: 190). Hess found no record of the formation of such a club and notes "it seems obvious from the lack of evidence that any other similar attempts by women to involve themselves in the game as players were either short-lived or failed to gain the attention of the press" (1996: 368).

Because Australian Rules football is a combat sport which ritually celebrates hegemonic masculinity, it is no surprise women have remained marginal to the game. It would not be difficult to imagine that over the last century Australian women who tried to start, or in some cases started, women's football teams and/or organised women's scratch matches, were deterred from playing through social sanctions such as marginalisation, homophobia, heterosexism, trivialisation and ridicule. The question then, is not why have few Australian women played Australian Rules football but rather, how did some women eventually come to form their own Australian Rules leagues? The rest of this chapter looks at the particular socio-historical circumstances which eventually led to the development of a women's football league in WA.

Pre-Conditions for Women's Football

There were two historical pre-conditions for the establishment of a women's football league in WA. The most important was second-wave feminism.

Feminism and Women Playing Men's Sports

Certainly women in the Western world had made a place for themselves in many sports long before second-wave feminism but advances into new sports

or male-dominated sports occurred mostly during historical increases in women's freedom or power relative to that of men. This usually occurred in times of rapid social change, such as industrialisation at the end of the 19th century, and immediately after the two world wars.

In Australia the first recorded women's cricket match took place in 1874 but the first governing bodies for women's cricket were not set up in the 1920s and 30s in the various States (Cashman, et al. 1996: 598-600). In the US, in the late nineteenth century, women began playing baseball and occasionally a strong female player would play in professional men's leagues (Sherrow 1996: 27). Later, the interruption of men's professional baseball during World War II, saw over 500 women playing in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League between 1943 and 1954 (*Ibid*: 28). However, it must be noted the players were recruited specifically for their "looks, deportment, and feminine charm" (Markel, et al. 1997: 25). In Canada, ice hockey was developed in the late nineteenth century but the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations was not formed until 1927 (*Ibid*). Importantly, women played minus the physical contact allowed in men's ice hockey.

In 1895 the first contest of the British Ladies football club was held near London, attracting a crowd of 12,000. However, it was not taken very seriously, according to an English news report quoted in an Australian newspaper, which said "the spectators roared amain and tears ran down manly cheeks" (*Vigilans et Audax*, 1895: 4). The report trivialised, demeaned and poked fun at female footballers, the tone of which is summed up in this quote: "Sometimes... the players kicked the ball, sometimes they only stood round and giggled at it, but usually they fell over it... in the mud, heels uppermost" (*Ibid*).

Later, during World War I, women working in English munitions factories formed football teams, the best known of which was Dick Kerr's Ladies XI, formed in 1917 by workers at Kerr's engineering works in the north (Hargreaves 1994: 141-2). In 1920 they played 30 matches and at one match attracted over 53,000 spectators, turned away 10,000 people and took over £3,000 at the gates for charity (*Ibid*: 142). In 1921 they played 67 matches, drawing approximately 900,000 spectators (Giulianotti 1999: 153). They even played men's teams (Hargreaves 1994). In 1921 there were around 150 women's soccer clubs in England and the first national English Ladies' Football Association was formed (*Ibid*: 142). However, by the end of that year the men's FA outlawed major female matches by instructing clubs not to lease out their

grounds, thus maintaining male domination of commercial football (Giulianotti 1999: 153).

Hargreaves points out that, like other untypical female sports which developed rapidly during the interwar period in Britain, women's soccer relied on the support of men and men's organisations to develop their game, in particular they needed access to pitches:

The case of football also illustrates the power that men had to impede the smooth progress of women's sports and the way in which they did so when the success of the women's game seemed to be threatening the enactment of traditional masculinity. The women's sports that survived without a break in continuity were in general those which formed their own separate national organizations and international federations, and which were not dependent on male support and control of resources and events (Hargreaves 1994: 143).

In Australia during World War I, women became increasingly involved in the work place, assuming roles previously reserved for men and expressing much of their new freedom through sport (Stoddart 1981: 669). In the 1920s, large companies began to take an interest in women's sport, developing teams and competitions, providing equipment and facilities so as to increase worker efficiency through health and fitness (Stell 1991: 216-7). By 1939, there were well over a million amateur sportswomen in Australia and a whole infrastructure had developed which facilitated the post-World War II "golden era" of Australian sportswomen (*Ibid*: 48-79). Moving into combat sports however, has been much more difficult and any gains made during periods of increased freedom for women have been short-lived.

For example, men's rugby began to emerge as a distinct form of football in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century (Phillips 1994) but the Sydney Women's Rugby League was not formed until 1991. Previous attempts to establish a league were short-lived. After World War I, a full women's rugby competition was developed in Sydney in 1921, when five women's teams were formed and the ladies' Rugby Football League was established with numerous country teams also forming (Stell 1991: 57). They played various exhibition and fund-raising matches. A charity test to benefit Sydney's unemployed women in 1930 attracted more than 2,500 spectators (*Ibid*: 56). Though women's rugby in NSW also flourished after World War II, "no formal competition existed and matches were often played as fund raising

games for local war memorials" (*Ibid*: 210) rather than to exhibit sporting prowess (Phillips 1994: 204). Thus, the competitions which sprung up after both world wars were short-lived because female rugby was never considered as serious, important or meaningful as its male equivalent (*Ibid*).

The pattern is similar for women's Australian Rules football. A rare media report of women playing Australian Rules football appeared in 1895:

An interesting, if it be an absurd, development of the game is the appearance on the scene of the lady footballer. No department of life or form of exercise seems to be sacred to man now-a-days... A match between ladies was played recently in Melbourne (*Vigilans*, 1895: 4).

Such aberrant behaviour reflects the rapid social change of the 1890s but was far from universally accepted. In his historical account of sport in Perth from the 1890s to 1940s, Stoddart illustrates that sport "was a major social instrument for keeping women in their ascribed places" (Stoddart 1981: 670). Since sport was thought to provide a bulwark against undue change, breaches of convention were regarded askance and attempts by women to change the male-domination of sport met with suspicion and resistance (*Ibid*: 669-73). Indeed, the newspaper article reporting the Melbourne women's game (above), ends on this note:

Ladies, however ingenious and versatile, are apparently not designed for football playing. They have not attempted it in this colony [Western Australia], popular as the game is here, and the fact does credit to their sense of reason and humour (*Vigilans*, 1895: 4).

Women's Australian Rules football flourished immediately after the second world war. In 1947 four teams in Victoria played a series of matches on Sunday afternoons (the only time they were given access to football grounds) (Stell 1991: 210). One match drew a crowd of 25 000 and "was cited as a source of alarm by clergymen attempting to have Sunday sport prohibited" (*Ibid*).

Certainly the desire for some females to play football has been present ever since the code was developed. Yet whereas women's organised soccer - a non-contact football code - started up in Australia in the late 1960s, the first Australian Rules league for women was not formed until 1981 (Lawrence 1998: 121). This was despite concerted pressure in Victoria for the re-formation of a women's Australian Rules competition (Stell 1991: 255). In WA, the wait was

even longer. The WAWFL was founded in 1988. Thus, unlike their male counterparts, for women, simply having the desire to play football was not enough to establish leagues.

It was not until after the 1960s feminist revolution that women slowly began to move into full-contact sports. There are records of a few females boxing and wrestling in Britain, France and the US as early as the 18th and 19th centuries (*Ibid*: 44). However they were generally staged as a novelty, oddity, spectacle or with risqué outfits or topless competitors to titillate voyeuristic males (Markel, et al. 1997: 259). It was not until 1975 in Nevada in the US, that the first women's boxing bout was held, after Nevada's boxing commissioner agreed to allow the fight, though women in some other States were less successful in lobbying for the right to hold officially sanctioned women's boxing bouts (Sherrow 1996). Similarly, there are rare media reports of women playing grid-iron football in the US in 1895 and 1905 (Oriard 1993: 267-9) but the National Women's Football League was not formed until 1974 (Sherrow 1996: 104). The League was short-lived, dissolving in 1985, due to the extra emphasis being placed on the association of football with masculinity during this period of sharp transformations in gender relations (Ginstling 1995).

This project uncovered further anecdotal evidence of women wanting to play football. Many of the WAWFL footballers in the twenty to thirty age group said they wanted to play football as children but were "not allowed". For instance, Sally Dunning, founder of the WAWFL, remembers being allowed to practice kicking with her brother's football team because her father was the coach, but being frustrated she could not play a game. She was relegated to the sidelines, quite literally, as boundary umpire for his team, making her determined to play the game one day.

Another footballer, Natalie, was thrown out of her high school football team when she began to develop breasts. Caroline tried to play football at school but was told that girls were not allowed because marking the ball "gives you breast-cancer". Even if it were the case, for which there seems little evidence, it would not be difficult to wear a breast plate or padding, as do women boxers in California (Lenskyj 1986: 121). After all, male genitalia are far more exposed than female genitalia but this is overcome by wearing boxes. Concern over women damaging themselves (in particular their reproductive organs and breasts), is reflective, not so much of actual biological differences between the sexes, but of socially enforced gendered embodiment.

The particular resilience of full-contact sports to women's "intrusion" is twofold. Women participating in full-contact sports brings into question the myth that females are necessarily the weak, fragile, submissive and defenceless beings we are required to be in order to maintain the current male dominated gender order. Defenders of the gender order, including women, men, the media and male organisations, have rigorously defended such sports from female trespassers. The second reason is that from a young age females learn that they are fragile, nurturing, defenceless beings, not just at a cognitive or ideological level but at the lived, embodied level (Young 1990). Traditional feminine embodiment is not only the result of a male dominated gender order but also plays an important role in its maintenance and reproduction. The radical but very slow change in the way women in Western countries inhabit social space and use their bodies has taken nothing less than a radical revolution in gender relations - second wave feminism - the particular effects of which will be discussed further below.

Nationalisation of Australian Rules football

The second pre-condition for the development of a women's football league in WA was the nationalisation of Australian Rules football in the 1980s. The formation of the Eagles (WA's first AFL team) in 1987 seriously threatened the existence of the WAFL, as West Australians transferred their colloquial support from local teams to the Eagles in droves. This put great pressure on the WAFL to promote West Australian football in any way possible and, in a desperate attempt to do anything to promote their "product" to as wide an audience as possible, even agreed to help establish women's football in WA.

For example, during the newly-created "Football Week" a high profile WAFL footballer and FDT member was interviewed on television, along with WA's Minister for Sport. Standing behind them in the manner of those posing for a football team photograph were "WA's Football Family", comprised of WAFL umpires, players of all levels from school boys up to Senior League level - and even female players! In a television interview around this time, a high profile player and FDT member, who was coaching the women for their inaugural scratch matches, said of women footballers:

"I've got nothing against them. I believe the development of this great game of ours is at a serious time now, you can see by crowd attendances dropping off. These people here are either mothers or are going to be

mothers and one of the very important things in our game is we've got to address that. I mean, they're going to have a big influence on whether their little boy plays the game. Now if they get a feeling for the game out there and a love for the game, and that's what it's all about, well then so be it. I think it's fantastic." (7.30 Report, ABC, no date).

Obviously, he was not interested in women footballers as athletes in their own right but as transmitters of values to young males, in their apparently inevitable role as the nation's child rearers. His comment also reveals the FDT's broader agenda in helping establish the women's league at the most critical stage in the WAFL's history.

By 1989, the eight WAFL clubs², the West Australian Football League itself and the holding company of the West Coast Eagles³, were all in financially precarious positions. The State Government stepped in, offering financial assistance on the condition that the administration of football in WA be restructured in a manner mutually satisfactory to both the football organisers and the State Government (WAFC 1999). Thus on 20 June 1989, the West Australian Football Commission (WAFC) was formed, administering both WA's local and national football clubs (*Ibid*). Since then the WAFC has not just survived but grown and there are now nine Westar League clubs.

Two other crucial factors shaped the establishment of the WAWFL, though they were not historical pre-conditions. The first was, even though Sally was not gay when she founded the League and there have been many heterosexual players, the League attracted many gay women from its inception. As female pioneers in a male-dominated arena, "out" gay women were less likely to be deterred by labels of butch/'leso'/'dyke' than heterosexual women and more likely to be attracted to such a gender-subversive activity. The other essential factor was Sally's determination and effort as a pioneering individual.

The WAWFL's Early Days

At 22 years of age, Sally Dunning was tired of waiting around hoping someone else would start a women's league. In 1987, the inception of the Eagles greatly increased the profile of and interest in Australian Rules football in WA and Sally felt the time was right to start a women's league. She ran a very small

² Now Westar Rules clubs

³ Indian Pacific Limited

advertisement in the *Sunday Times* newspaper and also did a lot of canvassing. Melanie Baines, another pioneering member of the WAWFL, recalls with great admiration how Sally actively recruited players:

MB: But it was amazing how someone was just actively out there looking for players. I just admired that, I thought "How else do you get something started?" I mean she advertised but you've got to be out there on the street as well saying "Who wants to play?"

Within a few months Sally recruited more than 70 women, ranging in age from 15 to 36 and coming from all walks of life. There were nurses, students, clerks, barmaids, a speech pathologist, policewoman, school teacher, courier and several secretaries.

Twice-weekly training sessions at Subiaco Oval were run by former WAFL footballers from the Football Development Trust (FDT) and attended by 60 women. For match experience and publicity, two demonstration games were staged, for which the FDT arranged coaches, football grounds and field umpires. The first "scratch match" was played on Sunday 13 September 1987 at South Fremantle Oval. Although many of the women had kicked a football with their brothers as children, most had never played a game. Thus, the games were played with modified rules, adopted from the FDT's junior and youth competitions, aimed at accelerating skill development and reducing the likelihood of injuries resulting from inexperience. They played 15 minute (instead of 25 minute) quarters on two-thirds of a standard oval. Teams were 15-a-side (rather than 18) with up to five players on the interchange bench. The teams had no rucks or rovers, bringing more players into the ruck and the wings to do a lot of roving. Only one bounce of the ball was allowed before disposal. No off-ground soccering was allowed (except in the goal square) as it is too easy and not good for skill development. No restrictions were imposed on tackling, general body contact or any other skill aspect of the game. The women picked up the basic skills quickly and enthusiastically.

The following year, 1988, the WAWFL was formed with Sally as President and consisting of four teams. This meant that for the first couple of years each team had to play the others several times a season. They would also visit country towns to play regional teams, some made up mostly of Aboriginal players. In 1989, the second year of the WAWFL, a fifth team joined the League but the following year the number of teams dropped to four,

highlighting a major concern in the early days about whether the League would survive. Besides attracting and retaining enough players to sustain the League, the WAWFL's future was made more uncertain by two recurring problems: its turbulent relationship with various men's football organisations and a lack of funding.

Funding

Sally was keen to get funds to promote women's football and the Committee (usually consisting of Sally and Mel) wrote many letters and proposals, with little response. Sally recounts the one time they were sponsored:

SD: I knew a guy that ran a furniture shop and he offered to give us enough money to buy so many t-shirts with his business name on the back and WAWFL on the front and that was sort of like a one-off thing and it would be the first ever Women's Footy t-shirt so it was sort of like a little thing but big to us. And he offered to do it and he kept wanting to have meetings over the amount and stuff like that and I thought it was a bit sus. because it was fairly easy to give us some money and we'd print some t-shirts. And it turned out that he had *other intentions* with me and so, like I still got the sponsorship but it was hard. I had to sort of just pretty well tell him to go away in the end and chances are I could have lost our sponsorship but I would have had to put up with that because I wasn't going to do what he was intending for the sake of the sponsorship. And that was my first experience with sponsorship!

Initial Relations with Men's Football Organisations

Initially the WAWFL were involved with men's football at two different levels - with professional men's football through the WAFL/FDT and with men's amateur football through the West Australian Amateur Football League (the Amateurs).

The FDT helped Sally establish the WAWFL by providing some financial backing, coaching, and publicity. They also provided valuable administrative knowledge needed in order to establish a league without reinventing the wheel, like helping them form their own constitution. As Melanie explains:

NW: So you needed the men to get started but you didn't want the men actually organising you...

MB: No, we didn't want them organising us but we needed to know how a sporting club should be run and maybe it didn't have to be men's footy

telling us, it just needed to be people with know-how in sports administration... I just wanted girls to be ringing up and that we sounded professional, that we had all the things of the proper sporting club. We didn't want people coming down and thinking "Oh, this is just run by a group of girls who don't really know what they're doing"... They've got to feel that everything is going to the right places and you have financial reports every year and all that sort of thing so that it all accounts for each other, what's going on.

With time, the WAWFL became more established and more independent of the FDT, though the FDT still provided them with umpires. However, the umpires they provided were not as good a quality as the WAWFL expected and did not take women's football seriously. They were junior umpires who would not always turn up and when they did, few cared to enforce the rules as strictly as they might in a men's game. Nor did they care to learn the few different rules of the women's games. According to oral testimony, at one particular match circa 1994 between the League's two top teams, there were eight or nine serious injuries and four players taken off on stretchers because the umpires were letting packs form, resulting in players crashing into one another. The two coaches pulled the teams off the field because they felt the players were not being sufficiently protected by the umpires. This was followed by some very fiery exchanges between players, coaches and umpires and the WAWFL refusing to pay the umpires concerned. Because the WAWFL President was not in Perth at the time, one of the coaches phoned the FDT and, rather than smoothing things over, he had another 'blazing' row with the FDT. As a result, the FDT refused to have anything more to do with the WAWFL and the WAWFL has been supplied with umpires from the Amateurs since then.

Undoubtedly, some of the men from the FDT involved with the WAWFL genuinely wished to help the pioneering women learn to play football. For example, a WAFL and VFL football legend and ex-AFL Assistant Coach helped train one of the WAWFL teams in 1990. When interviewed on television at the beginning of the WAWFL's third season, he said:

"There's a lot of people who stand over the fence and yell and scream but the real heroes are on the inside playing the game. Now, whether they be women or males it doesn't really make any difference. And so long as they're enjoying it and they get tonnes of fun out of it, I reckon that's terrific" (*Channel Ten News*, no date)

However, other well known male footballers involved in the establishment of the WAWFL expressed opinions about women's football which were not always positive. For example, one WAFL player, when asked whether he thought it is good that women play football, said "No, cheerleaders, I reckon they should stick to that" (*Channel Seven News*, no date).

The hasty marriage between the WAWFL and the WAFL was one of convenience for both parties. It occurred at a time when there was safety in numbers for the WAFL because it was seriously threatened by the development of the AFL, and when the women's league just needed help getting started. At first glance, the WAFL's assistance in setting up and coaching the fledgling women's teams along much the same lines as young boys' teams, appears to be a very progressive attitude towards a group of women displaying such gender-anomalous behaviour. Yet, one might say that in their roles as coaches and advisers, the men were reproducing, rather than transgressing, traditional patriarchal relationships and power dynamics. Especially since, in the beginning, this small group of women in their twenties and thirties, most of whom had never played football before, posed little threat to the gender order. That is, until some years later, having gained experience and confidence, they demanded to be taken seriously by walking off the field in protest at being endangered by incompetent umpires. Evidently, the FDT were not keen on a more egalitarian association in which the women's League could speak up and demand to be treated seriously by the men's organisations. By this time too, the WAFC (ex-WAFL), had been rescued financially by the State Government and their marriage with the WAWFL was annulled, having never been truly consummated by mutual respect. Despite an acrimonious divorce and no settlement, the WAWFL was able to survive on its own, having by that time taken root and become firmly established.

The other level of involvement with men's football was with the Amateurs. When the first four WAWFL teams were initially formed they were affiliated with four Amateur clubs. Because Sally was keen for the WAWFL to be taken seriously, she sought four strong men's clubs with A and B grade teams, who were financially sound, had good facilities and a high membership. The affiliation was meant to be mutually beneficial. Each women's team would have access to an established club with a history, home ground, supporters and perhaps even be able to recruit wives and girlfriends of the male players. In return, the affiliated men's teams would receive fees of \$35 per player per annum and the women would attend their matches as supporters or to run

water. One player even met her future husband when she was running water for his team.

Unfortunately, the honeymoon period with the men's clubs did not last long. Once the men in the affiliated Amateurs teams realised many of the WAWFL footballers were gay, it became apparent most were not interested in women's football for its own sake. Some would make homophobic or derogatory comments. According to oral testimony, at one club three or four of the women would drink with the men and watched each other's matches for several years. However, when one of the women married one of the male footballers and the other two or three became gay, the relationship between the two teams soured.

The WAWFL felt they were no longer getting anything in return for their fees, besides use of ovals and club rooms, which they could get via local councils. Slowly, the affiliated teams stopped supporting each other's matches and small administrative and financial conflicts began to occur. One WAWFL team clashed with their affiliated Amateurs team when some of the men took it on themselves to give clearances to two WAWFL players from another club to play on their team. The men did not have the authority to do so and Sally forfeited the match because the two borrowed players were effectively ineligible to play. She was consequently abused over the phone by one of the men who "cleared" the players. While this is a petty administrative matter, it was clearly a much broader issue of autonomy for the WAWFL and one of arrogating power over female players for the Amateurs. Unlike the split with the FDT, the split with the Amateurs was gradual because it involved different teams and different personalities. Thus some of the teams maintained good relations with their affiliated teams for longer than others. Eventually, however, all of the WAWFL teams changed their names and venues and ceased their affiliation with the Amateurs.

For teams which have formed more recently, being largely independent of men's football organisations has meant that some of the women's clubs have very few support structures at the ground level. Rather than building on existing, well-established men's clubs, new teams have had to build themselves up from scratch, often relying largely on the time and efforts of one or two individuals in the team for their very existence and sometimes folding when that/those individuals leave the team.

WAWFL's Current Status

As Sally points out, it took an enormous effort for her to establish a women's league "compared to what guys could, you know, just turn up at their local club and have a game any time". In the beginning, she was doing eighty hour weeks because she was also a full time clerical officer as well as League President. Ironically, while she had started the League because she wanted to play football, she was initially unable to enjoy the fruits of her labour. As President, she had never been able to relax and enjoy her games because she was always worrying about administration, organisation and informing the umpires of the women's rules. Sally played for five years and then had two seasons off to recover from two broken ribs. When she returned, it was a different experience because she had retired from the Committee, enabling her to concentrate on playing: "I played so much better and I really enjoyed it for the first time. I enjoyed playing before but *really* enjoyed it the second time round." After this, Sally had another year off then played for one last season before retiring, playing a total of seven years. To honour Sally as founder of the WAWFL, she was made a Life Member at the 1997 tenth anniversary function. The Goal Kicker of the Year trophy was also named after her, which she presents every year. Though a little frustrated that she can no longer play herself, Sally is pleased that other women can.

As is common with voluntary committees, the WAWFL Committee are all extremely dedicated but unable to achieve all they would like because of the limited funding and limited amount of time which they can put in as unpaid workers. The League struggled to survive in 1992 and 1993 after Sally and Mel resigned. A new Committee in 1994 had to work hard to ensure its survival.

Current Relations with Male Organisations

The WAWFL currently has its own constitution and is, in practice, largely independent of male football organisations. However, because the AFL is the governing body of football in Australia, the WAWFL cannot form a national body. That is, it can set up its own by-laws and have its own constitution but it cannot lodge register itself as an independent body. The WAWFL are only recognised as an associate member of the Australian Sports Federation because, technically, they are subsidiaries of the AFL. This has little bearing on the day-to-day running of the League as they were unaware they were not an

independent entity until 1998 when they began making enquiries about forming a national body. However, it does mean they cannot apply for Federal travel grants to play interstate, nor hold a schoolgirls' national championship nor be eligible for national travel insurance when playing interstate.

The WAWFL now get their umpires through the Amateurs. Most are junior umpires who referee Juniors, Colts and WAWFL matches to notch up experience and earn \$50 a game. The WAWFL are still having trouble with male umpires not taking women's football seriously. One umpire tried to "chat up" footballers during games, using their first names and asking them what they did on the weekend. The WAWFL got rid of him. The consensus among players and coaches was that the umpires do not report things they would in a men's match, such as swearing and illegal violence. Tania has seen "one of our girls' head stepped on deliberately, I've seen girls punched, I've seen girls sworn at and the umpires do nothing". Reporting a player means sending them to the WAWFL tribunal, which involves both the umpire's time and taking women's football seriously. Some umpires allow players to abuse them and instead of warning or reporting them for this behaviour, simply abuse the women back. Fiona feels this is partly because, being junior umpires, they do not have enough experience to referee adults authoritatively, especially older women more aggressive than themselves.

There are, however, signs of change. According to feedback from the Raiders camp, the umpires of the 1998 Grand Final were much stricter than ever before, sending one player off for several minutes for ranting and swearing and reinforcing rules they had neglected all season.

At the time of the research, the WAWFL's main relationship with the FDT was through the schoolgirls', rather than the women's, competition. They also had a representative on the FDT Council and another player on the Northern Suburbs FDT Committee. However, she resigned from the Committee because she felt she did not quite fit in with all the older men who coached or managed mostly boys' teams, and who did not know how to act towards women. Although they made her feel welcome, she felt she was there as a "token tart" to make the committee feel "politically correct", as they did not listen to any of her ideas or opinions. For example, when there were discussions about girls who sought permission to play in junior boys' football teams, the main consensus was girls should not play and when she tried to voice an opinion to the contrary it fell on deaf ears.

Funding

Funding is only slightly improved from the early days. At the time of this research, the WAWFL received only a small amount of regular funding. This was from the Metropolitan Football Leagues Council (MFLC), a coalition of WA community football leagues⁴ who apply for funding as a combined force, rather than small individual leagues. The WAWFL joined the MFLC in 1991 and now receive 3% (around \$2,000 a year) of the MFLC's annual funding, which is shared between the member leagues. The WAWFL report back to the MFLC about how they spend the funding.

Sponsorship, however, continues to be very difficult to obtain. It is already well-established that the lack of media coverage of sportswomen and women's sports is inequitable and sexist (Daddario 1994; Duncan 1990; Embrey, et al. 1992; Keane 1995; Miller 1990; Pringle and Gordon 1995; Stoddart 1992). This is particularly the case for women who play male dominated sports. Because media coverage is closely interrelated with sponsorship, it is difficult to get one without the other. In 1998, the year of this study, the WAWFL received \$10,000 sponsorship to travel to and participate in an interstate carnival. The next highest sponsorship out of the teams at the state 1998 carnival was \$1,500. Not only was the level of sponsorship unprecedented in women's football but it was highly controversial because the sponsor was Magdalenes - a Perth massage parlour. Unfortunately, the story is long and complicated and there is no scope to discuss this unprecedented and interesting occurrence in great detail here. However, it is worth briefly summarising the major issues this extraordinary partnership raised.

Although the "Magdalenes Affair" arose because of the lack of support from male organisations and the media, the complexities of the affair go beyond the marginalisation of women's sports by male dominated organisations. The affair elicited disapproval from various women's groups and organisations, who viewed sex workers as being in an abusive or submissive relationship with their male clients, thus paradoxically reinforcing an oppressive patriarchal definition of female sexuality.

Together, Magdalenes and the WAWFL, all renegade women on the margins of society - sex workers, lesbians and women playing contact sports - wittingly

⁴ Superules, Amateurs, Sunday FL, Hills FA, Peel FL, WA Country FL and WAWFL

enlisted male money into a female sport and attracted media coverage they could not get in their own right. While the sponsorship deal was first and foremost a mutually beneficial business arrangement, there were other agreeable outcomes. By supporting one another in a business arrangement, Magdalenes and the WAWFL resisted male control. The only other options open to them would have been no sponsorship or media coverage at all or to attract attention and sponsorship using soft-porn images, which also uses women's sexuality to make money.

Schoolgirls' Football

Starting up a girls' football competition has been in the WAWFL's Ten Year Plan, since its inception. In 1990, the WAWFL advertised in the *High School News* calling for expressions of interest in starting an Australian Rules football competition for young women aged 13-15. However, it did not take off, perhaps because it was pitched at teachers, rather than students. The initial impetus for the schoolgirls' competition in WA came from a group of schoolgirls rather than the League itself.

The formation of the Smarter Than Smoking Schoolgirls Cup (SSSC) occurred only eight years after the formation of the women's league, yet the socio-historical conditions were markedly different. To begin with there was a generational difference in the players. The majority of women in the WAWFL are part of a post-feminist generation but their parents and teachers were not. Only four of the 36 women interviewed had played organised football as children, the oldest of whom was 25, the youngest 17 and the other two 19. Only the youngest, Arlene, had played in the WAWFL's junior competition, the SSSC. Peta had played a few informal scratch matches organised by her male PE Teacher. Ali had played with her twin sister and cousin in their local boys' community team and Gaya played on a boys' football team in primary school with another girl.

The schoolgirls, on the other hand, have been raised by parents from a post-feminist generation and have been schooled within an education system in which equal opportunities legislation has been in place since the late 1980s (AEC 1987, 1993). For example, in 1986 the Aussie Sport programme, which promoted equal opportunity in sport for all children under 12, included football (Stell 1991: 255). This is not to suggest most of the schoolgirl

footballers or their parents are feminist, for this is not the case. Rather, the schoolgirls have greater expectations of what should be available to them.

For example, a study based on questionnaires and brain-storming sessions carried out in 15 schools across WA in 1995/96 found that an overwhelming number of the 1,140 adolescent female students surveyed wanted to be allowed to play male dominated sports, in particular Australian Rules football but were thwarted by teachers, principals, community sports clubs and parents (Malaxos and Wedgwood 1997). This is very different from the attitude of the WAWFL footballers when they were at school, many of whom had always dreamed of playing football but never imagined they would be "allowed" to play. For example, Anna (24) said "I never really thought about it because it was just a thing that girls didn't play so I never really ...it didn't really cross my mind that I could do it, I thought it just didn't happen." Although females wanting to play football is not new, the fact the young women surveyed were declaring their exclusion from male dominated sports as unfair, indicates a substantial shift in female identities and attitudes towards their bodies. Unlike the historical moment when the WAWFL was established, by the time the SSSC was formed in 1996, girls' football seemed almost inevitable.

There are indications of a similar post-feminist trend in other Western countries. For example, British research based on interviews with 43 girls aged 10-15, some of whom played stereotypically masculine sports like soccer, concluded that sport has become more compatible with girls' conceptions of femininity over the last twenty years (Archer and McDonald 1990). Their conclusion is supported by questionnaire-style research involving over 3,900 German and American adolescents, which suggests that "white American female adolescents may now see sport as a legitimization of their physicality, a characteristic which, until recently, was generally perceived as a male preserve" (Rees and Brandle-Bredenbeck 1995: 54).

The formation of the SSSC was different from the formation of the WAWFL in another way. Because the SSSC has developed within the context of an education system with an equal opportunities policy (Ministry of Education 1991), its development relied less on an historical weakness of male football organisations and more on the efforts of individual teachers (mostly female). This is because each team is based in a school and, as with all school sports, is coached by teachers willing to donate their time.

The establishment of the women's and girls' competitions were similar in one respect. Their existence depended on the determination, energy and time of women with strong pioneering spirits. In the case of the SSSC, this was Kelly Hall (29), a Perth science teacher. She established the schoolgirls' competition when some of her female students asked her if they could play football (their PE teachers were not supportive of the idea). Kelly, who had never played nor followed football, said "Yes, you can do anything you like" but soon discovered this was not altogether true, as there were no girls' football teams in Perth for them to play. Coincidentally, the League Secretary had a much younger sister attending the school at which Kelly taught and put Kelly in touch with the League President who was teaching at another school and promptly organised another team. As far as Kelly knows, the match played between these two teams in the winter of 1994 was the first girls' football match in Perth. Unfortunately, no record was kept of the date.

They were not the first schoolgirls in WA to want to play a game of football. Five interviewees (under 20) and many other young women and girls I talked to during my fieldwork reported getting their own football team together at school but being thwarted by teachers and principals, who maintained they did not have enough time, that it was a boys' sport, it was "too dangerous" or "too rough" for girls and/or there were no other girls' teams to play against. Kelly reported she still has schoolgirls ring her saying they have a team but their teachers will not coach them. She can do nothing in these cases and notes it is mostly male PE teachers, in particular those who play or coach football, who are most resistant to female students playing football.

The young girls who asked Kelly to help them start a team in 1994 approached the right woman at the right time. Kelly fought for their right to play football whenever she encountered resistance. For example, the Principal denied them permission to play at first, on the grounds of it being too expensive. Kelly then presented him with a viability report and he reluctantly admitted "I suppose there's no real excuse apart from that I don't feel good about it". He was evidently uneasy about girls playing contact sports because he asked "What about shirtfronts?" Kelly also experienced resistance from the school's PE Department but was equally assertive with them. The first time her girls' team trained, the boys' team trained on the same oval, running around them. Kelly found this intimidating, belittling and infuriating so she returned the favour the next day, telling the PE Teacher off for his behaviour in a staff meeting.

One of the reasons Kelly found running a girls football team difficult in that particular school is that they had a very strong, highly successful boys football team, who won the Quit Cup almost every year.

KH: and when they won, they brought the Cup back and we had a huge assembly, they played "We are the Champions" as they walked up. The whole school was there and there was about 20 minutes on this. Then when they finished, the Principal said, "Oh yes, we also have to congratulate such-and-such for being nominated in the State School netball team and as she walked up, they said "Oh, we'll stop it there, there's not enough time" and then my girls' football team were just [pulls angry face], they sensed - and when the boys were going up, my girls were actually doing this [illustrates by raising arms in worship] like making fun... and they got in big trouble... And then when the girls' basketball won... they weren't going to have assembly. Luckily enough, a PE teacher went up and said it was inequitable

Kelly's new school does not have such a strong boys' football team and she has had fewer struggles, noting a pattern in the schools with girls' football teams. They either have a strong boys' team and a weak girls' team or visa versa.

The two original teams played two informal games in 1994 with just 9-a-side. In 1995 four teams of 15-a-side from private and government schools played a whole season in an unofficial competition. In 1996, in her new capacity as WAWFL Junior Coordinator, Kelly asked the FDT for help in setting up a formal schoolgirls' football competition. At first she found the FDT and WAWFL antagonistic toward one another: "I felt a bit like they were enemies almost." She found herself with the difficult task of overcoming the rift between the two organisations, which had existed since the umpiring debacle (above). Kelly also felt the FDT were not keen to deal with those WAWFL footballers who were gay and/or butch: "But then they liked me, I suppose because I came across as a normal/heterosexual, which I didn't like in a way but I thought I've got to work with it and then the rift got less and less."

After some initial resistance to the idea of girls playing their game, the FDT assisted the WAWFL in developing a schoolgirls' competition along the lines of their own schoolboys' competitions and, more recently, have given \$1,000 annually towards the running of the competition and donate a football for their Grand Final each season. The WAWFL provide \$2,000 to the SSSC annually but since 1996, when the schoolgirls' competition became a formal, organised competition, the major sponsor has been Healthway, providing

\$4,000 a year. Hence the official name: Smarter Than Smoking Schoolgirls Cup. Kelly noted that the Women's Sport Foundation and various men's organisations who would have nothing to do with the WAWFL when asked to help with funding or sponsorship, sponsored the Schoolgirls Competition.

In its first two years, the SSSC was a trial School Sport. Then, in 1998, having proved to be a growing, viable sport, girls' Australian Rules football became an official School Sport. School Sport WA do not provide any funding but their endorsement provides credibility. They also provide administrative services and send out a booklet to every school in WA each year with nomination forms for all school sports, including girls' football.

Thus, although the SSSC is a subsidiary of the WAWFL and coordinated by a WAWFL committee member and player (Kelly took up football herself after starting the SSSC), it is run within, and with the aid of, several mainstream organisations. It is promoted in schools as something different and novel for girls to try within the context of equal opportunities philosophy and, unlike the WAWFL, is not dogged by "the homosexuality issue". Subsequently, it has been far more successful, as far as participation rates are concerned. In 1996, its inaugural year as an official competition, seven schools entered the SSSC. The following year the number increased to 12 and in 1998 to 19. In 1999, the year of this study, 23 schools had teams playing in the SSSC and by 2000, this had increased to 32. Though no records are kept of the exact number of players, with approximately 20 young women on each team, the number of schoolgirl footballers has increased from about 140 in 1996 to around 640 in only five years. There is every indication that it will continue to grow for some time, particularly if the enormous success of one-day football carnivals and mini-competitions for girls organised by various regional Womensport West officers is any indication. In 1999, one-day schoolgirl football carnivals attracted 220 secondary students in Geraldton and 250 in Albany. A primary school girls' football competition in Geraldton run over four weeks, attracted 464 participants. In Bunbury, a short four week competition between several secondary schools attracted over 200 female participants and 370 male and female spectators (Womensport West 2000).

Relations with Men's Football Organisations

Technically, up until the age of 12, the FDT allows girls to play in boys' teams of their age group. However, neither the WAFC web site (WAFC 1999) nor

their Annual Report (WAFC 1998) made any mention of girls, though the gender neutral language used to discuss the various "youth" competitions could be taken to insinuate that girls might be allowed to play. The "Women's FL" is listed as an affiliate under the WAFC Structure but no details of the WAWFL are given. The Smarter Than Smoking sponsorship from Healthway is listed but no mention is made of the Smarter Than Smoking Schoolgirls Cup. Furthermore, the FDT were very helpful when I was researching statistics on male football in WA. However, when I asked how many girls participate in their youth competitions, I was told, rather defensively, that there is no need to keep statistics on the sex of the participants because it is of no concern to the FDT whether participants are male or female, only that they have "18 players on the field". It would be inaccurate to accuse the WAFC/FDT of specifically excluding females from football in WA, especially since they now provide the SSSC advice on running a school football competition, some financial assistance and a representative on the SSSC Committee. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the WAFC/FDT see the active promotion of schoolgirls' football as "women's business".

In NSW, on the other hand, where two rugby codes have always overshadowed Australian Rules football, young girls have recently been encouraged to play the game, as part of an aggressive attempt by the AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission to market their football code in a traditional rugby State (Huxley 2000). The success of the Sydney Swans (NSW's AFL team) in 1996 making it to the Grand Final, resulted in an increase in public interest in the code. This window of opportunity has been capitalised on by the AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission, who have set up the Paul Kelly Cup in NSW primary schools, an Auskick programme (modified game for children as young as five) and also made inroads into Sydney high schools and community clubs. This has been done with the aid of a \$6 million annual development budget and 25 full-time development officers, each with a car and equipment to promote the code across NSW (*Ibid*). The Commission estimate that a quarter of the 8,000 or more children playing in the Paul Kelly Cup in primary schools and over half of new club registrations are female and that girls are also well-represented in Auskick. The Chief Executive, John Livy, said: "I don't know whether it's because Aussie rules has a non-threatening feel to it, but the girls really seem to love it. In fact, last year, an all-girl team from Pymble Primary School won their age-group grand final"(*Ibid*).

This phenomena deserves further research which is beyond the scope of the present study. The point is though, once again, there are always Australian girls and women who would like to play football but the opportunity to do so relies on certain pre-conditions. In NSW's case, on four important socio-historical developments. First, a post-feminist equal opportunities philosophy. Second, the greater interest in Australian Rules since the inception and success of the Sydney Swans AFL team. Third, the increased competition between rugby and Australian Rules for supporters and players in the big business world of commodified sport. Fourth, the relative position of the Australian code in NSW as a poorer cousin to rugby in the regionalised masculinity hierarchy, where rugby league and rugby union epitomise masculinity and have a more violent ethos.

Summary

In summary, the women's and girls' Australian Rules football competitions in Perth both attracted different members, had historically different catalysts, different sources of support and encountered different barriers. They have also been perceived differently by men's football organisations, for which I suggest there are two major reasons. Firstly, young girls who partake in activities considered masculine, are just considered "tomboys" and/or childish and expected to grow out of it. Whereas the threat of adult women playing football to the male dominated gender order is much greater and less easily dismissed. Secondly, gay women are even more threatening to the gender order than women footballers because they create gender disorder, existing outside of and rejecting existing normative rules of traditional heterosexual marriage, a major site of the reproduction of male domination.

The gender relations reproduced, challenged and negotiated through Australian Rules football in WA will be looked at more closely in the next three chapters, based on my interviews and fieldwork with three football teams, one each from the WAWFL, the Quit Cup and SSSC.

4 WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

The purpose of this part of the research is to look at the refractory women who play "a man's game", why they play and what, if any, challenge they present to the gender order. The chapter begins with a sketch of the League, the team with whom I did my fieldwork and their coach. Analysis of the interview data begins with the early childhood patterns and their motivations to play football. This is followed by a discussion of sexualities, in particular, the connection between homosexuality and women's football on the one hand and the disruption of traditional gender relations for heterosexual players on the other. Since a major purpose of this study is to explore whether playing a combat sport helps women to develop a physically and/or socially powerful embodiment, the next section focuses on the women's gendered embodiment in relation to playing football. The chapter concludes by gauging the various responses of people from outside the League to women's football.

Setting the Scene

The League

Those interviewed were between 17 and 42 years of age. The majority were in their mid-to-late 20s or early 30s, the average age being 26.6 (see Table 1. Note: all tables are located directly after the final chapter). The average age of players when they took up football was 22.4 but eight players started between 17 and 19 years of age. Only two started much later, at 29 and 32. Players varied greatly in size (see Figs 1 and 9). Like men's teams, women's teams have small rovers who use their speed and agility to get the ball closer to their goals, large full backs and full forwards who use their height and weight to physically contest marks in the goal square and tall rucks who compete for the centre bounce.

Of those interviewed most were White Australians (see Table 1). Almost a third had professional occupations, a markedly higher proportion of women than state (WPDO 1998) and national rates (ABS 1998: 189). They were underrepresented in traditional female employment such as clerical, sales and service work and only two were full-time "house-Mums". Conversely, they were over-represented in the tradesperson/labourer category and in Management/Administration. There were several players with traditionally male occupations: a police officer, science teacher, brickie's labourer, engineer,

prison warden and landscape gardener. Karen, for example, has always had male-dominated jobs, beginning at 13 as a runner for a bakery van, then becoming involved in "a lot of illegal behaviour", followed by four years managing a bar in an infamously rough outback hotel in WA. This was followed by short stints as a truck driver, motorbike courier and recreation officer before becoming a prison warden. She is also a certified abseiling instructor, scuba diving instructor and was a women's football coach.

Occasionally low numbers of footballers means being unable to put a team together. In 1992, Greenway struggled for a team all year and had to forfeit on several occasions, including a final. Low numbers also results in an uneven competition, as there are not enough players in each club to have both a reserve and league team. Thus, teams consist of players with vastly different skill levels and experience. Some players have 11 years experience, while new recruits may never have played a game - like Tina, who was thrown in at the deep end with another rookie when her team was short of players:

TK: We'd had one training session... We had no idea what to do... I was like "Oh my God". I didn't even know where you stood or anything... But I remember... the first time I was on there for only two seconds and this girl slammed me in the ground, I thought "What am I doing?"

The League are extremely supportive of non-skilled players, nurturing them through the difficult early stages of skill development, as Tina discovered:

TK: The first night I went [to training] I was thinking I've got no idea how to kick the ball, even though I know the rules of the game and I watch it every weekend... So the first night was "I don't want everyone to think I'm an idiot" sort of thing, so that was pretty hard but [the coach], he gave us just so much support and I couldn't believe that the girls, even if you kicked it and you knew it was just a horrible kick, they were just "Oh, that's good", so they were really encouraging and nobody sort of rubbishes each other. I think in guy's football, if someone kicked a bad kick, the other guys tell them off sort of thing but I think with us girls there's much encouragement... So they don't feel like an idiot.

There is inconsistency of skill and experience between teams as well as within them. Milton and Ridgley have dominated the competition, typically beating the other teams by 10 to 25 goals and between them have won the majority of premierships. Though some players in opposing teams develop rivalries, female footballers do not generally develop the rivalries male footballers do with their own teammates (Messner 1992).

The WAWFL competition is modelled on male football leagues. There are practical advantages in following an existing model. Yet it is not just the structural and administrative but also emotional rituals and symbols which have been co-opted. For example, the League holds a guernsey presentation for the State team and plays the national anthem before the Grand Final. After each match both teams sing their team song (Fig 2), the general tone of which is summed up in this line from the Raiders' song: "Sorry but you've been outclassed! [Ridgley Raiders] kicked your arse!" The Raiders' post-match celebrations after their Grand Final win, included the drinking, revelry and antics of victorious male football teams (see Figs 3 and 4). Many players have macho nicknames which serve as markers of belonging, much in the same way they do in men's teams.

A highly competitive and brutal approach is sometimes fostered by male coaches (Fig 5), who draw on their own experiences in men's teams, illustrated in this fieldnote of the Raiders' coaches, geeing the team up before a match:

Steve: "Get it pumping. Don't give them an inch, be with them all the time. The wet ball will be on the deck a lot so we need crumbing. **Do some hard shepherds, if need be make them eat dirt! Show them we're out there to play footy**". Then the women were instructed to go for a run and stretch again. Then team and coaches got into a huddle. Steve: "We must win the game. **Hit them hard**. They're pumped and think they can beat us". Luggie yells: "Are we going to let that happen?" Team: "No!" This was repeated three times... Still in a circle the players told to jog on the spot. Steve: "**Flog the shit out of 'em**".

There was certainly a lot of hard physical contact on-field (see Figs 6 and 7) and many calls from spectators for players to flatten their opponents. At the first two WAWFL matches I attended (both played on the same day), I noted the following injuries resulting in players coming off the field: 3 knocks to the head, 1 knee injury, 1 shoulder dislocation. There may have been more as I did not watch all of both matches. During my fieldwork, there were occasional on-field fights and, in my interviews, reports of physical intimidation: "One girl actually was going to head-butt me".

These and many other examples may suggest the WAWFL are uncritically aping both positive and negative aspects of male football. However, contrary to Carle & Nauright in their study of women's rugby, I do not agree this simply "reinforces the gender order and escalates existing male dominance" (1999: 66). By taking a close look at the social practices within the League, the everyday

interactions and meanings these women invest in football, this chapter reveals some important, gendered differences. For instance, a major difference is the large gay sub-community which is a defining feature of the League. Unlike the elite women's ice hockey team in Theberge's (1995) study, sexuality is very much relevant to the dynamics of WAWFL team relations. Because the WAWFL is a non-mainstream organisation largely outside of male control, a highly visible gay sub-community has been able to flourish. Though it is difficult to establish, probably just over half of the WAWFL footballers are gay. Similarly, a little over half of the women interviewed for this study are gay.

There have also always been a large number of heterosexual players. A team was forced to disband when seven players fell pregnant in one season. Another team calculated that collectively they had 30 children. A few gay couples also have children, though this was less common, and a Raiders player had a female partner with a young child from a heterosexual marriage. Her regular presence at training and matches (Figs 2, 8 and 9) was welcomed by all - another difference from male teams.

The Team

Ridgley Park Raiders are the team with whom I trained. In their 11 year existence they have been composed of roughly the same players and located in or around Ridgley Park. After several unsatisfactory relationships with men's clubs, for example being relegated to the farthest corners of training grounds with little light, the Sports Club at their current location is supportive because the Club Secretary is the husband of Ridgley player, Jessica. He allows the Raiders to train free of charge and use the Club for functions. He has also provided them with a wall at the Club on which to hang their pennants and team photographs - a place to call home. The Raiders are very strong because collectively they have more years of experience than any other team in the League. The youngest player is 17, the oldest 42. The team also has a high percentage of gay players, even for a WAWFL team, adding to the closeness of the team. As Belinda points out: "the gay family is really tight. If there is a lot of gay girls in one team, of course, that team is going to be really tight".

The Game

Another crucial factor in the strong bond between teammates is the physical contact. Australian Rules footballers can legally tackle opposition players in

possession of the ball by wrapping their arms around them anywhere above the waist and below the shoulders to bring them to the ground. Therefore, it is essential for players to protect any teammate in possession of the ball from being tackled. Players about to tackle an opponent with the ball can be shepherded away. Shepherding involves running into the opponent using one's hip and shoulder to "bump" them away (not in the back or head-on). If they are not close enough to do this, it is important to yell "You're hot!" to warn a teammate to dispose of the ball before they are tackled.

To win a football match, each player must be prepared to put their body on the line for every other team member. As in a war, when one soldier puts their body on the line for another for the common cause of defeating the enemy, a strong sense of camaraderie develops between those individuals who may have little else in common. As three coaches - Jim, Steve and Karen - explained, this is also true of both men's and women's football:

JC: Within the team itself the friendship is deep, yeah because basically... you've got to rely on your teammates to protect you to bump the opposition or to shepherd the opposition to save you from getting hurt and when you've got confidence in your teammates to do that, yeah, that friendship and bonding goes a long way, goes pretty deep.

SN: If me and you were on a team and if I've got the ball and someone's coming at me that's going to King-hit me, I'm relying on you to shepherd them out of the way, so you've got to look after me, the same as I've got to look after you... You've got to look after each other... If you don't look after each other well that's it, you might as well not play.

KM: That's one thing I pushed as a coach, if I saw a person who wasn't protecting or shepherding another player I would pull them off the ground. That's one thing I instilled: If you don't look after each other, who's going to?

The Coach

Being a WAWFL coach involves giving up two evenings per week for training and most of Sunday when matches are played. This does not include other time-consuming administrative activities. Therefore, coaches are highly valued and difficult to come by and retain.

Steve Nicolaidis (29) is a refrigeration technician and Raiders coach. He and his two older sisters were raised by their Greek parents in a small Australian

country town, heavily populated with ethnic communities. His family follow soccer, which Steve played from a young age. A good player, he had his manhood conferred upon him by elders in his community for using his body in a powerful and fearless manner:

SN: It was quite funny, all the old Greek men who loved their soccer, they used think I was alright because they used to call me "The Bulldozer" and I was 16 years old and I was playing senior soccer against men and... I used to go in hard ... They knew that I wasn't just a kid or I was physically stronger than a 16 year old, I didn't really care what happened, I just went in hard and that was it.

Steve was encouraged to play Australian Rules by high school friends, despite his parents' disapproval, who wanted him to keep playing soccer:

SN: I had to play soccer for my Dad. He didn't like football... Yeah, just had to do it, it's just a thing, not that I had to but I did it for him basically 'cause he liked to go out on a Sunday with all the other Greek or Italian men, have a few beers and a barbecue and just watch soccer and all that.

Stoddart argues that playing Australian Rules or rugby is how some "newer generations of migrants have seen the way to social acceptance" (Stoddart 1986: 178). He points out, "the choice of football codes does not simply concern the games themselves, but also includes a social decision - soccer and communal integration, or an Anglo-Saxon code and some form of wider social recognition" (*Ibid*: 179). Steve overcame this difficulty by playing both.

Throughout high school Steve played school and club soccer and school and club football, training every day after school and playing on weekends. He enjoyed the full schedule and "couldn't get enough of it". By 13 he was playing in an under-16s Australian Rules team, at 16 was runner-up Fairest & Best and third highest goal-kicker in his League and by 18 was playing Seniors. An all-rounder, he did not play a set position and, as in soccer, he "played very hard":

SN: If you are going head-on to someone who's got the ball and you tackle them very hard and put them on the ground and you get a free kick, you can tell from the crowd that you did something good and they cheer and it makes you feel good you actually stopped someone. And I had a few tactics of my own that I used to do on the field. Like, not to go out and thump anybody but I used to tackle very hard... not dirty but I was very hard tackling - and I try to tell the girls as well - that if you're going to tackle them, let them know you mean business so next time that you're going head-to-head with them they'll pull out before they get

hurt again... I thrived on it, loved it, I enjoyed it. It was part of my game. I didn't do anything dirty but once I was around, they knew I was around.

Early in his first year as a senior footballer Steve snapped a cruciate ligament. This was an extremely painful injury physically and emotionally. He had been playing on a regular opponent who has since become a leading goal kicker in the AFL. Steve was devastated to prematurely end a promising football career and to retire from the game he "absolutely loves". I asked if coaching fills the void left by his injury and he said "Oh yeah. That's one of the big reasons."

Because of his injury, Steve experiences the same frustration many females experience of wanting to play but being unable. In the bus on the way back from the Grand Final, we stopped at the front of a player's house and the assistant coach urinated behind the bus. One footballer moaned "Wish I was a boy - we have to go inside to piss", and Steve said with some feeling and more than a dash of irony: "I wish I was a girl because I could play footy".

It was Steve's partner, Kylie, who introduced him to women's football, through her flatmate who plays for the Raiders and Steve thought it would be amusing to watch a match. Like many men, he went with low expectations:

SN: I'd never heard of it, never even knew it existed and was honestly having a bit of a laugh to myself about seeing girls getting tackled or thrown to the ground or anything like that or crying, doing the girlie thing. But once I actually watched the game, yeah it was very good.

In 1996 the Raiders asked Steve to coach them and he agreed to "give it a go". Kylie became team manager, a supportive, low-profile role, involving doing the books, getting jumpers laundered and distributed before a match, collecting fees, organising runners and other administrative tasks. This Coach/Manager arrangement mirrors traditional husband/wife and other male/female relations, such as boss/secretary and pilot/air hostess.

Kylie trained seriously for a season with the Raiders as fitness for netball but did not play as she did not want to be injured. Steve said "she's too scared, too much of a girl", whereas many players are masculinely embodied and do not take it easy on Steve during training, which he enjoys. In many ways the footballers are Steve's mates: "they're good fun, the girls, you can always have a good laugh with them and they party hard". They present a contrast in

womanhood to his partner, Kylie, who wears make-up, has long permed blonde hair, long fingernails, a slim figure and feminine embodiment.

At the end of the 1998 season Steve resigned. He was asked by other WAWFL teams to coach them but he said "No way, I'm a [Raider] mate, that's it, through and through... I'm loyal to one team and that's it". For Steve and many players, an emotional connection with a team is developed both on and off the field, making women's football a meaningful experience.

Early Gender Patterns

As explained in chapter two, of the 36 interviews with WAWFL footballers only the 11 follow-up interviews were life-history interviews. Therefore data on early gender patterns is uneven and lacking in depth. Despite this, four major recurring patterns were visible.

Sporty Childhoods

Of the 36 women interviewed, 26 played at an elite level in one or more sports or athletic pursuits from an early age. For example, Karen was an all-rounder, who played volleyball at State level and, unusually, was Captain of the boys' cricket team at school at 13. Ten of the women interviewed had participated for many years in Little Athletics, which was very popular in the 1970s and 80s when these women were young. Most of those who were tomboys and/or excelled in sport or athletics in their childhood continue to play a lot of and/or excel in, sport as adults, it being a defining factor in their embodiment.

Tomboys

Seventeen players described themselves as tomboys during childhood, playing male-dominated sports, playing with their brothers or boys at school. Some, like Karen, outrightly refused to conform to traditional gender prescriptions:

KM: I remember when I was 13 and a pilot came to the school talking about careers and I'm fighting with this guy saying "Why can't *I* be a pilot? I'm a level-A student. Why can't *I* be a pilot?" because he'd told this kid next to me that he could. "Oh, no because you're female". I said "Well what is the relevance?" And I had that same sort of attitude with sports. If somebody wants to do it, why not? I remember the Principal of the time said "Oh, that's the Captain of our boys cricket team, so don't turn

around and tell her that she can't". I said "Give me a good reason why I can't but don't tell me it's because I'm a female. I can run faster than any of these guys. I'm brainier than any of these guys and I can pummel them if I have to. Don't tell me it's because of my gender!" I've always had male-orientated jobs. I don't like being told I can't do something.

Many of the gay women were tomboys when young but not all the tomboys developed homosexual identities later, like Shell a heterosexual player, who "was always playing cricket and footy with the boys... at lunchtime or whatever, rather than skip-rope or bloody hopscotch". A number also kicked a football whenever they could, though not allowed to play an actual game. Elizabeth, WAWFL President, says most of the women playing in the League wanted to play football as children and "would always try and sneak off and have a kick down the park with the boys and get into the tackling and things like that".

A majority had sought out boisterous pursuits from childhood. Two women had done martial arts for many years from a young age. Several reported being regularly penalised in netball and other non-contact sports for being too physical, like Peta, who says "I was always the one who used to get pulled over for contact all the time. I was always the rough one". Many found the rules of games such as netball too restricting physically because players are confined to small areas of the court and are unable to run with the ball or to tackle opponents. Some, like Brigit, found being a girl too restricting. When I asked her how she felt about not being allowed to play football as a child, she said:

BS: I felt totally ripped off. I was like "You could put me in a pair of shorts, no-one will know anyway" and Dad was like "You're not allowed to, you're a girl!": "I'm a girl! I'm a girl! Wish I was a boy!" that type of thing, God I used to hate it. I used to always swear and curse my Mum and Dad that I wasn't born a boy... I love the sport. I've got a very big passion for it. I've always wanted to play it. After netball training, this is as a kid, I'd run across to the football training and try and train with the Colts and I used to kick the footy with my Dad around the sheds and stuff at home. Used to kick the football every lunchtime with the boys.

Fathers and Football

Thirteen players developed a love of football through their fathers, who had either played (some at an elite level) and/or been avid supporters. For some of these women it is clear that their love of football developed as an attempt to

bond with their fathers, something touched on briefly by Lawrence (1998) in her study of the VWFL. Jay's case study provides a striking example of this.

Jay is the second eldest of four sisters in a family with a traditional division of labour. They have always lived in the country and been very close. Jay had a reputation as the naughtiest, most defiant daughter. When punished with the wooden spoon, her sisters always pushed her forward first. Whenever any of the others cried their Dad would automatically tell Jay off because she was "a bit of a bully and shit-stirrer". Jay thinks she probably behaved this way to get her Dad's attention but this merely served to achieve the opposite. She felt she was far from her Dad's favourite because she was always in trouble and remembers feeling "pretty shit about that". Her Dad worked long hours but when he was around Jay would try to interest him in showing her how to fix his cars or her bike: "I was the son he never had. I was the one taking interest in all his cars and things and playing cricket and footy." However, he did not take much interest in this, which she puts down to her not being a boy.

Jay's first sporting memory is of watching her father play football. Her whole family followed his football career in a country team. She fondly remembers "footy was the weekend and we'd all get packed up and go to different towns" to watch his games. Though Jay has kicked a football from a young age, she has no memory of her Dad teaching her football skills. At kindergarten one of the mothers would bring her son's football and kick with her. She also kicked with boys at school: "And most photos as a kid I've got footy boots and a footy under my arm".

Her mother had an enormous impact on her other sporting achievements and her love of sport. However, it is her father who seems to have had the greatest influence on Jay as a footballer, at a deeply emotional level. Like many fathers, he was keen to have a son to follow in his sporting footsteps and when they were in their forties, Jay's parents had a fourth child hoping for a son. Jay remembers: "Dad was like fairly old but he had to go back and play another season so his last daughter could see him, even though she was only a baby! But he *had* to play." When I asked Jay why she likes football, she said simply "Because he [Dad] does it." Since joining the WAWFL, she has worn the jumper with the number her father wore and allows no-one else to wear it. She was disappointed not to be able to wear his number in the State team, which she says would have "topped off" her State game "because it was Dad's and his last-ditch effort for a boy was a girl, so I thought I've got to - and that

meant so much more to me to play". It seems that Jay's passion for and desire to play football, her "tomboyishness" as a child and perhaps even her homosexuality, are all linked with her father's wish for a son and Jay's desire to please her father and be loved by him: "You see, so he could never have a son to take after him, so I have."

Marginal Involvement in Male Football

Three of the women interviewed were heavily involved in male football, through their father, brother or other male family member. Like Shell, who at 12 became involved in her nephews' team, running water and becoming team manager: "I think I was around it so much that I just got to love it". An ironic contradiction is created when a woman's love of men's football as a spectator or other traditionally marginal, supportive role develops into a desire to play the game, ironically creating a challenge to the hegemonic masculinity celebrated through male football.

Many of the women interviewed fitted into more than one of the above categories. Only one did not fit into any of these categories, Kelly, the founder of the junior competition, who had more or less discovered she enjoyed playing football by accident through her students.

Motivations to Play Football

Given the evident gender-identity danger of women's involvement in what is a major masculinising institution in Australia, it is fundamental to determine what factors motivate these women to play football. The following is a summary of the reasons stated.

Love of the Game

With the advent of WA's first AFL team in 1987, the number of Western Australians following Australian Rules football increased dramatically. This included female supporters, some of whom appreciated the game so much they wanted to play it themselves. Others developed their love of the game during childhood, through their families' support of a men's football team. For example Peta, like her Dad and other male family members, is an avid Australian Rules fan: "I've got, this thing the guys have, this passion that runs

in your blood for football and you just can't get enough of it... I've always had a passion for football". When she first saw an advertisement for players on the board at university, she thought "Yes, yes! Because I've always had this passion, this dream and even on my resume it's got "Aims" or "Goals"... to play women's football." Peta follows the Westar team her family have always supported. Similarly, the teams Shell has supported have always been determined by men. First her father, then her step-father, later her boyfriend and now her husband. Thus team loyalties are fluid, even among avid football supporters. Since football is a male-dominated sport, it is not surprising that the love of football in women is often a by-product of that of a male loved-one.

Chris' family were also ardent supporters of a WAFL club, of which her parents are life members. Chris went to every one of their games as a child and recalls helping make the banners which players run through as they enter the field. Chris' Mum still does 3 or 4 days a week of volunteer work for the club. I asked Chris if supporting their team was a bonding activity for the family:

CF: Yeah, especially - none of us have a really close relationship with Mum - and I would be the closest because we have sport in common, and that's so important for her, footie and cricket, so it's something that we have absolutely in common that we can talk about and we both read heaps of sport books and all that sort of stuff so yeah it would have been.

It is unusual among those interviewed that it is the mother in the Foley family who is the "cold fish" and also that a mother and daughter might bond together through sport, in a way more typical of fathers and sons. The underlying desire to connect emotionally with their parents, makes Chris' and Jays' stories more similar than they appear on the surface.

Contact

Considering Australian Rules is a combat sport, it is little surprise contact was a major attraction for quite a number of the women interviewed. As Elizabeth, League President notes, "that's what attracts a lot of women because they are able to use their body for the first time." It is not just homosexual players who enjoy rough-housing and physically dominating other women. Jessica said: "I like giving the old hip-and-shoulder and rubbing the face into the ground"

Those attracted to football by the contact element sought it out for a variety of reasons. Some, like Kelly, enjoyed the high of being physically aggressive:

KH: It's an adrenalin high to actually attack someone physically... I mean in all sports it's all very controlled and I like that and so is footy, it's controlled when you kick the ball but it's not controlled when you attack someone [laughs]. It's great. Like when I went for that point at the weekend, I didn't actually get a goal, but I had to actually shove someone with my arm, kick the ball up and there's nothing like that, I had to actually push her out of the way to try and kick a goal, it was brilliant!

As Chrisp (1997) found in her study of schoolgirl football, another attraction is quite simply the physical release of frustration not possible to the same extent in non-contact sports, and therefore not available to females generally.

TR: It's just great because you can get your aggression out and tackle the girls hard if you want, to the ground, that's the good part, I like that the best.

UW: It's great if you're in a really, really bad mood. You can go out there and let it all out [laughs].

TB: You can take your frustrations out. Fairly, of course, but if you have any frustrations then you can take it out.

PW: That would be the best part of it, for me. Remember that frustration thing? You can actually get rid of some of that in a legal sort of way in a good hip-and-shoulder.

Many players are attracted by the physical freedom compared to sports devised for females, like netball. They enjoy being able to run with the ball (see Figs 10a and 10b), move freely over the whole oval, develop a greater range of physical skills and use their bodies invasively without being penalised:

GF: I like the fact that it is a physical game. I've always hated about netball things like that, that when they've got the ball, you have to stop and let them have it, 'cause I am a bit slow and I'm usually second to the contest so if they've got the chance to get to the ball first, I've got no chance. Whereas I've always been prepared to put my body in... I like the physical side of it. I get bored if it's not a physical game. I've never really managed to last out games that aren't that physical.

SD: I like the fact that you can do a lot more to get a ball with being able to use contact. If someone's got the ball you can grab them and get the ball off them. Whereas in netball you could never do that and that was very frustrating.

AY: I like a bit of contact because I mean even in netball you still knock people and they buzz you for everything. How can you handle it? Of course you've got to knock someone in a footy game. Yeah, I do like

contact sports. I think it's fun just pushing everyone around, grabbing the ball, it's like a party.

This is what Lawrence (1998) hinted at when she said some players felt playing football was "like being let out of a cage".

A handful of footballers were attracted to combat sports because they are large and feel this is a disadvantage in many sports, like Ursula, who says: "I'm not all that fast when I'm running... in football I can just tackle people and put them on the ground and then I can get the ball, I don't have to chase them!" Danni says "I've got size, I've got strength, I might as well use it, put it to a sport that it's going to work well in." Kelly "always sort of felt like society doesn't want you to be big, but in this case it's good to be big and I feel good being big." However, others, like Elizabeth, hold back because of their potential to injure an opponent: "because of my size I usually take it pretty easy."

For some of the many WAWFL footballers who have always been sporty, football presents the ultimate, or at least a unique, sporting challenge with its many skills and physical challenges:

DM: it's sort of the most skilful game on Earth, I think. Really difficult, so many skills, so much happening. The most team oriented game I've ever played. I've played everything else... it's just something different.

MR: I think it's good because it shows all areas of skills. With netball you only show a little bit of skills inside you but in football it's a [inaudible] area because you can show if you are strong, you're fit, you can understand football in your mind, physically and I think it's an all-round thing for yourself to see what you can achieve.

For some, knowing they are resisting traditional feminine embodiment by playing a combat sport is attractive:

TR: Because girls have always been told "Can't be physical", "Can't do this", "Got to be ladylike". I mean, even still in today's society, you still get it and so I just think it's good to be able to go and let your hair down a bit and do what you want, have a bit of fun.

CF: I can remember at school that we used to play British Bulldog, which was a tackling game, and schools used to ban it because they were worried girls would get hurt and at the end of the day if anyone got hurt it was normally the boys because in Year 6 and 7 the girls were bigger than the boys. And I just remember hating being protected from that,

sort of saying well, if I need protecting I can protect myself or my Mum or my Dad will come in and protect me as a kid. But I got annoyed that somebody else said I had to be protected... and I like all the rough and tumble, I guess, aggression, but controlled aggression. I hate boxing and things like that where aggression is the sole purpose - I don't want that to be the aim, but I think it's really good to get out there and, I don't know maybe, it's a bit of a power thing that you can show that you can do it... I don't know whether that's a subconscious putting-it-up-the-system as well, that every time you do something, like when I started playing cricket, that it's "I'm doing something that you said I can't". I'm playing this game that you said that I couldn't play when I was a kid. That's definitely part of it.

However, only one of the women interviewed took up football as a conscious act of feminist rebellion, Emma who, after starting university, decided to play a sport that "is a little bit different, which females do not normally play". She rang the local women's sport organisation, who told her there was rugby league or union, football and soccer. Emma wanted to play a contact sport but, being petite, was frightened to play rugby. Emma's study of feminist theory at university informed her decision to play football:

ER: thanks to my lecturers... I've sort of had this feminist side to myself. I'm quite keen to explore my own femininity and what it is to me. And to me it's all about being equal. It's not being dominant like some feminists... but to me it's just a matter of being equal and making it socially acceptable for women to participate in any sport without people sort of raising an eyebrow basically. That's probably the main sort of reason why I did want to go into football, it's just to, well not only just play a sport, but more for that aspect to see how people react and just to feel like it's a normal part of everyday life, playing football for a female.

Four other players appreciate playing football as a feminist act but it is not their primary motivation. For instance, Shell is "not a burn-the-bra type person but certainly interested in female issues and the equality of women in everything." She says: "I do love the fact that it is a non-traditional thing for women to do and I like that. I like to fly the flag if I can, which makes it a little bit more enjoyable." However, her primary motivation to play is her love of the game.

A Gay Environment

For many of those interviewed, playing football is not just a sport but also a way of being part of the local gay scene and of being "out" in a safe, non-hostile environment. The League introduces gay or potentially gay women to a community which, for those like Belinda, is an enlightening experience:

BC: I'd never really met people like that before and I went out with them a few times and seen it with my own eyes... I'm actually starting to enjoy their company, or actually I did from the start, but I'm meeting more and more of them now so it's working out really good and I love it.

The League forms the basis of the social network of many of the gay footballers in the study (see below) and is a major motivation for playing football. This finding concurs with Griffin's (1998). For butch gay women, it is also a way of deliberately contradicting and eschewing conventional femininity as part of their homosexual identities (see below).

Sexuality

Football and Homosexuality

Each of the seven gay women with whom I did life-history interviews shared the same pattern of sexual development, shaped by a constant struggle between their embodied sexuality and the social taboo on homosexuality. This usually began in childhood in complete ignorance of homosexuality and confusion about their as yet unnamed "difference". This was followed in adolescence by a repression of their homosexuality and a refusal to confront such issues as why they were not attracted to males, as they were supposed to be. Yet so complete was their heterosexual upbringing, most were convinced they would marry and have children. Some still did not know what homosexuality is, those who did were homophobic. A couple said they later discovered their homosexuality was apparent to others, such as teachers, parents or siblings long before they themselves realised. All were in denial, usually until their mid-20s and most did not have their first homosexual experience until in their early to mid-20s.

While "coming out" to themselves was generally very difficult and traumatic, most reported coming out to their parents by far the most difficult and traumatic process. Most feared rejection from their parents, delaying "coming out" to them and with good reason. As Chris' mother said to her: "Oh my God! I'm devastated! This is every parents' nightmare." Reactions from parents ranged from disowning their daughters and throwing them out of the family home, shock, disappointment or disapproval to slowly becoming accustomed to the idea but never resuming quite the same relationship.

Sexual identities must be managed differently in different situations because in some instances, such as work, being "out" can be detrimental (Griffin 1991a; Griffin and Genasci 1990). For example, Chris and her first partner did not have their work contracts renewed at one school after they were "outed". Chris now works in a more gay-friendly environment and is "out" at work. There are various sexual identity management strategies (Griffin 1991b). Some gays pass as heterosexual, remain sexually ambiguous, are implicitly out, explicitly out or only admit to being gay if asked. For others, their identity management is a complex combination of various strategies. Danni is out to her female PE Teaching colleagues and a few other teachers, but not her male colleagues:

DM: I don't think it is required and it could get me in trouble... I just think they [male PE Teachers] would treat me differently... I'm in there as one of the guys and I get along very well with them and I just think after a few comments that they've made, especially about the other gay person that used to work there, I don't think it's worth it.

Some male PE Teachers jokingly call Danni a "big lesbian footy player." She has also been demonised by some students: "I've seen written down on a desk "Miss [Mills] got balls" and scraped in concrete at the gym entrance "Miss [Mills] Butch Dyke" and I've been told that quite a few kids think I'm gay."

Given their marginalisation, demonisation and struggles to come to terms with their sexuality in a society in which homosexuality is socially taboo, it is little surprise they seek temporary shelter from heterosexism in their daily lives in enclaves of gay women, for example, in the army, sport or gay pubs and clubs. The WAWFL is, among other things, a supportive arena for women to explore a gay identity or sexuality in a non-hostile environment.

For instance, Jay found the elite basketball team she joined when first moving to Perth were too interested in "looking pretty for the boys" and behaving the way "a lot of girls act around boys" for her liking. They condemned a gay woman who was in the team before Jay joined, discussing whether she watched them getting changed. Thus, Jay felt she did not belong. When she joined the WAWFL, Jay found the footballers did not dress up, style their hair and apply make-up after a game. Unlike female bodybuilders, most WAWFL footballers, do not indulge in emphasised femininity to make up for their gender transgressions. Jay no longer felt she had to be somebody she is not. A year and a half after discovering she was gay and moving from the country to

Perth "the world lifted off my shoulders. In footy I found happiness. Before that I had feelings I didn't belong". She has met a lot of gay women, with whom she can relate. Through such relationships she feels she has been able to understand herself a lot better and feel more comfortable about her sexuality: "Had I not, I would probably still be a mess, I was pulling my hair out and, yeah, not a happy girl. I owe a lot to footy".

"Butch" Embodiment

There is no such thing as an essential lesbian body (Creed 1995: 102) and by looking at butch footballers here my purpose is not to perpetuate this popular lesbian stereotype. Not all the gay women in the League are butch but for those who are, excelling in activities culturally defined as masculine or masculinising like football is part of their butch identity/embodiment. A close look at the construction of Ginger's butch embodiment highlights the complex intersection of sexuality, gender and embodiment.

Ginger has an athletic body, her muscles are hard and prominent. She plays football at state level and cricket at national level. She cross-dresses, walks with a masculine swagger, sits and stands like a man. One of the Raiders' coaches said as he looked at Ginger some distance away "She's just like a bloke, only she's a girl!" He did not say it in a derogatory manner, he was obviously confused and amazed. As a physically powerful woman her body has literally become contested terrain. She lives her body as a contradiction. Sometimes she is hassled by her brothers because of her build and for playing male dominated sports. At other times people insist on treating her as physically fragile. Once, when training with a men's cricket team, her coach said "Don't you think you should wear a helmet?" as she went in to bat facing a male bowler. When Ginger asked why he responded "Well, you're a girl". Ginger informed him she had never, ever worn a helmet in her life and did not intend to start. When she asked him "Would you say that to a man my age coming in?" he said "Nup". Similarly, when she told her mother she was going to play football, she said "You're going to get hurt! Football is only for big tough girls".

Despite her powerful body, the fear of getting hurt stopped Ginger from playing football at first but eventually she decided to play and to treat injury and physical pain as mind over matter.

NE: I haven't been hurt once. I think it was all mental more than anything.

NW: You got knocked in the head on Sunday didn't you?

NE: Yeah, I got hit in Melbourne and I got a black eye and it just flared it up again when I got hit again. But that's the first time I've been injured, sort of hurt in any way. I think it was more me thinking that I'm going to get hurt than it actually happening. If you go out there to play the game and don't look to get injured you won't. Just play it hard and tough like everyone else does.

By "playing it tough" Ginger is developing a hard, macho, stoic reputation among her peers. In her very first match she was sent off for stepping on her opponent's head. I once saw Ginger continue playing after being concussed and on another occasion play almost an entire game with a broken finger. Field observations and anecdotal evidence revealed that "playing hurt" (Messner, 1992: 72) is a part of the butch embodiment of a number of women in the WAWFL.

As Ginger gained confidence in her sexuality, through her association with the gay community within the League, she became more outgoing:

NE: I never used to go out or anything because I always did training, always did something to do with cricket... Since I've played footy I've been going out, I've had fun, I've made so many more friends and it's just made me more open, I can just talk, like this time last year I probably wouldn't even be saying this to you... Even when I go out I'm more outgoing, I talk to anyone and get along. I've probably made more friends in this year, this footy season, than I have in my whole life.

She also began to advertise her homosexuality more explicitly through her body. On her trip with the State team, she had her hair cut very short tongue pierced, along with several others. She began dating Zoe, a pretty, femininely embodied footballer. At 16, Zoe is six years younger than Ginger and other players teased Ginger about going out "after Zoe finished her homework" or "picking her up from school for a date". Ginger took the ribbing well, as her reputation was being enhanced in much the same way a 22 year old man's reputation is enhanced by going out with an attractive 16 year old girl.

On the one hand, by developing a butch embodiment, through dress, manner and behaviour, gender disorder is created. As a butch woman Ginger "is stating her rejection of femininity, her inclusion in the category of lesbians,

and her nonavailability to men" (Crowder 1993: 69). However, even though lesbians may not actually want to "be" men or even "play" men (*Ibid*: 68), rejecting what is socially defined as "feminine" in favour of what is socially defined as "masculine", paradoxically reinforces the higher status of "the masculine" over "the feminine". Rather than 'butch' women bringing into question whether physical power, toughness, confidence and so on are purely male traits, the gender disorder is recuperated by the common interpretation that butch gay women are trapped in men's bodies or are male impersonators.

Football, Marriage and Heterosexuality

For three of the nine players who were married or had male partners, football disrupted their existing gender relations.

For instance, Caroline's husband, Bob, begrudged looking after their young son when she played. Caroline met her husband when she was playing for Greenway and he was coaching a men's team there. Caroline has always had an athletic embodiment, competing in athletics at national level. She is not overly feminine in her comportment, answering the door to me in her work clothes and a tool belt around her waist because she and her Mum were working on an extension on the house. Because her father had been a sailor, her Mum had chopped the wood and mowed the lawns and done the handiwork, as well as raise three daughters, all of whom had to pitch in with what needed to be done. However, not all gendered tasks were shared equally between Caroline and Bob.

After they married Bob gave up playing football and was happy for Caroline to continue playing, though he had no interest in attending her games. After having their first child, Bob began resenting the time Caroline spent playing, training and doing committee work - even though Caroline was housebound with Thomas every day while Bob drove their only car to work. After many arguments and "near on divorce", Caroline and Bob came to a compromise in which Caroline continued to play football but reduced her committee work. When I re-interviewed her the following season, Bob had taken up football again: "it's totally different this year because he's involved."

Penny, conversely, had to wait until her husband, Ken, retired from football before she began playing. Her father's family were good rugby league players in NSW, where she grew up. At 16, Penny followed in her Mum's footsteps and

married into a football family. Ken's relatives are a famous Aboriginal football family in WA, several members playing at state or national level.

After following her father's sport all her life, when Penny married into the family of a rival football code, a struggle ensued. The first four years of their marriage "were love and war over football" because she hated "his game" and he did not understand hers. Despite their initial disagreement over which code was better, Penny played the traditional supporting role to her husband's football, looking after their four children while he played, reflecting their traditional female homemaker/male breadwinner division of labour. Penny eventually adopted Australian Rules: "What do they say? If you can't beat them, join them. Damn it, I did that big-time, didn't I?" The intimate connection between football, love and traditional power relations, has continued to be a strong theme throughout Penny's life.

Penny has always excelled in sport, especially tennis when she was young, and has also played male dominated sports like basketball, soccer and cricket. She is derisive of netball, which she calls "a sissy game". Penny learned what she modestly calls "basic" football skills through being around Ken's family, "Basically that would be all we'd do, just kick around the footy, go to footy, sleep footy, eat footy and watch footy." After retiring from football Ken said to Penny "Oh, you can go and play footy now". Penny did not even know women's football existed until Ken showed her an advertisement in their local paper. She has been playing ever since.

Penny's gender ideology in the 11 years since her marriage has changed. This is not surprising considering she was 16 when she married and has since been in the public service, where she is bound to have encountered equal opportunities practices. There has been a slight shift in the power dynamics within her marriage: "So now *he* packs up the kids and a picnic lunch and follows me around off to the changerooms. I look out on the ground and *he's* sitting out there with the kids." However, Ken coaches her team and Penny still does the majority of housework and child-minding. Also, Ken forbids his four daughters to play football, though the eldest is keen to play, has run boundary for her Mum's team and kicks the football whenever she can.

Playing football not only reflects a change in Penny's gender-ideology but has further disrupted it. Football is the first contact sport she has played and through it has found herself becoming more assertive off and on the field.

NW: Do they get those bags out at training and teach you [shepherding]?

PW: Yep, yep. I like doing that at training actually, especially when my husband holds the bag! "Oh dear, I didn't mean to connect with my elbow!" It's good, you know, it's a building up thing, a confidence thing, the more you learn the more confident you become.

NW: Have you felt that? A difference between before you played and after?

PW: Yep, I think I was that little submissive type, housewife type person but now I'm more open and I don't know what but it's definitely helped at work, to be a bit more [pause]

NW: Assertive?

PW: That's the word.

Excelling in football has also disrupted the gender-dynamics between Penny and her husband's family, whom she describes as "the women's place is in the kitchen type people". Playing football initially resulted in negative feedback, particularly from his nephews, all footballers whom Penny describes as "the big-shot type". Watching her play has "put them in their place a little bit". Making the State team and being named All Australian Series player means Penny can now put Ken's nephews in their place by saying "Well, I've gotten on the State side, have you done that? It really cheeses them". She hopes, however, his family are proud of her.

Even Tina and Tony, a young couple who both play football and have no children, experienced a disturbance in their relationship. Tina is petite and feminine, probably a large part of Tony's initial attraction to her. When Tina took up football Tony, "a chauvinistic pig" according to Tina, made it clear he does not think females should play football, making her "more determined to prove that women can play it". He dislikes her telling people she plays, especially his football team:

TK: We had a social night down at his football club and everyone had had a few drinks and they're saying "Oh! How come you're not drinking" and I'm saying "Because I've got football tomorrow" and some of the guys were "Oh, that's really great. Good on ya!" but he wasn't impressed that I was telling them, because they're his teammates and I suppose he doesn't want them thinking his girlfriend plays football.

Tony begrudgingly watched and supported Tina:

TK: It's probably under sufferance that he comes and watches because I watch him every Saturday and he probably feels he has to do the same for me but I'm sure he doesn't enjoy being there. He can't believe, especially the first game [Ginger] kicked this ball about 50 metres and he couldn't believe that we play like guys, sort of thing. So I think that shocked him.

During the Grand Final, I spoke to Tina while she sat on the interchange bench. She was nervous about playing, worried Tony would not turn up, angry he was hung-over the day of her first Grand Final. She frequently looked back at the stand to see if he had arrived. He finally came just before she played but barely acknowledged her, let alone come over to wish her luck. He just sat down in the stand behind us, his hands in his coat pockets, shoulders rounded, face glum and looking down as if even the ground were more interesting than the football match. Later that night, during the celebrations at the club rooms, Tina and Tony appeared to be arguing a lot and at one stage I saw them outside having a very serious talk, perhaps because of the overt gay scene. Thus, far from giving Tina and Tony a common interest, it has created friction and instability. I did not discover why, but Tina was no longer playing when I returned the following season.

There are several probable reasons why only a small number of those interviewed with male partners or husbands experienced a disturbance in their gender power relations due to playing football. To begin with, football appears to attract mostly non-traditional women in the first place, many of whom have egalitarian relationships.

Secondly, I heard anecdotal evidence to suggest that, some of those traditional women it does attract, are forced to drop out of football or lose their motivation to play because of their male partner's reaction to them playing. Kelly told me about a footballer married to a man who took up football when she did so that he did not have to mind the children when she was training or playing. When she gave up playing, he also quit.

Lack of support and encouragement from male partners may also work as a disincentive. Jim, ex-Milton coach, notes that the husbands of the married women in the Milton team generally watch their first three or four matches but when the weather gets cold and wet they go "missing in action. Apart from that, yeah, not really a great deal of support". Steve, the Raiders Coach, noticed a lot of husbands or partners "think it's a bit of a joke and all of that or a waste

of time." The WAWFL President estimates that the majority of husbands will watch a WAWFL game at some stage but most do not attend their wives' matches regularly as "it's a different scenario for the guy to have to stand on the sideline and look after the kids, if they've got kids, and the woman out there playing". My own observations supported these reports.

For those players who already have egalitarian relationships with husbands or male partners, football is not so divisive. It can even be a shared interest, as for Shell and Jim. Because Jim is a self-confessed "football nut", he has been very involved, right from her first game, which he watched from the car because it was raining heavily. At half-time he told Shell "Don't forget, because the ball's really heavy and slippery it will skid to the back of the pack, so be at the back of the pack", which she found helpful and encouraging.

They began kick in the park on weekends and Jim volunteered to be goal umpire for Shell's team - Milton, later coaching them for several years. As player and coach, Shell and Jim had a couple of minor disagreements, mostly over which position Shell should play. Jim reminded Shell he is the coach and Shell says "I respect that, because that's what his role is and yeah, fine, you have to take a back seat." Shell has respect for Jim as a coach: "he's a very good coach, a very good male coaching females. I don't know how often that combination works very well." The equal distribution of power between them became more evident after Shell retired from football and became Milton's coach. Though Jim wanted a break from football, he was happy to be Shell's assistant coach, deliver messages to players and give advice if solicited.

Shell has been very active on the WAWFL Committee but believes without Jim's support she would not have been as involved in the League because she has seen the friction created for other heterosexual couples. For the most part, their common interest has enriched their relationship. There are not many days they do not discuss football "It's just part of our lives". In winter, their social life revolves around football and they share the common goal of seeing Milton do well and the League grow and are both actively involved to that end.

Homo-hetero Relations

The WAWFL provides an opportunity for heterosexual and homosexual women to associate in a largely non-heterosexist environment. This is not to

romanticise the League. Certainly, a number of heterosexual players never mingle socially with gay footballers and Ali had a homophobic teammate confide in her that she did not approve of lesbians. When Ali and another young player went away with the State team, she said "I hope you don't come back lesbians". Sometimes, however, homophobia is a manifestation of denial. Jessica recalls the homophobic reaction of the three friends with whom she joined the WAWFL:

JC: my friends have turned gay... from 10 years ago, they've turned gay. I don't give a toss, they're my mates and we still do exactly the same things. It's their sexual preference, not mine, it's their life but it's funny to see because they were so anti-gay. Wouldn't get changed in front of the girls that were in our team. [Megsy] was a shocker mate, [Megsy] was an absolute "Nup, nah, let's go around a corner and get changed, I'm not getting changed in front of *them*" and... now she's gay!

Jessica is not homophobic but is heterosexist when it comes to her own sexual reputation: "I don't want to be thought of as gay because I'm not, I'm straight and I'm married." Jessica, who has long blonde hair and a slim build, has had her bottom pinched in the changerooms and players tell her they wished she was gay. One player said to her husband "I wouldn't mind rootin' ya missus". Though she finds all this sexual harassment offensive she says "I still love them, because I've grown up with them and we've been together through thick and thin, it just doesn't change the way the sport's played or anything."

I found the League and its members more welcoming than most groups of people I have come across and most players enjoyed playing with both homosexual and heterosexual women. There were exceptions. When Emma joined, she felt the gay community within the League was a little exclusive but finds she is now accepted and says playing in the WAWFL opened her eyes:

ER: I've learned so much from being a part of the gay community and participating, well not actively participating, but just observing the lifestyle and being socially inclined with these people.

Overall, the WAWFL provides common ground for homosexual and heterosexual women and the opportunity for heterosexual women to develop friendships with 'out' gay women.

Gendered Embodiment

Attitudes to Contact

Though the contact in Australian Rules football is attractive to many of the women interviewed, this is not the case for them all. The women interviewed had a range of different attitudes towards using their bodies as weapons.

Several players saw the contact as just one element of the game they neither love nor hate. Some were loath to harm others, like Belinda, who says she has not "taken anyone out" because: "It pains me to see other girls get hurt, especially when it's knee injuries and injuries that take a long time to come back, I feel for them." Martina enjoys the contact but since being injured realises how much it hurts and does not "go in" as hard as before, especially against smaller or novice players.

Because Katrina is small but athletic, she rarely competes physically with her opponents, using her speed to avoid contact where possible. Similarly, Emma does not "go in" as much as most of her bigger counterparts, as her small build makes her feel timid. She is also wary of the back injury sustained when playing basketball as a child: "But I mean, I still enjoy it, to me just playing footy and hitting someone, it's just a normal aspect of the game." Gaya, despite being well-built, shies away from contact and often gets in trouble for "not giving opponents a full one". Peta has a matter-of-fact approach to contact:

PP: I've injured one girl and I felt bad at the time but you play as a team and her teammates weren't talking to her telling her she's hot, someone's going to run into her. So I guess it wasn't her fault but I was just going for the ball and when you're playing you're focussed on getting the ball to your teammates and whoever's in the way is in the way.

Jay, a tall, well-built, powerful woman who bumps hard but plays within the rules, enjoys the contact but worries if she hurts her opponents, particularly her best mate Baker, who has a much smaller build than her. Although Jay does not want to hurt her, she believes on-field "you have to think footy". She recalls during one game tackling or shepherding Baker three times as hard as she would any other opponent then closing her eyes and running away. This reflects very different friendship networks compared to male leagues.

Many of those with a masculine embodiment (see Fig 11), who have always sought out masculine/boisterous pursuits, were comfortable with and explicit about the embodied power they experienced through contact in football:

BS: Chasing someone down a field, wrapping my arms around them and heaving them into the ground, getting up, grabbing the ball and taking off, that's a real challenge I suppose. It's incredible when you do it, you just feel so powerful and it's unreal, I love it.

DM: I've played a lot of netball, volleyball, tennis... but there is nothing better than chasing after a person carrying the ball, grabbing hold of them, dragging them down to the ground and getting a free kick for it!

NW: So you like the contact then. What do you like about it?

DM: I suppose it's the superior strength that you've got over someone, knocking them down.

Players with a masculine embodiment are accustomed to using their bodies as weapons, like Jay:

JB: I don't care if I have grazes and that's [shows me a bruise] still a bruise I have from State, it went all the way under there. I get satisfaction out of seeing bruises because I know I've put my body on the line and it's usually for someone else, it's usually for a teammate to go through and pick up the ball and get a goal.

The majority of women who join the League have never played football before and even those with a masculine embodiment need to learn how to shepherd so as to bump their opponent with their hip and shoulder and tucking their shoulder in to avoid breaking their collar bone. They also have to learn how to dive on a ball and fall after a tackle or high mark, without hurting themselves. For Nicole, who learned judo from a young age this was relatively easy:

NA: I don't get hurt when I get knocked around, I know how to fall and roll out of things and I'm reasonably resilient and that's from 15 years of doing a sport [judo] where you are being constantly knocked around and you do learn to tumble .

For traditionally embodied women, however, the experience of the contact element of football is somewhat less straightforward. They not only have to learn new skills but also have to unlearn their traditional embodiment in order to be able to tackle and shepherd effectively.

Tina, a rookie recruit, is an example. She grew up with no other children to play with except her brother, who refused to play girls' games. Subsequently, she caught tadpoles and played cricket and kick-to-kick. However, Tina is no longer a tomboy and is femininely embodied. She is slim, has long hair and wears make-up and the latest women's fashions. Tina heard women's football "was all big, fat, mean, butch people and ... I never thought that I would be able to do it". She saw a flier which said "You don't need to be butch to play women's football". Later she met Daisy through work, who plays for Ridgley, and asked her "Can I play or am I too puny to sort of play? I haven't got any muscles and I'm unfit". Daisy assured her she could.

Although Tina has always wanted to play football and to tackle someone, she discovered when she had the opportunity it was "just so hard to tackle someone, like you try to grab them but you just can't pull them down... You don't realise how hard it is until you're out there trying to do it yourself." Tina even had difficulty practicing tackles on her teammates "because we're all friends training together no-one wants to hurt each other".

To learn how to use their bodies as weapons, feminine women like Tina, must first "unlearn" the most traditionally feminine aspect of their embodiment, that they are fragile and must not put themselves in physical danger.

TK: I'm scared that if I went in I'm going to get kicked in the head or something like that... At this stage I'm too scared to go in and do that... When we got there for the game on Sunday, the other game was still on, we saw this girl ... knocked on the ground and then they carried her off, and I'm thinking "Oh, what a great way to start!" You just think the worst all the time and I think that probably inhibits you a little bit.

Tina has never been nervous playing other sports but the thought of the physical danger in football makes her physically ill before she plays: "I want to vomit and really, really nervous... I suppose because that physical contact comes into it, something bad may happen."

Tina did eventually manage to successfully tackle an opponent in her third game, a moment she remembers vividly:

TK: I tackled this girl really, really well which was at a crucial time as well. I was in their forward line and I tackled her... at that time I hadn't really tackled anyone before, hadn't really tried it or if I had tried it I wasn't really trying, but I just thought "I've got to get this girl" 'cause it was a

close game and it was a difference of two goals and I just grabbed her so hard and got her down and then they lost the ball and we got it up our end which resulted in a goal... It gives you more confidence while you're playing the game as well 'cause you realise that you've done something good and others have seen it and I think that sort of lifts your energy levels up, you're feeling really good about it.

The contact in football increases a femininely embodied players' self-esteem, as Karen, ex-coach of the Raiders, explains:

KM: I think it's good for women to know they can get up from something like that and walk away and survive. We videotaped a couple of games and then we let them watch it. They saw themselves being picked up and put on the ground but they got up and ran and they were wondering how they did that. So, the belief that they can take the physical - because they're told usually that they can't - and survive it and get on with the play... Well, I mean if you look at girls, they're always treated as fragile little dolls and girls are never encouraged to get out and play British Bulldogs with the boys as kids, so they believe that they can't. So after getting dropped on the ground a couple of times they realise that physiologically they can. It does a lot for their confidence too, knowing that that didn't hurt too bad... I think that's where there's a big difference and you see that, lots of girls haven't got the confidence in their ability to either evade or get up and survive. Their confidence grows from there. That's the biggest thing.

NW: So you've seen women come in and be less confident or not confident at all find that there's...

KM: For sure. I've seen... girls run in the other direction when somebody goes to tackle them and when they're running along with the ball, they actually drop the ball and move out of the way because somebody has confronted them, to watching them half a season later, actually putting the power on and running or fighting their aggressor and back-stepping and doing something about it. So it's actually a role reversed.

Martina provides an example. In her first three games she was frightened to shepherd or tackle an opponent thinking "I can't do that, I'm the one that's going to get hurt ". She then bit the bullet, deciding "Okay I'll get hurt I don't care" and discovered to her surprise "as soon as I'd done my first hip-and-shoulder then there was no turning back. I did it all the time." I asked her how she felt after her first bump and Martina said "It felt good because she went to the ground and I thought I *can* do this, you know, you just need that little boost of confidence."

Learning to play football involves acquiring many different, difficult and highly respected skills and this also engenders a sense of accomplishment and confidence. Jessica, a highly skilled player (see Fig 12), says "I can kick a football and I enjoy kicking a football well. I guess I get a buzz out of doing that and doing it good." Shell gains a boost from mastering difficult skills: "I suppose it is achievement that gives you the confidence to say "Yeah, I can do this" and I'm not necessarily bad at it either." As does Chris:

CF: If I relate it to the army, anything I do new physical in the army, I always feel fabulous because it's another physical achievement that's about pushing your mind and your body and that sort of thing, and I think footy's probably the same. Especially because I'm in my first season so I'm still working out what I can and can't do, and what size player I can reasonably go up against and what size one I know I'm going to come off second best. So I think it is about that. I think it's an achievement.

Gilroy (1997) found little evidence of the confidence gained by the women in her research through participating in physical activities flowing into other areas of their lives. In the current research, however, there was some indication that this is sometimes the case. For example, Tina developed a more confident and assertive embodiment on-field (above) has boosted her self-esteem off-field:

TK: I've become a lot stronger probably, especially from guys. Before, if I heard someone say a chauvinistic comment, I would sort of get jacked-off and fob it off but now I argue the point. So if they say "Oh, girls don't play football" I say "Well, why are girls any different than guys?"... I defend the point so that's definitely made me stand up for myself.

Still, Tina was loath to talk about herself as powerful, even when relating an incident clearly illustrating her using her body powerfully:

TR: No, I don't feel powerful, well, when you get a big girl and you think you'd never be able to tackle her and you tackle her to the ground, you feel pretty good about yourself and then when all the other girls say "Oh, man, she was huge, how did you get her down?" sort of thing, that makes you feel pretty good about yourself.

Emma, also femininely embodied, notes that despite not being as aggressive as her teammates, she feels more powerfully embodied since taking up football:

ER: I play basketball Saturday afternoon, just a social, and it amazes me how afraid some of those girls are when they come up against me because

even when I take a rebound I will play hard and if someone is coming towards me I will hit them [laughs] or put my body on the line... it's just become second nature to me. Taking a dive in basketball for a [inaudible] doesn't bother me at all but a lot of the girls, you can just see it in them, they're timid, they're as shy as anything or don't want to be hurt... But I like playing rough.

NW: So they're shy with their bodies.

ER: Yeah. You can just see it. I suppose that's one of the good things about playing football, it does build up your confidence in that you're prepared to take a hit, that's no problem. Like, I find that if I go into town of a night time, walking the streets, if I'm with just one person or ... even with a group of girls, they're sort of wary of guys, sort of approaching them or looking at them, but it doesn't me. I have the strength, I feel in myself that I have the strength and the confidence, if someone tried to have a go at me, I could look after myself and that's how I feel.

Reactions from Outsiders

To gauge the disturbance in the gender order presented by women's football, I asked each footballer about the feedback they receive from family, friends, work colleagues, partners and strangers. The following is an analysis of the wide variety of responses.

The vast majority of feedback reflects conservative concerns over the potential disruption to normally tacit understandings of gender that such a cultural anomaly presents, particularly for those men and women whose own gendered relations, lifestyles, worldviews and embodiment are rooted in the current gender order. For example, one of the first reactions is disbelief, surprise or shock to hear women play football. Some assume they mean a non-contact football code such as soccer or touch. This disbelief is partly to do with the lack of electronic media coverage of the sport but also the difficulty many people have in reconciling the traditional image of women as petite, frail and submissive with the macho image of Australian Rules football which involves physical contact, skill, speed and power. This is evident in responses like "I better be careful then or you'll beat me up!" and the questions people often ask, like: Are the rules the same? Do women tackle? Is it full contact? Don't you get hurt? How do women play that rough sport? Does it get rough? Is it as rough as men's footy? Are there any fights? Do women wear "boob pads?" Don't your breasts get in the way? Do women wear football boots? Do women wear shorts or skirts? Do they have real umpires?

This fascination with, and inability to comprehend, women's bodies being both on the giving and receiving end of physical contact also elicits curiosity about the size of the bodies of women footballers. An elite sportswoman from a non-contact sport said to me "Oh, I bet they are all big girls". Despite the large variety in the size of players, when some of Shell's work colleagues watched a WAWFL game, they commented only on the size of the larger footballers. Large women are commonly considered unfeminine and heterosexually unattractive and, if they play football, often assumed to be lesbian. A woman working where one of the WAWFL teams is based, said to Chris, who is gay and slightly built, "Gee there's some big girls in that team. Well, I don't suppose it makes a difference but I reckon they're all lesbians". The normally tacit cultural expectation that heterosexual women are smaller and less powerful than heterosexual men highlights the important role of gendered embodiment in male domination.

Because women who play male-dominated sports are often assumed to be gay some players, both homosexual and heterosexual, said they were hesitant to tell their friends and colleagues they play football. Danni's friend who does not know she is gay, jokingly calls her "footy leso" and she calls him "poofter cop" in a rather hollow retaliation.

When Tina's male colleagues at the bank at which she worked discovered she was playing football, they said things like "Oh, you're an idiot. You're going to get broken bones and you're skinny and how are you going to like it if they're fighting?" and "You're joking! Women don't play football. Why don't you play netball?" They also made homophobic remarks such as "The girls are going to try and kiss ya", "That's not a game for girls, it's a game for gay girls" and "You're going to turn lesbian". Tina did play but many other women may be deterred by the butch image of women's football and/or the homophobic and heterosexist remarks of others. Certainly, this deters many schoolgirl footballers from playing in the WAWFL.

Negative feedback from men varied from insisting "Girls can't play footy", making snide remarks like "Oh yeah, it's sort of kiddie football" or "What would women know about playing football?" to reprimanding the players for their gender transgressions. A man in a pub overheard Belinda talking to her friends, tapped her shoulder and said "Do you play footy?" when she said she did he said "Huh! What a joke!" and stormed off. Some men laugh at the thought of women playing football or treat it as a joke. When Emma was

editing a film of a WAWFL game at university, a male student came into the editing room and quipped "Oh, women play football! Do you play in skirts?" Ironically, he was a ballet dancer. Some men sexualise female footballers. When Tania approached professional male players to coach her team, some said "Oh yeah, I wouldn't mind coaching a bunch of women" or "Oh it must be good tackling women!" to which Tania retorted "Oh yeah, it's wonderful, just as much as you enjoy tackling those blokes, eh!". Most people who laugh at or denigrate female football/ers, have never seen a game.

Not only men defend the gender order. Karen finds that much of the negative feedback she has had from women implies there has been a personal affront to their own femininity. This is particularly true of women who have made large investments in the current gender order. For example, Peta has a girlfriend she met playing netball, whom she describes as "a typical girlie girl. She's at the beautician, hairdresser all the time. Got to have the nicest clothes" and hates the idea of women playing football: "Because her boyfriend plays for [a Westar Rules team]... she's got this big thing, women don't play football because she reckons it's just not right... She's just totally against it." She probably gains vicarious prestige simply by going out with (sleeping with) this man, who is a well-known/eligible footballer in Perth.

When Mel hobbles around Monday mornings at the library where she works or has time off work through injury, she gets the impression her colleagues feel she should not play football. She did not get the same reaction when she had time off for hockey injuries and believes if she were a man hobbling around at work or having time off with a football injury, they would not think anything of it. Similarly, Geraldine found that when people ask her how she hurt her knee and she tells them it was through playing football, many say "Oh well, serves you right then, you shouldn't be playing that sport". Sally, a Lending Manager, found some of her male colleagues are really supportive and interested but the men who play themselves never talk to her about football. She takes this as a sign of disapproval. Some of the women at her work also expressed their disapproval through silence.

A number of players reported friends, family and colleagues reacting positively and being generally supportive of and interested in women's football. For instance, Penny's public service colleagues have followed her football career with interest, supported her generously when fund-raising for her club and sent her messages of congratulations when she was voted All-Australian

player. Shell, also a public servant, has a workmate who follows the WAWFL results in the paper every week and on Monday mornings says "Another good win". He is a man in his sixties whom Shell has worked with for 13 years and he and his wife have been to a couple of her games.

Gaya's male and female colleagues in the employment agency in which she works often kick a football with her in the road outside their office at lunchtime wearing suits or skirts. Some of Peta's university friends think it is great that she is playing football because it is different and "at uni, if you're doing something different, everyone kind of likes you... So my difference is football". Another of her friends said "Oh that's fantastic! Girls taking over!" Marnie received a back-handed compliment from two men who told her "You've got balls", promoting her to honorary male status.

Several players remarked that playing football is a great conversation starter with men and gives them a common interest. Several heterosexual players, reported enjoying "talking footy" with their partners. When Katrina takes a football to university to kick with her friend, male students say "Oooh! Where did you learn to kick a footy?" Others would come up to give them unsolicited advice, such as "Oh, you're not doing it right. You have to do it this way."

The footballers had many stories to tell of male friends, colleagues or family members attending a game "for a laugh" or to support them and having generally low expectations, believing they would not be very skilled, nor tackle hard and that they would run away from physical danger. Indeed, before they have seen women playing football, most men insist "Girls can't play footy". However, once they see the women are serious and that they play the same rules using the same skills as the men, particularly the tackling, their opinions quickly change. Typical feedback was: "Well, shit you're not just having a kick in the park!", "Wow, she's good, wouldn't mind having her in my team", "Jees, I didn't think it would be that good!" and "Wow! It is good!" Some not only change their opinions but stay around to run water or keep going back just to watch. Terri's brother said "it's a boys sport". Terri said "Alright if that's what you think, come down and have a look". He did so and ended up coaching her team for two years. Steve's workmates all laughed when they first found out he was coaching a women's football team but when one actually watched a match he was impressed, especially that some players "went in hard" and those who have been playing for 10 years have the same skills as most men, like being able to kick with both feet.

Caroline recalled a match played by two women's teams during the half-time of a men's WAFL match in 1989:

CS: We ran out there and you could hear everyone just laughing and sniggering and pointing and that, especially the guys, they would whistle and make fun of us. Half-way through they finally realised we can kick the footy and... they ended up starting to cheer... and they gave us a huge applause when we came off. So their attitudes really changed in that fifteen minutes we were out there.

Karen relates a similar response from a crowd at an exhibition match played in a country town, who jibed the women until they saw they could play.

I only heard one instance of a woman playing in a men's team. After meeting a woman who played football when she was on holiday she says she "got a real passion just thinking about it". Brigit returned to the city where she lived and asked the local men's A & B grade teams if she could train with them. At first they did not think she was serious but when she said she was, they agreed and she trained a full season with them.

BS: and they loved it, it was really good. And I would have to train 120% every training just to keep up with them, and it was great. That's where I learned a lot skill because I had to be good just to be out there, just to keep up with them. And they actually wanted to put me on the field one day but I wasn't registered or whatever it was.

I asked Brigit how she was accepted by the male players. She said that because she was "just one of the boys at school", trained with the boys' football team and now works as a brickie's labourer, she knows how men think:

BS: I know I've got to prove myself to them and they just accept me. I don't get jeered at and I don't get smart remarks, they respect me. At the same time I accept all of them and treat them good, so they just treat me back the way I treat them I suppose. So, I've never had trouble.

This was very different to the feedback from the schoolboys when talented schoolgirls' played on their team.

A number of parents worried their daughters would get injured, like Tania and Katrina's mother, who helps Tania coach her team and watches their games but would prefer them not to play "because she thinks women's bodies

are different from men's and they're not supposed to take that kind of treatment". Peta's Mum did not like her playing because she was afraid she would get hurt but when it came to Peta's brother, she forbid him to play "because he's really rough. She's scared he might kill someone". Other parents wondered aloud if football was really an appropriate sport for women. Kym's father, who used to play WAFL football, was "quite funny" when she told him at first and was not sure what to make of it. Tina's Mum laughed, "she can't imagine it. She thinks it's just girlie, girlie, like we wouldn't tackle and stuff. She hasn't seen a game yet!"

On the other hand, Sue's Dad "loves it. Especially when I clean up a few people". Some family members were negative or worried at first but through their daughters, soon learned to appreciate women's football. Like Peta's father who was at first hesitant to support her playing but is now enthusiastic: "He's a guy, he's got that passion through him as well - as soon as you tell him 'Oh, I kicked a good goal, Dad!', he goes 'Oh did you? How did you do it?' When Brigit's father heard Brigit had made the Australian team, he was so proud he cried and said "I can't believe it, my daughter!" Kitty's family were delighted she plays because they love football and her father is especially happy and very supportive, taking down her "stats." when watching her matches. Shell's family are big football supporters too but only watch her play when her games do not clash with Westar Rules or AFL matches. Some younger brothers help out as goal umpires or water boys and therefore grow up knowing that women can and do play football.

5 SCHOOLGIRL FOOTBALL

As stated in the literature review, my purpose in studying schoolgirls' football is to explore its potential to teach young women non-traditional modes of embodiment, as a form of resistance to male domination. As discussed in detail in the methodology chapter, the findings are based on life history interviews with 19 of the 22 players on the Waratah High girls' team and participant observation over one school term in 1999.

Before discussing the data, the chapter begins with a description of the coach and team. The SSSC competition in which the team participate has been described in the background chapter. The data analysis begins with a description of the gender patterns of the young women's families. This is followed by a consideration of why these young women play football, given the gender identity danger involved. The main focus of this chapter is on the young women's gendered embodiment, starting with a look at all the major patterns. This is followed by a closer examination of the contradictions, shifts and transformations occurring in these young women's embodiments at such a turbulent time in their lives - adolescence. This highly experimental phase is strongly related to another aspect of their embodiment and being, their sexuality, which is the focus of the following section. Since playing football is such gender anomalous behaviour, the various reactions from both their male and female peers are then reviewed for two reasons. One is to determine what social price, if any, these young women pay for their gender transgressions. The other, to gauge if this challenge to hegemonic masculinity is successful or, if not, how it has been recuperated. The chapter concludes with an inquiry into whether the young women copy or learn the same values as their male peers or whether they bring to the game their own values and meanings.

Setting the Scene

The Coach

Janice Stephens (33), a PE Teacher, is the driving force behind girls' football at Waratah High. Though not a feminist in theory (she prefers to think of herself as an advocate of equal opportunity), Janice has always been a feminist pioneer in practice. At 17 she was WA's first female football umpire. Janice had trained as a runner five days a week throughout high school. Her Dad, a

goal umpire, suggested she earn money while at university by umpiring, knowing she could run as well as any male umpire. At the time, the Saturday West Australian Football Association (SWAFA), an amateur club, wanted a female umpire to curb on-field swearing. Thus, her entrance into this male bastion was not a result of the governing bodies consciously challenging traditional gender relations but from viewing women in one of their most traditional roles as "God's police" (Summers 1975). Ironically, while her presence did curb swearing on-field, Janice has been abused by the crowd in the process, who say things like: Bitch with balls!; Get out of footy; Why are you out there?; You're no good; Get back to the kitchen; You wouldn't know what you're talking about umpire; Go back to netball; and That's a weak decision (minus the swear words which Janice edited out). Not only men react against the threat which Janice represents to the current gender order. Most of the verbal intimidation comes from female spectators.

Some male umpires also have, as Janice puts it, "very set, fixed ideas about what females should be doing and where they should be doing it and footy umpiring wasn't one of them". Not surprising, since umpiring involves power over males, decision-making and in-depth knowledge of a male-dominated sport. The attitude of her male colleagues has improved with time but she stressed:

JS: You still cop the flack. Don't think you don't. I found it very hard on Sundays this year with some of the flack I've got from some of the males scrutinising my private life and all that sort of stuff and there's been times where I've wanted to throw it in but, you sit down and think afterwards "No, I'm not going to let them win. I'm going to beat them!"

Scrutinising her private life probably refers to her sexuality. Janice is heterosexual but even her university peers were suspicious of her because of her unorthodox job:

JS: The girls were all fluffy and the blokes were [deep voice] into footy and cricket, blokey and me umpiring Aussie Rules, I was a bit weird, I was one to leave alone, they didn't come anywhere near me.

By 20, Janice was a boundary umpire for the WAFL, the state's top male league. But after 10 years with them, Janice was keen to progress to field umpiring. She had been tolerated on the margins - literally - as a boundary umpire, but not as a field umpire. The Sunday Football League (SFL), an amateur, less

prestigious male league, gave her the opportunity to do field umpiring, even umpiring a Grand Final. Field umpires are in the spotlight more, making more crucial decisions and Janice finds she has to constantly prove herself. Some players have tried to physically intimidate her by standing "right in your face going 'What do you reckon!' and bellowing at you and standing over you, that's really hard". One 6'3" player attempted to punch her and got 18 months suspension - "that was pretty scary". Most of the resistance, however, is in the form of players undermining her authority by asking male umpires "Why did she make that decision? Is that right?" Her colleagues have backed her up, saying "She's made the correct decision" which "shuts them up immediately".

Janice is no longer the only female Australian Rules umpire in WA but she is the only female field umpire in WA. She recruits female students from Waratah High to umpire for the SFL, as she finds girls more reliable and committed than boys. They earn the same amount umpiring two games a weekend as working at a fast food outlet. They also take turns in umpiring the boys' games. Being a specialised athletics teacher it is a good way for Janice to keep her students fit.

Janice sees herself as a role model and pioneer for girls considering umpiring as a viable sport:

JS: I've gone through and pioneered that, so they've seen me running League and doing finals and things like that, so it's broken down the barriers for these young girls coming through... It's so much easier for them and they're accepted so well by the majority of the umpires... There's still a few stick-in-the-muds that don't want them there but they're there, they've made friends, they've got accolades for what they've achieved.

Janice takes an equal opportunities activist approach to her PE Teaching. She believes "girls can do anything they want to do. Anything so long as they are given the support and the opportunity to do it" and she goes out of her way to provide that for her students:

JS: I hope to even it up for the girls... Males get so much in our community, jobs, wages, all of those sorts of things, accolades, I think I try and go the other way to give the girls a bit more.

NW: Positive discrimination.

JS: Just making sure they're recognised, making sure they're in the write-

ups - these girls have done a bloody good job and lets acknowledge that. How many of the blokes were named in the combined side, almost a State side? Nil! And yet we had nine. Standing up, getting in staff faces and telling them, come down to the game, the girls are doing really well. And giving the little reports and doing the positive write-ups for the [school newspaper]. Getting the write-ups in the local paper when they've won, putting on the lunch for them, making them feel special. Yeah, it is positive discrimination and if that's wrong, then I'm guilty.

In 1995 Janice was approached by a PE teacher from a nearby private school to form a girls' football team to play a short season with three other local schools. Janice found it easy to organise a team as the interest was high. The team did very well that season. The following year the WAWFL's Junior Coordinator rang Janice inviting the teams from the regional competition to join the SSSC, which they did. Being a Vice President of School Sport, part of the WA Education Department, they also asked Janice to be the School Sport convenor of girls' football, to which she agreed.

The Principal's visible support of the girls' team has been essential because the Head of the PE Department, Brian Cox, neither approves of nor supports girls' football, refusing to release funds for girls' football expenses, like trophies and petrol for away games. Funds are either raised from the players or the coaches use their own money. However, not all the male PE Teachers have been resistant to schoolgirl football. Tim Broad, the boys' coach, is Janice's assistant coach for the girls' team and she is his assistant coach for the boys' team.

As with the formation of the SSSC, the formation of the Waratah High girls' football team was primarily due to the efforts of one or two individuals. Under Jan's guidance and with Tim's assistance, the girls' team went from strength to strength. In 1996, their first year in the SSSC, they narrowly missed the finals. In their second year they made the finals and in the third year were runners-up in the Grand Final. In 1999, their fourth year and the year of this study, they won the Grand Final.

At the school assembly which followed their Grand Final win, Janice ensured the team was presented as the grand finale after all the boys' sports teams (none victorious that year). She gave a positive speech about the team and each member, calling them up to the stage individually. In engineering the presentation in this way, Janice says she had several points to make. Firstly, to stress to her Head of Department the success of her team, despite his lack of

support. Secondly, to show the school that girls can play football. Thirdly, to demonstrate female footballers are not necessarily big, butch girls and, in doing so, perhaps encouraging more (heterosexual) recruits for future teams.

The Team

In the year of this study, the girls' team was made up of 22 players. Only students from Years 10 to 12 (age 14 to 17) play in the girls' team. Lower school male students (Years 7 to 9) have a football competition but female students are considered too fragile to play at that age. As with the boys' team, the girls' team ranged greatly in size (Fig 14). Most of the young women come from working class families (Table 2), unlike the boys who came from a mixture of working and middle class families, suggesting that a boisterous embodiment is even less compatible with middle class femininity than it is with working class femininity. The majority of players are of White, Anglo Saxon origin. Some players are Aboriginal, Maori or Asian, a marginal status within the school social hierarchy, despite the good race relations and the school's high Aboriginal population.

Friendship cliques occur within the team like, the Aboriginal, Maori and Asian players who call one another "Bro" and "girlfriend". "Bro" is a "cool" American negroism, referring to an imagined black brotherhood. I asked Vanessa why they do not use the term "sister". She said "because it's the tomboy kind of thing". At the Grand Final there seemed to be a stronger bond between the Aboriginal players from opposition teams than between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal players within the one team. Sometimes too, the bond between Aboriginal players seemed to transcend the gender divide. Once an Aboriginal player from the boys' team passed an Aboriginal player from the girls' team on their way to a match and he said to her "Use this [lifting up his elbow] when you play".

The young women also dwelled in different peer groups outside the team - such as the druggy group, the conservative sporty group, the shy, studious group and the racial minority group. None could be considered fully paid-up members of the "cool" group - the highest status group in the school.

Six team members have played football and two have played rugby but most have not played a combat sport before. They have been playing, on average, less than three years (Table 2), an average of five years less than the boys' team

(Table 3). The skill levels range from basic beginners to highly skilled players. Most can kick and handball effectively but many are unable to bounce the oval-shaped ball. Those young women who have played since primary school are notably more skilled, like Gemma, who can kick a ball 40 or 50 metres on the run (Fig 15). She plays in the ruck and, unlike most of the footballers in the women's league, few of whom jump very high (Fig 13), Gemma does extremely well because of her height and athleticism (Fig 16).

Most of the young women lack an understanding of game tactics and the distinct roles of each position, tending to follow the ball around in a huge pack. When Janice tells a player to "go to the flank" they look at her blankly or say "Just tell me where I have to stand". Jade is an exception. Rather than simply following the ball she waits outside the pack, reading the ball well, anticipating play and weaving confidently to evade opponents.

Despite their many differences, these young women all share one thing in common. None have chosen female dominated careers like their mothers, the majority of whom were housewives, clerks, primary teachers, waitresses or secretaries (Table 2). Fourteen of the 19 young women plan to go to university - a much higher rate than the school's catchment area, where the proportion ranges from 0-24%. This is much higher even than the richer western suburbs of Perth, where over 40% of the labour force are university graduates (ABS 1997: 18). Five plan to spend all or part of their career in the male-dominated armed forces or police force. One plans to be an actress, neither a male nor female dominated career, one plans to attend technical college and another is unsure as yet. Of course, not all of the young women will end up in the careers they have chosen. Nevertheless, such a strong trend suggests they are both a product of a different, post-feminist generation to their mothers and they share with their team mates a sense of themselves as capable of going beyond those limits traditionally set for them.

Gender Patterns

The team members either come from nuclear families with traditional gender regimes or families whose traditional gender regimes have been disrupted by divorce. Only Gemma comes from an intact nuclear family with a non-gendered division of labour.

Traditional Gender Regimes

Eight of the 19 interviewed - Miranda, Amy, Lisa, Jade, Natasha, Becky, Caroline and Jasmine - have families characterised by patriarchal gender regimes. They are from intact nuclear families with a strictly gendered division of labour. Their mothers have chosen to forgo existing or potential careers in favour of their husband's in order to raise their children.

For example, Lisa lives with her parents and two older sisters. Her Dad is a Distribution Manager for a large retailer, for whom he has worked 25 years. Her Mum did clerical work before having children. Her parents are stereotypically gendered. Her Mum is nurturing, kind, considerate and worries a lot about others. She recently had emotional problems and sought counselling, after which she has tried to get her husband to open up emotionally. Lisa's father invests a lot of time and energy into his work and is emotionally unavailable to his family: "His job's a bit heavy on so at night, he doesn't really say much actually. He has a routine where he just goes and showers, I don't know he's just Dad!" He obstinately clings to his traditional role, despite his daughters' campaign to do the gardening in order to make him help around the house: "Dad doesn't want to change. You have to push him to change". Lisa is confused about her feelings towards him as she loves him and gets on well with him but is unable to make sense of his behaviour:

LM: I think he's a bit of an arsehole sometimes because he comes in and he says "I want this" and he expects you to do it, so we just all turn around and tell him to get lost because there's more of us than there is of him!

Such a lack of respect for her father when he behaves in this way further undermines his claim to the role of *paterfamilias* and an inalienable right to respect and power.

Of the eight from traditionally gendered families, five - Jasmine, Natasha, Becky, Lisa, Jade - have rebelled against their parents' values, in particular traditional forms of feminine embodiment. For example, against her parents' wishes, Natasha smokes, is sexually active with her boyfriend and has a pierced tongue. Similarly Becky, the middle child of eight in a very traditional and conservative Australian working class, Catholic family, rebels against many of her parents' values. She refuses to dress femininely or behave in a "ladylike" manner, is sexually active and hangs around with a group who

experiment with drugs and alcohol. In theory, Jasmine is ideologically supportive of her strict Muslim upbringing but in practice has defied many of her parent's rules. Lisa and Jade, on the other hand, are rebelling less against their parents' rules and more against societal norms.

Disrupted Traditional Gender Regimes

Half (9) of those interviewed have divorced parents. Of these, two remain with their fathers (Elli, Georgia), one with her grandparents (Leah) and six with their mothers (Simone, Vanessa, Tanya, Dana, Janela, Jacinta). All six who live with their mothers have had negative experiences with domineering fathers/step-fathers, significantly influencing their gender ideologies.

For instance, Jacinta and Janela's parents divorced when they were 6 or 7 and their Mum later married Alex, a very frightening, domineering man. A prison warden, he enforced very strict rules. If they were not in bed at the allotted time he would yell at them. If they misbehaved he would strap them with his belt. An extremely controlling person, Alex kept their Mum in an invisible cell. They rarely went out, he allowed her few visitors or friends and built a house designed so their part was separate from the rest. Jacinta and Janela are not sure if Alex was violent with their Mum because when they fought they would go into their part of the house. They divorced after six unhappy years. More recently, their Mum has found a partner with a much more gentle character. She is a lot happier, has started making friends again and goes out a lot more. Their bad experience with Alex has made Janela and Jacinta determined not to date or marry anyone like him.

Dana and Vanessa had similar experiences, though with their own fathers. Both their mothers divorced their fathers after years of subservience. For example, Dana's Dad was the boss of the house and her Mum looked after their three children, cleaned and cooked. He belittled and degraded her constantly and when she discovered he had been having an affair she threw him out, after which she blossomed and discovered her own inner strengths. She went to technical college where she did several self-esteem courses, got a Diploma of Accounting and then went out to work as a bank teller to support the children.

Dana has learned from her Mum's mistake: her boyfriend, Paul, is the opposite to her domineering and oppressive father. She says it was good to meet Paul

and learn that not all men are like her Dad. Likewise, Vanessa, whose situation is very similar to Dana's, says "I kind of like don't want what my Dad did to my Mum to happen to me, so I'll like be really paranoid but I'll have to know the guy for ages before I marry someone". For Vanessa and Dana their parents' divorces have not deterred them from marrying but have highlighted and nullified the previously unquestioned power of their fathers.

Dana, Vanessa, Jacinta and Janela have all seen their mothers find strength through their new-found independence, inspiring a lot of respect from their children. Dana says of her Mum: "She did that all on her own because we were so young... and she did it well. I think it made her a really good person." However, when asked to describe her father, Dana said "He's a wanker... he cannot have a relationship with anyone unless he is dominating and competing with them." Conversely, Leah's Mum seemed to stagnate, rather than flourish after her divorce and Leah has little respect for her, choosing to live with her grandparents instead of her Mum.

Georgia and Elli, on the other hand, were raised by their fathers after their parents divorced. They have experienced their fathers, not as domineering and unreliable but as nurturing and dependable. For instance, Elli's parents split up when she was five because her mother was addicted to drugs and alcohol - "when she was pregnant with us, she was sort of out partying and drugs and stuff". When she was eight, Elli and her younger sister moved with their Dad to WA, where he worked for a university. He is a lecturer in Aboriginal Studies. Elli would like to be near her Mum, who works for a telecommunications company in Melbourne, "like a mother and daughter should". When she visits her she is very affectionate but Elli says "You can't trust her. She's really bad on drugs and alcohol". For example, their Mum booked tickets for them to visit her in Melbourne but they arrived at the airport to find the tickets had not been paid. Elli feels as though her step-Mum has replaced her Mum but her Dad also plays a big role in parenting his children. He is very affectionate and open and his daughters can go to him whenever they have a problem. His only interests besides his work are sport and his daughters. He is very supportive of everything they do, especially school and sport.

Eight of the nine young women from divorced parents all have significant others in their lives who have defied tradition. That is, mothers who have rejected male domination or fathers who have been primary care givers. This

may have created for these young women enough ideological ambiguity to prompt experimentation with their own gendered identities.

Why Do Girls Play Football?

Not all young women who rebel against their parents' conservatism, or who come from a single-parent family, play football, nor are all the young women who play football from single-parent families or rebellious. Given the gender-identity danger involved, there must be other factors which influence these young women to play a male-dominated game. Indeed, around half those interviewed were heavily influenced by *one or more* of the following factors.

Playing with Brothers

Caroline, Natasha, Jasmine, Vanessa, Tanya and Georgia have grown up with unconventional ideas about what they can do with their bodies because they were close to their brothers as children (though few remain close as adolescents). Their brothers would not participate in "feminine" activities so they participated in "masculine" activities. This resulted in them developing a more boisterous and skilful embodiment than many of their peers. For instance, when Jasmine's Dad put up a basketball ring at their house, her older brother would bribe her with money or other things to play with him. Thus, she has been playing basketball since she was six and was recently selected to try out for a Perth combined team. Jasmine has always wanted to play football and when given the opportunity was good at it "cos you know I'm all, not very feminine, so like me and my brother, I don't know it just happened, it's in my genes I think".

Sporty History

All 19 played sports other than football. More than half (11) could be described as skilful all-rounders who have played many sports other than netball at a better than average level, and who pick up new skills easily. Several have even participated in a sport or physical activity at an elite level, like Gemma, a national javelin qualifier and all-round sportsperson.

For those who have always played any sports available to them, the girls' football team provides just another physical challenge or sporting adventure.

As for Leah, who has played tennis, basketball, beach volleyball, netball, badminton, cricket, tae kwon do and touch rugby. At school she does athletics training but does not compete, preferring team sports. Leah took up football when Janice, for whom she has a high regard, asked her to play, rather than it being something she had always wanted to do. Nevertheless, Leah is a very good footballer, is Vice-Captain and has taken up football umpiring, also due to encouragement from Janice.

Playing Football with Family/Community

Jade, Gemma, Becky, Elli and Marnie all played football (or in Marnie's case rugby) with their families or communities. Gemma is close with her whole family but is "really close to the male side of the family" (all of whom play football), because she says "I'm a boyish kind of person". She kicked with her Dad and brother a lot when she was younger but living in a remote Aboriginal community gave Gemma her first taste of playing a game: "cos like basically girls were allowed to do different kinds of sport... like say if boys was playing football, girls was allowed to play too". Elli, also Aboriginal, has played football with her family all her life. Thus playing for the school team is no great departure from her sporting history either. Marnie played rugby at school in New Zealand and plays Australian Rules only because rugby is not available. Her family have made up a rugby team and play regularly against other New Zealanders. In Perth, playing and following rugby is for them an expression of family loyalties and of nationality.

Inspired by Male Football

Gemma, Becky, Elli, Jade and Caroline have all been inspired to play by their involvement with male football. For instance, all of Becky's brothers played football from a young age in local teams. The whole family supported and were involved in their teams: Her father as coach; her mother as Team Manager; Becky as boundary umpire, water "boy" or runner; and the others as spectators. Having "grown up around the game" she learned to love it and always longed to play the game. She has kicked with her Dad and brothers for as long as she can remember, which is why her skill levels are high.

Elli is inspired to play by watching male football on television and has several cousins and uncles who play in the AFL. She plays because "it is a popular game, it's a good game and everyone [male] plays it". Similarly, one of

Gemma's cousins plays in a Westar Rules team and her whole extended family watch him play on Saturdays and another cousin play on Sundays. Watching football with her family has been a big motivation for Gemma to play herself:

GC: I've really been interested in it for all those years and for me to play it's like really big for me... It makes me feel good actually because just sitting there watching a footy game, like you're into the spirit and everything but when you're actually playing it you feel like you are part of the team, you are helping everyone else, like kick goals and stuff.

Rebelling Against Traditional Femininity

All those interviewed think it great to be able to play football and when asked why, have an equal opportunities approach to the issue. Most argue females should be allowed to do whatever males are allowed and that it is unfair or sexist not to let girls play because sports should be for everyone. A couple added the proviso as long as girls do not play against boys because of differences in size and ability. Tanya assured me female football would never be as popular as male football. A number stressed it was good to have a greater variety of sports from which to choose, besides the standard female non-contact sports. Like Leah: "You just can't be boring all your life, do one sport all your life... I'm not saying netball's boring but... I think girls have to try something different".

However, a minority - Jade, Vanessa, Natasha, Becky, Lisa, Gemma and Jasmine - were explicit about playing football to rebel against conventional femininity. Vanessa sees girls' football as disproving the myth that females are inferior to males. Natasha enjoys playing football because "it's like not conventional and you do get to have like your bit of force... and you can get physical. Like that's what fun about it, that's what's appealing". Gemma adds:

GC: I reckon it's good because some people seem to think that football is only for boys and like rugby is only for boys because it's a rough sport but I think girls should be free to play any rough sport because like *it's their body* and like if they want to play a rough sport it's theirs [my emphasis].

Becky says: "I just see and think the guys can do it, I'll show you, you know, girls can do it too. I just like pissing my Dad off mainly". Similarly, Jade, the only girl in her primary school to play on the boys' football team, remembers joining the team "to piss everyone off." An otherwise conservative young

woman, Jade has always played non-traditional sports like basketball and soccer because she is: "sick of 'That's not very ladylike', I'm sick of that." When she was young, Jade's father coached a boys' football team and she would accompany him and when they were practising kicking: "I would just go steal the ball and kick it. No, I didn't steal it, just kick it". The phrase "steal", indicates a strong sense of male ownership of football and highlights the sense of trespassing when females step into this male arena. When I asked her what her motivation to play football was, she said "to go against the norm, I think. " The most powerfully and confidently embodied player on the schoolgirl team, Jade said she only goes against the norm in sport. However, she is also extremely confident and assertive off-field and does not conform to many feminine behaviours, like wearing dresses.

Lisa's main motivation to play football is: "to show guys that I can do what they can do, instead of saying, 'Oh no, I'm a girl, I can't do that'". I asked Lisa if she could give me other examples of this:

LM: I think mainly just sports when they don't want a girl on the team or something, I just like to do it and show them we can do it. If they're all bragging, I stand there quietly and then go out there and show them that I'm better than them or something, I don't know.

Lisa's attitude towards boys is similar to her attitude towards her father (above); confused and lacking admiration and respect. Unlike most of her peers who are beginning to socialise in mixed-sex groups, Lisa does not even talk to her male peers, describing them as immature and weird. She called them arseholes but, as with her Dad, had difficulty explaining why:

LM: Just like what you see of their attitudes sometimes, like they think they're high and mighty or something. I don't know, they just seem [long pause]

NW: So what, like they put you down or something?

LM: No, [long pause]

NW: Or do they strut around and show off.

LM: Yeah, their attitudes sometimes in class and stuff, like some of them can be really nice to you and stuff but sometimes they're just like immature and, I don't know, just

NW: So do they say rude things to you?

LM: No [long pause] I can't explain it, just their personalities or something, I don't know. Just the way they act and stuff. You look at them and go "Urghh! Who are you supposed to be?".

Lisa could be described as a latent feminist - she certainly seems to reject, resent and question hegemonic forms of masculinity. However, she appears not to have access to feminist ideology which would help her make sense of their behaviour and her response.

Certainly Jade, Vanessa, Natasha, Becky, Lisa, Gemma and Jasmine are rebelling against feminine stereotypes. But none is consciously trying to overthrow or undermine the current patriarchal gender order by playing football nor any other means. Indeed, those who became interested in football through being close to their fathers or brothers expressed stereotypically patriarchal views of their mothers, all of whom were housewives. Becky said: "Mum, well, what's to say? She's a Mum! You know? She's strict a lot and she's just an over-precautious, caring Mum". Similarly Jade says "She's just a Mum. You know? Like a Mum/daughter relationship... She's there, I'm there". Jade's Mum used to play squash and when I asked if she played competitively Jade was dismissive: "I don't know, she'd go down with her friends and talk knitting and patchworking". Natasha describes her Mum as "a real stress freak", who ends up being the brunt of many of Natasha and her Dad's jokes. When Natasha and her Dad watch football on television together, her Mum will usually make lunch when the game is on. Natasha and her Dad will say insincerely "Do you need any help Mum? That's good!" [laughs].

Most of the girls' team were very uncomfortable with the "f" word (feminism), like Jasmine, who knows her Dad is sexist but at the same time shares a lot of his reactionary views of women:

JN: He doesn't criticise like women who do everything right, just some of them. I don't know, he's just one big sexist pig [laughs].

NW: So do you see yourself as a bit of feminist, you know, like stand up and not put up with

JN: Nup. Sometimes I think women take advantage of their you know, sometimes, not all the time, only a little bit, you know.

NW: While men only do it all or most of the time because it's standard!

JN: Yeah, like men always stereotype women, like they have to be in the kitchen, they can't have any fun, you know, they can't play sports, it's a man's sport, you know. That just pisses me right off.

NW: So you are a bit of a feminist then.

JN: I don't know [laughing]. If my Dad found out! [laughing]

Jasmine's contradictory attitudes and opinions reflect the conflicting messages she is getting from, on the one hand, her Muslim family and, on the other, her school and Australian society generally. This is not particular to Muslim households. Natasha described herself as a "hell-feminist" at one stage but later said everyone calls her a feminist but she prefers to describe herself as into equal rights for everyone not just women, because the label "feminist" conjures up images of "angry, radical, bra-burning hippies". Natasha occasionally has clashes with her Dad about issues of sexism and gave a talk at a school assembly on the suffragette movement, to which many of the boys yelled out "Go back to the kitchen!" Yet, she is keen to point out she does not mind men opening doors for her and can handle a sexist joke. Also, she is keen to be a fairytale princess for just one day:

NP: I don't really care if I get married or not, I just want a wedding dress. If he leaves me on the alter, I don't care as long as I get my beautiful wedding dress... I just can't wait for the day when you've got to go shopping and trying on all them beautiful gowns - Oh!

Natasha is more interested in being a bride than a wife in the traditional sense, an attitude becoming more common (Spender 1994). Of her hypothetical husband she says "I'm not going to just... have me do all the work, I mean if we're both working... he can cook... he's going to have to put his fair share in."

None of those interviewed seemed to have been exposed to feminist theories beyond liberal feminism at home or at school. Anything beyond equal opportunities was radical and "going a bit too far". Nor were all of the young women on the team tomboys, rebels, racial minorities or top athletes. Indeed, this accounts for only about half of the team. The other half, less predisposed to playing football by their histories and more influenced by the support and encouragement of others, such as their fathers, friends or teachers.

Daddy's Girls

As in the women's teams, relationships with fathers were important for a number of the girls' team, although the connection between fathers and football was less explicit and less common than in the boys' team. Natasha, Becky, Miranda, Jade, Georgia, Amy and Gemma often bond with their fathers through playing, watching or talking sport together. For example, when Amy told her Dad she was playing football, he got very excited, saying "Oh I'll have to go get your boots, get your socks". Amy puts this down to his never having a son and she enjoys being able to please him in this way. He is extremely supportive of her football, always riding the boundary, going out on the oval at half-time to listen to the coaches' talks and running onto the field after the game to congratulate Amy and the team. He has always encouraged her to play sports. However, her sister is not sporty, which begs the question why is Amy sporty? Amy says it is because she is her "Daddy's little girl" and also because, out of the two daughters, she is "the more son one", as she puts it.

Encouragement and Support from School and Peers

Waratah High has a smorgasbord approach to PE in Year 10. Janice pushed for cricket and football to be included for girls and, after a little resistance from some PE staff who wanted to keep teaching what Janice described as "traditional girls' subjects like dance, gym and badminton", they were included. Janice said it is fine to continue teaching girls the "pretty sports" but they should be balanced with more physically demanding sports. Now that football is compulsory for girls in Year 10 PE many have been introduced to a sport they thought they would not like. Miranda, for example, would not have joined the team if she had not been introduced to football in PE.

Another motivating force for many players is Janice, whose support, guidance, enthusiasm and promotion of a strong team spirit is crucial in both the recruitment and retention of players. Several players are close to her through athletics, PE and/or umpiring and reported playing football because Janice asked them. Like Leah: "Well, see [Janice] asked me to play. I've got a lot of respect for [Janice]." The Chaplain and Principal are also visibly supportive, regularly watching the girls' games, along with a small band of teachers (from Jan's PE "faction") who support the team by being runners and spectators. The students enjoy their support:

GT: I remember one of the semi-finals, he [Principal] was sitting there going "Go [Waratah]!" so he was really getting into it, so it's really good and a lot of teachers come as well and they really get into it".

Peer support to play football was also important, especially for students who always wanted to play but were deterred by doubt about their ability to play, a fear of being hurt or of appearing unorthodox, weird or butch. Caroline, Dana, Lisa, Miranda, Jacinta, Janela and Amy all said they would not have played if their friends had not joined the team with them or already been on the team. Dana did not play in Year 11 because none of her friends would and she did not want to make a fool of herself alone. Jacinta and Janela were too shy to try out for the team because they did not know how to play or what the rules were - now they are both umpires! Their closest friend, Amy, talked them into joining as she did not want to join alone. Lisa was talked into playing by two of her friends who had played the year before.

Meeting Young Men

Jacinta and Janela both date young men on the Waratah High boys' team but this was not a motivating factor for playing, as neither knew their boyfriends played football before they started dating them. Simone, however, is sexually attracted specifically to male footballers and appears to be the only member of the girls' team for whom a major (unstated) motivation to play is meeting male footballers. She often hung around the boys' changerooms after their matches, talked to an ex-boyfriend on the team or kicked the footy with him. When she played on the staff vs student match (against the boys and male teachers) she wore coloured, tight surfie shorts. She runs water for the local football team every weekend and gets along well with them, three of whom she has been out with. She is also a skilful footballer.

Gendered Embodiment

I wish to establish how the young women in this study are embodied and whether playing football has affected or changed their embodiment, in particular if it teaches young women a stronger, more confident and assertive embodiment. For this purpose, the players can be usefully divided into two groups according to their embodiment type: sporty/tomboy or feminine. Roughly half fall into each category.

Sporty/Tomboy Group

Most of this group were very sporty, had a long history of avoiding feminine embodiment and would commonly be described as "tomboys". Jade "plays like a boy", exuding a confident and skilful aura on-field (Figs 17 & 18). Contact is her favourite element of the game:

JE: I think it's cool, a big hip-and-shoulder. I watched a video the other day of us last year - a video of us playing [Mosmon] ... this [Mosmon] chick went down to pick up the ball and she was the only one on the screen and then all of a sudden I come flying across and BANG!, she went newhhhh, [laughing]. It was really cool!

The more confident and skilful players, particularly those who had played contact sports since they were young, did not report feeling a sense of power when tackling or bumping opponents. It may be because they have always inhabited their bodies in this way. For example, Vanessa says she does not feel powerful when tackling but describes it as an adrenalin rush. She does not feel it when she is on the receiving end of a tackle or bump because she is used to playing rugby with boys. Similarly, Jade denies feeling any sense of power from the contact element in football but her description (above) of her bumping another player is infused with her sense of physical power over her opponent. Marnie, a well-built young Maori woman, certainly loves to tackle and shepherd (she learned to tackle rugby-style in New Zealand) but when I asked her if tackling made her feel strong, she gave an embarrassed laugh and said "No, I don't reckon, nup".

Others, who were sporty and confidently embodied but had not played a contact sport before, reported a sense of power derived from using their bodies forcefully. When I asked Leah if she feels powerful if she knocks someone over who is bigger than her, she said "Oh yeah! Of course! Everyone does!" Even Natasha, who does not consider herself particularly skilful, reported feeling great when she does a hip-and-shoulder and, despite her small stature, feels powerful. Similarly, Becky says the contact element "definitely brings something out in you, you know, that strength you know you've got and if you can't show it off it's just like, oh well." She broke her arm in the first game of the season but this has not deterred her from playing, seeing injuries as "just a part of the game".

Feminine Group

Those with a feminine embodiment were much shyer, with a more modest comportment than those in the sporty/tomboy category. They were set apart from the sporty tomboys by their projection of "femininity" through their bodies. While the sporty tomboys would project an aura of confidence, taking up a lot of space, arms out (Fig 19) and legs apart (Fig 20), the feminine girls would often have their legs closed and arms close to their bodies (Fig 21).

Those who had not played contact sports before admitted to being frightened of being hurt at first. Dana was helped over her fears by a team mate who said "Nah, don't worry about it, just go in". Dana now loves the contact, although she is still frightened of the ball. Some were unable to imagine using their bodies as weapons. For instance, Jacinta and Janela were both too frightened and unsure of themselves to tackle in their first season. Jacinta recalls:

JK: I wouldn't tackle because I was like "I won't be able to do it" and things like that but this year I was "Oh who cares, I'll just go for the tackle!" so I just, I don't know got heaps more confident and I reckon that's made me heaps better... but I've enjoyed it more this year because I'm trying harder. I'm not so shy about it. Yeah, so I'll just jump in there... Not like violent or anything! [giggles]

When Janela finally tackled someone in her second season, she discovered she does it well and when she knocks over a bigger opponent (Fig 22) feels "very surprised, I think Wow!... Yeah! Look around - Oh Cool!" Conversely, when she gets knocked over by an opponent or tries to bump someone and just bounces off them, she feels weaker than she thought.

Because some of the feminine group, even the sporty ones, were unsure of their own physical strength and resilience to begin with, they were far more likely to report the contact element of the game makes them feel stronger physically and more confident generally. Simone, for example, is quite feminine in her comportment and dress but feels "tough" when she does a good bump. Even Miranda, who is chronically shy and who would not have played football had she not been introduced to it in PE, found she enjoys the physical freedom and power she experiences through using her whole body in a game. Despite her shyness and fear of injury, she did not hang back at all and tackled very well during games, for which she was publicly praised by Janice, who noticed a change in Miranda and other shy players:

JS: She came down very quiet, very neat. [She] has always been very quiet but she got accolades out on the field because of her tackling abilities and she would just chase and drag a player down... Another one that is very meek and mild is [Lisa] - full-back - you probably wouldn't even know she was on the team... She didn't get aggressive, aggressive, but she was really competitive out there and I think that's a good thing in girls, I don't think it's a bad thing at all. *I do see a change in them...* In the kids I see here at school, it lets out that real aggression factor and a little quiet kid who you never thought would do anything, the tackling is quite ferocious... For example, the girls' Grand Final this year was a fantastic example of girls who a) had learned to tackle; b) take those tackles and c) probably just demonstrate that they've got that total aggression and they can, once shown properly how to do it, they can get in there and tackle just as hard, if not harder, than the boys. Some of the bumps we saw were harder than any of the bumps we saw in the boys' Quit Cup this year and that's girls-to-girls. I don't see anything wrong with that. Why should we have a society where they're not allowed to do stuff like that?

Kelly also found the girls in her schools' team physically timid at first and not used to tackling but once they started tackling, Kelly noted, they picked it up "like a second sense. They'll tackle anyone" and one young woman "found it such a high. She never realised the actual power that you could feel".

Several Waratah players noticed the contact makes them feel more confident. Tanya, who is quite dainty, even when playing football (Fig 21) is used to rough play. As a child her brothers were always "bashing me up, always punching me around". However, learning to tackle, to be on the giving not just receiving end has given her a little more confidence and makes her feel good when she does it effectively. Similarly, Amy reported:

AV: I think it's good, like it's sort of like a confidence thing as well because the guys, they can do it and then if you can do it you're on the same level as them, sort of thing and so you can do just as good stuff as them. I know it's good for my confidence, anyway.

This theme, that if a female can do what men are praised for doing, their social status is elevated to that of males, is common among these young women.

Caroline says playing football has made her realise females are stronger than people generally think they are (though, she maintains, weaker than males):

CD: we're equal, like a girl can do what a guy can. Like I think that girls can't do some things that guys can do, like lift heavy things and stuff like that but we're not as petite and stuff like that that people think you are.

She is also developing a taste for the open spaces of the football field and when she plays netball now is finding the spatial restrictions frustrating and unintentionally bumps into other players.

Bigendered Embodiment

The two categories "sporty/tomboys" and "feminine" are useful for analysing the effects of football on the young women's embodiment. Yet the way in which they are embodied is much more complex than this dichotomy suggests. Those who were femininely embodied off-field were capable of being boisterous on-field. Several self-confessed tomboys also enjoyed participating in feminine activities such as modelling and dancing.

For example, Georgia is in the school choir and has been going to modelling school for three years with a view to modelling part-time while at university. Most of the time she has a shy and feminine comportment. She has long hair, is slim and sits with her legs together and hands gently in her lap, taking up very little social space. At other times, perhaps because she has always been very close to her Dad, shared his love of rugby, played a lot with her brother as a child and enjoyed playing boys' sports at school, she displays a more confident, invasive and aggressive embodiment. She will bump her brother out of the way at home "when he's walking slow and I'll come up and go Whack! into him". He usually responds by bumping back. Georgia rejects the common myth that girls get hurt more, pointing out boys get hurt just as often playing football and girls get injured playing feminine sports like netball. The contact in football is not particularly attractive to Georgia but she does not mind it "as long as you play fair and not try and deliberately hurt someone".

Amy is also femininely embodied, softly spoken and modest. Her other pastimes could be described as typically feminine: tennis, netball, teenage mystery and romance books and popular music. Rebelling against gendered norms has not been typical of her up until she took up football. Because she had never played a contact sport before at first she found being tackled a shock but now it has become her favourite part of the game. Of small build, she is a rover who gets in and out of packs very well. She is "gutsy" and renowned for putting her body on the line in no uncertain terms, for which her coaches constantly praise her. Thus, through playing football Amy is developing a less fragile embodiment and a greater sense of her real physical potential.

On the other end of the gendered embodiment spectrum, Vanessa is a tomboy who played a lot with her brother, especially his favourite game, soccer. Vanessa prefers rugby, like her father, however girls over 12 are not allowed to play rugby so Vanessa reserved for a boys' team for three years, by pretending to be a boy. She wore a boys' uniform, took out her earrings and wore a bandanna around her long hair: "I had a really weird childhood!" At first the boys were like "Err, there's a girl!" but because she played in a level lower than she should have, she was always able to work out the next steps for the team. In this way she "proved" herself to them and they would say "Oh, she's like one of the boys, let her in eh?" Though Vanessa would prefer to play rugby, she describes football as "a plus-fun guy's sport". Having already developed football skills and confidence in rugby, Vanessa is a skilful footballer and was selected for the All-Stars team.

Vanessa's Mum would like her to wear dresses, which she does on her birthday to please her Mum but otherwise feels she has to be herself and wear pants, shorts or jeans. She enjoyed the opportunity for a bit of play fighting during football training (Fig 23) and her favourite aspect of football is tackling. Surprisingly, Vanessa also likes to explore a more feminine embodiment. Until recently, she enjoyed modelling school and, being tall, slim and attractive, the modelling school liked her. But when they suggested she be less tom-boyish, she thought "Nup. Stuff em! If they don't want me to be a tomboy - ehh, ehh ehh [wagging her finger]". Since then she has dropped farm skills as an elective subject and taken up dance, in which she learns movements she jokingly describes "as in, elegantly lady - it's not good!"

Jasmine is also very boisterous and adventurous. She is certainly not timidly embodied and proudly showed me her various scars from dog bites, football injuries and falling off her bike. She even had one scar from a fight which ensued after a Year 12 girl called her a racist name, her brother told her to "smash her", so she did. Jasmine's favourite part of the game is tackling, which she describes as an adrenalin rush. On the other hand she desires to be femininely embodied and in the last year, has swapped her baggy basketball clothes for a more fitted wardrobe. This may be since she started seeing her boyfriend. She says she is hardly eating because she is trying to lose weight and despite being slim, says "I'm so fat! My legs are so bulgy and stuff - they are!" Similarly, every few weeks Dana does not eat for about three days. She denies having anorexia nervosa but admits she fasts secretly when she feels "fat and ugly". Luckily, her boyfriend always realises and makes her eat. Paradoxically,

through playing contact sports Jasmine and Dana are challenging some types of traditionally submissive forms of feminine embodiment, but by dieting, are reinforcing other types of disempowering feminine embodiment.

It would appear that many of the players in the girls' football team experiment with two types of embodiment, seemingly from opposite ends of the gender spectrum but evidently not mutually exclusive. While the femininely embodied group are experimenting with greater physical freedom and autonomy by playing football, there may be two factors involved in the tomboy group participating in conventionally feminine activities, such as dancing and modelling. The first is that they may be assuring themselves and their peers that they are feminine and heterosexual. The second is that, through family dynamics and their own personal histories, people develop a range of personal traits, not all of which fall neatly into one or other of the culturally constructed dichotomous categories masculine and feminine. Further evidence of this can be seen by comparing Jade with her identical twin sister.

As children, Jade and Carly were dressed identically but despite their Mum's efforts they have asserted their individuality. They believe the purported exceptional closeness and psychic connection of twins is "a load of crap" and, as children played practical jokes on people who asked them about it by pretending to be able to read each other's minds. Jade says they are quite close but stressed they are totally opposite. Jade is closest to, and most like, her older brother: "I follow him, he's like a really good runner and everything". He also plays football. Carly, on the other hand, plays soccer, gets along best with their eldest sister, sharing an interest in the latest fashions. Jade prefers sporty name-brand clothes, wears "cool" sunglasses and trendy tracksuits.

Everyone has difficulty telling Janela and Jacinta apart, another pair of identical twins who both play on the football team. They dress the same, do the same subjects and share the same friends. They became very close when their step-Dad, Alex, dominated them and drove them apart from their Mum. But nobody at school confuses Jade and Carly, who are embodied differently. Their peers are fascinated they look so different, despite being identical twins. Even when they both wore the team football uniform and had their hair tied back the day Carly reserved for the team's Grand Final (Fig 24) I had no trouble distinguishing them, as Carly has a feminine, conventionally "sexy" embodiment and Jade has a more masculine embodiment.

Jade's personality/embodiment has more to do with her relationship with her identical twin than it does her biological sex. As with most siblings, one twin is always more dominant than the other. Jade's very strong, domineering character is a result, not just of competing with her twin all her life but also of asserting that she is different from her twin, that she is an individual.

The bigendered embodiment displayed by the young women in the study results from strong desires to participate in both "masculine" and "feminine" activities in a society in which such transgressions are taboo or difficult to define or categorise. They sometimes find it difficult to reconcile culturally defined gender-specific behaviour with physical realities, as illustrated in the following episode from my fieldnotes:

A group of us were walking past the change-rooms at the girls' home ground after a match. A men's team were getting ready to train and their coach, making polite conversation as we passed, asked our coach how we went. "Beat them 113 to zip", she said. "Wow, what do you feed them on?" came the reply. "We breed 'em tough at [Waratah]!" boasted [Janice], full of pride. The men's coach said "They ought to play the boys!" A female teacher who had come to watch said, "They'd thrash the boys", at which point Vanessa, feeling full of confidence after such a convincing win, said "We're really men in women's bodies". This resulted in laughter all-round and teasing from her peers for making such a "stupid" comment. Vanessa seemed confused and said earnestly "You know what I mean" and I was sure *she* knew what she meant.

Vanessa has always been a "tomboy". But rather than seeing herself as living proof that what are deemed biologically determined masculine and feminine activities are really culturally defined, she has made "sense" of this within the only ideology available to her - one based on a gender dichotomy.

Sexuality

It would be inaccurate to say there are no homosexuals playing in the SSSC. During my fieldwork I noted one of the schoolgirl teams was made up largely of butch girls and there were several gay schoolgirl players in the WAWFL. However, unlike the WAWFL, there was no homosexual community defining the school competition. This is largely due to the very different historical development of the two competitions (see background chapter). In fact, a deep chasm exists between the two leagues over the issue of sexuality. The WAWFL is keen to attract schoolgirl players as they turn 15 in order to

expand the league and improve its standard. However, the "homosexual issue" has deterred many schoolgirl players from the women's league. Only one young woman in this study reported her parents discouraging her from playing in the women's league but when Janice attended the presentation ceremony of the Schoolgirl All-stars team, parents were obviously shocked and turned-off by the overt lesbian presence in the WAWFL. Janice may also have played a role in this, as she is fervently against women's football being dominated by gay women:

JS: There's too much of a perceived image in the community that women's football, you only need play if you are gay or butch. And I've had lots of talks with women's football over this that they need to really present a positive [read: heterosexual] image for these young schoolgirls coming through so that parents and the community are going to think it is okay for my daughter's number one sport to be Aussie Rules football, happy in the knowledge that just because she plays football, doesn't mean that she's gay or butch. And at the moment and as they have done for ten years women's football has very much attracted those women who are very, very big, very uncoordinated in a lot of cases and very butch.

Only Jade and Leah, who are very close to Janice, were explicit about not wanting to play with gay or "butchy" women. Leah noted: "I mean when I was there last year I saw a *couple* holding hands and everything like that. There was the image of *that*." Jade did not want to be classed as gay: "I mean I would love to play with them but I care too much about what people say".

One of the young women on the Waratah High team appears to be a budding homosexual (thoroughly in denial and extremely homophobic). I did not ask the young women if they were sexually active, nevertheless most went out of their way to let me know they were "good girls". Only a few admitted being sexually active. Yet Jade went out of her way to tell me, in an unrelated context, her boyfriend swore in his sleep. Jade also told me graphic heterosexual jokes during her interviews and appeared to be trying to prove to herself, as much as to me, that she was heterosexual. Once Jade learned I had trained with the WAWFL, she would ask me things like whether the women showered together. I told her they did but just to get clean after a match, not to have group sex.

The majority of players, however, seem heterosexual. This is no accident, as Janice has consciously promoted a heterosexual team image: "you can see by the makeup of our team, the girls are feminine at the same time as they are

competitive and I think we need to strike that common balance." After the assembly at which the victorious girls' team was presented to the school, one bemused boy said to Janice "You didn't have a lot of big chunky girls in your team Miss". Janice replied "Nup. We've got a fast team, we've got a skilful team, we've got a strong team". He said "Oh" and walked away contemplating such an anomaly. When the gender order becomes gender disorder there is a greater likelihood of reassessment.

In accordance with sexual double standards, the young women interviewed can be divided into two categories, good girls and bad girls.

Good Girls

Of those interviewed, few had control of their own sexualities. For example, everyone in Jasmine's family seems to have control of her body, particularly her sexuality. Her Mum will not let her leave home until she marries but her brother has many sexual partners. Her father and brother will not let her go out at night or date young men. Being Muslim, they are not only guarding her sexuality but their family's reputation. Her Mum stopped her from playing basketball when she was selected for a combined Perth team, crushing her dream of playing at an elite level. When she was also forbidden to play football, she rebelled and secretly played for Waratah High, saying she was their water"boy". She has also been secretly going out with a young man from her brother's gang (walking together after school around the back streets so they won't be seen), after being expressly forbidden by her brother to see any of his Asian gang mates. Despite her feisty, rebellious approach to many of her parents' rules, Jasmine judges the women who hang around her brother's gang by the same sexual double standard he enforces upon her:

JN: Like all these other girls there, like they get around a lot but most people don't like that because they think they're real easy and stuff but they don't realise it. They all want to be someone they're not, do you get me? Like they want to be some superstar, like modelling person.

Lisa's parents control their daughters' sexualities, not through forbidding them to go out with boys, but by teaching them that their sexuality is precious, highly-sought after and not to be given away lightly to just any male:

They don't want us to go off and do it too early but I think they know we're responsible and we'll do it when we feel it's right... Mum just, we

just talk to her, she kind of trusts us. She knows we'll be good.

Lisa is tall, slim and femininely embodied but does not attempt to attract the sexual attention of males in conventional heterosexual ways. She wears plain glasses, has an old fashioned hair style and does not wear make-up or clothes which emphasise her female shape. Nor does she use sexy body-language or act coquettish or giggly in the presence of her male peers, perhaps because of her Catholic upbringing.

Vanessa also agrees with her parents' double-standard with respect to her and her brother's sexualities, calling it her "own standards". She would not want to go out with someone who uses her for sex or brags to his mates about sex. She does not want to lose her virginity just because her friends have, preferring to wait "not for like Mr Right but for someone who like understands". Vanessa does not think she should be a virgin on her wedding night but believes it important for a woman not to be promiscuous:

VB: It's more important that girls - because what happens if you get married and your husband asks you 'How many guys have you slept with?'

NW: Tell him it's none of his business!

VB: No but it's like you want to be truthful to them.

NW: What about them?

VB: Ask them but if they were like "Oh, I slept with heaps of girls and that", "Oh cool, don't give me STD!"

Her Mum knows that, despite her wild, rebellious ways, Vanessa can be "a good girl when she wants to".

Some of the young women reported their fathers or step-fathers being stricter and more vigilant over their sexualities than their mothers. For example, probably because she is her "Daddy's little girl", Amy feels her Dad is over-protective of her when it comes to sex and she argues with him regarding spending time alone with her neighbour, Saul. One night, Amy visited Saul after his cricket match and her Dad only let Amy visit him for half an hour because he did not know Saul's cricket friends. Another night Amy and Saul went for a walk, then back to Amy's house. When her parents came home her mother was not worried but her Dad was angry Amy had been alone with a

boy. Amy has not even kissed a boy but would like to be able to talk openly to her parents regarding sex, contraception and boys, like the parents of some of her friends who say to their daughters "When you are ready, let us know and we'll put you on the pill".

Tanya's step-father, Mitch often stops her from going out but what annoys her the most is that he has a different set of rules for her step-brothers:

TW: He's sort of got stereotypical views, yeah. He's got a son who's 16 now... the way he will treat him is completely different. I'm not allowed to go anywhere, not allowed to walk out the door after 5.30 or anything but he is sort of really moody so you've got to walk in the door and depending on what mood he's in, depends on you know, really controlling sort of. We still get on really well... but then on the other side, he's like over-protective and that - a bit hypocritical.

Tanya's brothers also got a lot more freedom at 16 than she does at 17 from their Dad and step-Dads. Tanya's Mum would like to be more lenient on this matter but is caught between the two. Tanya must feel betrayed by her Mum for deferring to her step-father on this matter because, even though he is not her father, her Mum has given Mitch the right, by default, to control Tanya's sexuality and to impose his patriarchal double-standards on her. Ironically she has a severe scar on her forearm, which was sustained as part of a bet she had with Mitch which involved him putting a \$50 note on her arm and letting her keep it if she burnt a hole in the note with a lighter while it remained on her arm. She won the \$50 and sustained an extensive injury, judging by the scar. Apparently Mitch is only protective of certain parts of his step-daughter's body.

With a few exceptions (noted above), mothers and step-mothers were a lot less protective of their daughters' sexualities than fathers and step-fathers. However, it was usually only in the absence of fathers or step-fathers that the young women were given the freedom to choose what they did with their bodies sexually. For example, Dana's Mum allows Dana's boyfriend, Paul, to stay over some nights and for Dana to go out at night with Paul or her friends as long as she does not walk back from the station alone. This would not have been the case however if her parents had not divorced because her Dad is very protective of her sexuality, given the chance. She is frightened to introduce Paul to him as she thinks he will threaten him.

Bad Girls

Not all of the team are "good girls". Some may have been secretly sexually active against their parents' will and some were sexually active with their parents' blessing. Several said their parents have said to see them whenever they feel they are ready to go on the contraceptive pill. Caroline's Mum has had this talk with Caroline, although her Dad is a little more protective of his daughter's sexuality. Sometimes he looks twice at what Caroline is wearing. In the main, though, Caroline has been given the same freedoms with her sexuality as her brothers. She is allowed out and her parents were fine when she had a boyfriend.

Only a small minority openly and defiantly resisted their parents' control of their bodies. Becky and Natasha have both defiantly asserted their autonomy through their sexuality. All but one of Becky's boyfriends have been older than her and this has been a contentious issue with her Mum who sees older men as more experienced sexually and predatory. Natasha's parents are also unhappy Natasha has a boyfriend and is sexually active before marriage.

Understandably, many parents try to protect their daughters from sexual double-standards because they do not want them to be used by men or socially condemned for being sexually "loose". However, this denies them autonomy just when they are becoming adults. At the same time teachers and the Principal at Waratah High seem overly concerned with enforcing the correct uniform and convinced of their success in this as a measure of their control over students. Unfortunately, the school is imposing strict dress codes at a time when these young women are experimenting with their identities, embodiment and individuality. For some young women football may provide a way of regaining control over their own bodies at a time when they feel they have so little. For example, for Jasmine football is a fun and exhilarating activity because it is one of the only arenas in which she can do whatever she likes with her body:

JN: Yeah, it's like you get to, you know, it's like there's no real, *real* rules.

NW: No restrictions.

JN: Like you can do, like you're free, you get me? Like with basketball, there's so many rules and stuff.

For Jasmine, playing football is rebellious, not just because it flies in the face of traditional gender behaviour and embodiment but also because, when she is playing football Jasmine is expressing an autonomous embodiment otherwise unavailable to her. Under the current gender order, women's bodies are a crucial site of male domination but Jasmine and her team mates may have found a way in which they can, for forty minutes a week at least, experience physical autonomy, freedom and power by: controlling their own bodies (I'll risk injury if I choose); occupying space forcefully and aggressively through shepherding; and experiencing their bodies as powerful through tackling.

Students Policing Sexuality

Policing young women's sexuality is also done by peers, both male and female. While romantic relationships are acceptable, sexual relationships for females, or rumours of them, are fraught with danger, as Simone found out when her ex-boyfriend told his whole football team she was a slut, when she began going out with another young man on the team.

Georgia noted there are many fights at school amongst girls which result from rumours about a young woman's sexual reputation. When the victim of the rumour finds out who the rumour-monger is, she confronts her, usually backed up by a group of friends. These confrontations are full of yelling but generally no violence. Thus, some female peers are as vigilant as male peers in policing female sexuality, including homosexuality (discussed below).

Negotiating Gender Contradictions

It is important to determine whether, by playing football, these young women uncritically copy or learn the same values young men do, or whether they bring to the game their own values and meanings.

Football and Femininity

As Natasha points out, most young women have very different motivations for playing to the young men:

NP: You can see it like, when you watch female football - when you just see us, we're more like wanting to get the ball and get it into the goal. Like you see the guys and they're all like glory-seekers they all want to just

take this guy out and do all the... like everyone's out for themselves to get a goal, do you know what I mean? They think they're big heroes.

Indeed, many of the young men liked to take spectacular marks, kick goals and "hog the ball". Conversely, several of the young women said they liked team games specifically because they did not want to stand out or be burdened with the sole responsibility for winning and enjoyed helping their team get a goal as much as the glorious task of kicking a goal themselves.

Only a small number of young women put their own personal achievements and performances above the enjoyment of working in a team. In particular, Jade, the most skilful and confident team member:

NW: When you are out there playing, what is it you really like about footy?

JE: Playing: running and watching the person behind you sort of drift off, that's really cool and then like the feeling: having a team, especially like this year being Captain, sense of leadership and, even if we don't win, like success, for being named Captain, that was like a goal I had when I started, I wanted to be Captain and I worked for it and I got it.

The girls' team were not as focussed on winning as the boys' team. The young women would be in high spirits, even after a loss. Many said that the most enjoyable aspect of the game is working together as a team, bonding with and protecting one another. Tanya enjoys "being in the team, spirit of the team, win or lose, it's fun". Georgia likes the on-field support of players yelling out encouraging comments to one another. Miranda likes the fact that out on the field the team is very protective of one another and worried for each other's safety. When anyone is knocked down or roughed by an opponent, they ask "Are you okay?" The young men were more likely to express friendship by "hitting back" physically at an opponent who hurt a teammate.

After a game, the young women mingled with the opposition, both sides genuinely excited just to be playing. Whereas, when the boys' team gave "three cheers" for the opposition team, they would be smirking, laughing and rather insincere. Only Jacinta, who is hyper-competitive because of her relationship with her twin, said her least favourite aspect was losing: "I'm not a very good loser!"

Several of the young women stressed they played football for fun, like Jacinta:

JK: I don't take it too seriously, because I thought, oh you know I don't know I didn't think I was too good - I don't know how to play either and I thought I will just get in there and try.

Since football is specifically associated with masculinity construction, none of the young men I interviewed said they did not take football seriously.

One incident illustrated the different priorities of the young women compared to most young men. Several of the boys' team said they did not want girlfriends at the moment because they would interfere with or distract them from their football training and school work. Elli, on the other hand, did not want her football interfering with her love life. At the last training session before the girls' Grand Final, Elli was acting differently, wearing her hair down, playing with it and flicking it around femininely and seemed very distracted. I noted in my fieldbook she must be in love. When Janice discussed the upcoming Grand Final, Elli asked if team members who do not play in the Grand Final get a medallion. Janice said it depends but she would like her to play. Elli said she watches football on the weekend. A lot of her team mates said they all do but will just have to miss one week because this is *their* Grand Final. Elli, sounding quite desperate by this stage, said "Yes, but the boy *I* watch plays on Sunday". She was evidently toying with the idea of watching a male game, in which a love interest of hers was playing, rather than playing in her own team's Grand Final. She ended up playing.

Dana thought people would laugh at her incompetence when she first joined the team but was surprised to find everyone very supportive and no-one ridiculing anyone else, no matter what their standard. Most of the young men, on the other hand, for whom games of verbal one-upmanship often begin in the week leading up to a match and continue for a week or more after, see such put-downs as part, not only of the game but also of their friendships. Not only was there less likelihood of the young women playing against friends but when they did, it created confusion and conflicting loyalties. When Vanessa plays against a stranger, her attitude is "play footy, be rough, be yourself" but she found it difficult to play against her best friend: "Everyone thought I was being soft but I mean, *you* play up against your best friend and see what *you* can do." Similarly, when she plays tennis against a friend who is not as strong a player as her, she does not play her best, simply because she likes her. Thus, the young women have different friendship networks and styles from the young men, which form part of their gendered identities.

Getting ready before a match was a bonding, feminine activity for the girls' team. There was jewellery to be removed, deodorant to be borrowed and hair to be tied up. Once when Amy asked "Does anyone have a hair brush?" Jade said sardonically "Of course! This *is* a girls' team!" In the changerooms before the girls' Grand Final, Tim asked in a frustrated manner (Grand Final nerves!) "Why do girls wear perfume for a football match?" I said "So the opposition can smell them coming" and the young women laughed.

Physical Contact, Violence and Femininity

As with the young men, the young women were happy to be on both the giving and receiving end of legal contact in a game. For example, Leah is well-built and skilful (Fig 19). Like most players, she does not enjoy being knocked around but does not hang back and will tackle and shepherd whenever she needs to in order to help her team (Fig 22):

LA: To get the ball, yeah, it's like "get out of my way, I'm bloomin' going for this ball!" but I wouldn't do it on purpose to hurt someone and make myself feel big or something like that!

One game was particularly physical. Gemma's calf was jumped on and she was carried off but went back on later. Jade's arm was trampled and she also got kicked in the stomach. As far as I could tell these were all accidental injuries. Most players disliked dirty play and/or bad sports, like Jade who, as Captain, has admonished players for dirty play or use of excessive force.

JE: Okay there is a line that you step over in being rough. Like, you don't set out to - Like, I hip and shoulder a chick, I hip and shoulder a chick to get the ball. I don't hip and shoulder the chick to get the chick but in the game last week one girl did that and I just didn't like it. [Note Jade's use of the word "chick", a sexual objectification usually used by males].

In another case, after a Waratah player her much smaller opponent who had the ball and Jade warned she would be sent off if she used excessive force again.

Some of the young men reported other players and/or themselves deliberately seeking to injure or illegally tackle an opponent. Few of the young women reported such incidents in their games - certainly not the sort of all-in brawls the young men reported occurring in their community matches. Jasmine even apologises to her opponent if she tackles them too high mistakenly.

However, two young women indicated they occasionally become violent on-field. Vanessa said that when she is tackled illegally she becomes infuriated and plays dirty back, even though she does not approve of dirty play. Elli said: "I've got a really short temper and if I get tackled down hard, I will retaliate and pull punches or something. That's why I try to keep away from the ball a lot." Both have experienced violence outside football. Elli has been involved in three fights with other Aboriginal kids because they are jealous of her: "heaps of girls hate me because of what I am", which is a rich Aboriginal kid. Vanessa has experienced violence closer to home. Both her father and brother have the same domineering personality and short, violent temper. Her Dad was sometimes violent with Vanessa. Physical violence is part of her brother's masculine identity. He boxes, which Vanessa thinks has made him "too up himself", indicating he probably derives a great sense of personal power from it. When he is in a bad mood, he yells and abuses his Mum, punches Vanessa or kicks her puppy. Vanessa tells him to fuck off and then she tells him to calm down while she takes her puppy for a walk. I asked why she does not hit him back and she said because she also has her father's bad temper and fears not being able to stop once she starts.

Despite this, I saw no physical fighting in any of the girls' games during my fieldwork. Both the young women and the young men who reported a propensity for physical aggression on-field, always had other crucial factors in their lives which involved physical violence. Thus, it is difficult to sustain the simple argument that football makes people violent.

Unlike most of the boys' team, few in the girls' team see themselves continuing to play football beyond school though most have plans to continue their involvement in other sports, such as softball, netball, hockey, basketball and athletics. Amy, Kylie, Tanya, Jacinta and Becky are the exceptions. Marnie and Vanessa would like to play rugby. Most plan to play sport into adulthood but seemed unable to imagine playing football, not surprising since few have seen women playing. Few knew of the WAWFL's existence before I told them, so only a handful knew of the WAWFL's gay community but would be aware of the deviant status of women, as opposed to schoolgirls, who play football.

In summary, by co-opting and investing the game with more typically "feminine" values, these young women have not simply copied or learned the values and attitudes which are common to male football.

Reactions from Peers

Unlike many of the young men interviewed, playing football for the young women does not earn them social status or popularity among their peers. Reactions from their own groups of friends varied tremendously, according to what was at stake for the respondent. Dana reports that female peers who reacted shocked or surprised - "What?! Girls don't play football!" or horrified because it is not feminine - "Oh! Isn't it a bit rough?" were "all the girls you know like put their makeup on and their nails and all that kind of thing". The friends of some players are totally uninterested in football and not fazed by their participation nor do they show any enthusiasm. Those who are football followers go along to the girls' home games to give support. Many of the player's girlfriends were excited for, and supportive of them, though they might not fancy playing themselves, saying things like "Oh wow! You're really good!" or showing an interest by asking "How did you go?" More sporty girlfriends say things like "Oh, cool man" or "Oh yeah, I want to do that!"

Some male peers also gave positive feedback, like "Oh yeah, you're playing football, great!" or "You should keep playing". The boyfriends of two players, Jacinta and Janela, attend some of the girls' matches in order to support them and, as Janice pointed out, to offer unsolicited advice. Other young men also watch occasionally or kick-to-kick with a some of the players at lunchtimes.

However, the majority of feedback from male peers was negative. This is not surprising, as for most of the young men their own masculine status is threatened directly or indirectly by females playing football. There were quite a number of reports of male peers laughing at female players and asserting "Girls can't play football!" - in particular those from the boys' team:

GT: I think guys are sort of more competitive and some guys think that girls can't play guys' sports and things. I've had a couple of guys over the years that I've played sport with have said "Oh, you girls can't do that" but I've shown them [laughs]. Quite a few girls have shown the guys that they can play.

The young women are very aware of the opinions of their male peers even though, as Janela suspects, most of their negative reactions are not verbalised in the presence of female footballers:

JK: I think most of them probably think girls shouldn't be playing football.

I mean, they don't say it but they think oh you know they can't play as well as boys and all this, I don't think, but some don't mind just let us play, fair enough but they prefer the guys playing.

When the girls' team first started, many people at Waratah High laughed at them. Males would say "Girls can't play football" or "Oh, we'll go down to the girls' footy for a laugh". Janice noted that, as the young women's skills have improved, they are not laughed at any longer and she is starting to hear comments from the sidelines now like "Jees, she can kick 40 metres!" "Look at that handball!" "Cor! Look at that tackle!" Crucially, it is the same physical skills which affirm masculinity in males, which earn young women respect from (some) young men. This sometimes creates confusion. During one game in which Gemma dominated play, I heard one young man say after she took a great mark, "She's a man!"

Signs of Change

There are also signs that schoolgirl football is increasing the confidence of some young women with regards to their own status *vis a vis* their male peers. I saw some young girls (not from the girls' team) kicking in front of the school while waiting to be picked up by their parents. Janice reports that although many young women sit on the outskirts of the oval at lunchtimes and watch boys kicking, since the formation of the girls' football team and the introduction of football to girls in Year 10 PE, some young women now have less hesitation in borrowing a football at lunchtime and kicking with or near the boys. She also noticed more boys are becoming accepting of their presence. In the past, during lunchtime team training, she encountered resistance from boys when she asked them to move further down the field so they could train in front of the goals. They would say "Oh, this is boys' territory" and give the girls "a fair bit of stick". The young women have persisted and won these territorial battles. The boys now move when asked. This is not the case with one male teacher who, one lunchtime before Janice arrived appeared with a basketful of footballs and asked the girls' team "Are you training today? I thought you trained yesterday." He seemed peeved when one of the young women said "No! We *played* yesterday" and then took up prime position in front of the goals with his lower-school boys' team.

At the school where Kelly teaches, she has noticed a change in attitude over a very short time to girls' football:

KH: I've noticed in my school since I've been there a huge change in the boys' attitudes towards football. Boys never make fun of it anymore but they used to to begin with. It's very accepted now. It's amazing. It's an accepted sport now in our school. It only took four years.

Defending the Gender Order

There is greater resistance, however, when young men come up against their female peers on the football field. Georgia reported that in Year 10 a girls' and boys' PE class which played football at the same time each week were amalgamated because of some timetable disruption. On the first day, most of the boys joined in with the girls in a big kick-to-kick session but some went off and played basketball so they did not have to interact with the girls in a sporting context. Georgia noted when they were practicing skills, the boys were saying "Oh yeah, girls can't play" but later in the season when they played games, "it sort of turned around and they realised that girls can actually play because they did not say 'Girls can't play this' as much".

Even the young men who are happy to play football or kick with their female peers, sometimes treat them as fragile, not tackling them or competing for marks as they would with male peers. When Amy, Simone, Janela and Jacinta played against some male friends, the rules were that the girls could tackle the boys but not so visa versa. At one stage, Amy's mate Cameron was about to kick the ball and Amy was about to smother it, that is, stopping the ball after it has been kicked by smothering it with one's body. He dropped the ball, saying he did not want to hurt Amy because she was a girl and that if it had been one of the boys he would have "booted it". Amy knew he meant well but found his attitude insulting and was very angry. Cameron was confused, saying "I thought I was doing the right thing!"

Conversely, several players found that off-field some young men treat them as less fragile than usual. Caroline noticed her peers do not think of her as "such a wuss" now and Simone reported her male peers "don't treat you as much as girls, like weak little girls" since she has been playing football. Kelly, founder of the schoolgirl competition, noticed since the male students at her high school have learned she plays football, she commands a lot more respect from them because they perceive her as physically powerful and tough:

KH: I've also found out that I have a lot more intimidation quality. It was like I could physically hurt someone therefore I was more intimidating

and that's terrible, that's why the male teachers have got - I can walk into a classroom and I knew that I had a bit more of a presence. I could often see kids saying "she plays footy" [illustrates whispering behind her hand]. And I'd get a black eye and they'd be going "Wow! You've got a black eye!" I was this high in their estimation, I'd gone from here to here [indicates low to high]. It was great, so I found it a lot easier to look after boys, you know, and it was that physical sense. And then I played karate and it was like "Oh!" I even know one time I wore a skirt and I do have quite good, strong calves. I remember this teacher told me these boys went "Look at the size of her calves! She must be pretty strong, I wouldn't want to take her on!"... You know a boy won't take you on if he knows that you can take him on [laughs].

Other young men, unable to reconcile rough and tough physical embodiment with females, have resorted to accusations of homosexuality. Dana's boyfriend "jokingly" calls her butch. Natasha's brother asks her "How's you and all your dyke friends?" and she thinks her male peers "probably think I'm a bit butch but it doesn't really bother me". Jasmine said "if you're having fun, it doesn't really matter what people think". However, being tall, slim and attractive, she has probably not been subject to homophobic remarks.

Jade and Leah, neither of whom are very feminine, experience heterosexist taunts from peers. Leah experienced peer pressure to toe the femininity line, from the "cool" group, some of whom have accused her of being "butch":

LA: But most of them know that I'm not [gay] anyway, you just get the odd, you know the real snotty kids, some of the guys that go out of their way just to tease somebody or you get some of the girls, the cool girls or whatever, they go out of their way just to hurt you.

She described the cool females as slim, femininely embodied, wearing makeup and dresses and the cool males as only going out with cool females for their looks. This group, with the most cultural capital in the school, policed gender roles and marginalised infringers. Although Leah has no desire to be one of the cool group, she is keen to maintain a heterosexual identity:

NW: Do you think playing footy earns you respect from your male and female peers?

LA: In some ways no, because you have the image of only butch girls play footy and I don't like that image and I'm not leaning towards that way.

Sanctions for transgressive gender behaviour varied according to how many other transgressions had already been made by a particular footballer and how ambiguous their gender and sexuality were before they played football. Conventionally attractive and femininely embodied footballers were less threatening to the gender order than were sporty tomboys. Also, because the social status of the young women on the team varied enormously, some had more social status to lose from such unorthodox behaviour. More was at stake for players like Jade and Leah, both White and conservative, than for members of marginal groups, such as Aboriginal, Asian or Maori players, for whom playing football was probably put down to their race or ethnicity rather than gender ambiguity. Those relegated to the outskirts of the student social hierarchy because they are quiet, shy and "uncool" had little status of which to speak in the first place. Some even found their status improved slightly. Miranda says her peers "think you're like tough cos you play football".

Connecting with Males

Up until around Year 10 students socialise mainly with those of their own sex. Even when girls and boys played together in primary school, their interactions were often sexualised, such as in kiss chasey. Georgia recalls in Year 6 girls playing basketball in a big group against a large group of boys and in Year 7 three of her girlfriends played soccer with a group of boys: "they would come in and hit us or something, we would hit them back hard". Obviously, if there is to be any mixing it must be on male terms. In high school girls and boys hang out mostly in separate groups, although usually within sight and earshot of one another, so they are never completely apart. Boys continue to play sports at lunchtimes but girls become more sedentary. Whereas Georgia's younger brother plays basketball at lunchtimes, Georgia sits around with her friends. She has suggested to her friends they borrow a football to kick at lunchtimes but her friends feel "intimidated by the thought of all those boys watching them". Reports vary but from about Years 10 or 11 it becomes more common and acceptable to hang out in mixed groups, though close male/female friendships are assumed to be sexual, or at least romantic. By Year 12 boys play less sport and "sort of just hang around and cause trouble, oh no they just sort of do guy kind of things, all being macho and things like that".

Thus, there is little encouragement in our highly gendered society, especially during childhood, for close friendships based on mutual respect between males

and females. For some young women football forms a legitimate "excuse" to interact with young men in a non-sexual way. I saw some evidence of this during my fieldwork:

While waiting for [Janice] to turn up, two of the more confident girls said to two boys as they came past with a miniature footy "Give us a kick!", which they did. This seemed to me more a way of interacting with the boys than particularly wanting to kick the miniature football.

Leah, Vanessa, Gemma, Tanya and Natasha all reported football provides, not a gender-neutral territory, but a common ground on which to relate with males. It would be emasculating for boys to share interests culturally defined as feminine whereas football is "safe" to talk about. Natasha notes:

NP: you're basically like the guys that you meet, it's not like you're being separate, you know "You've got to play netball". Even like now with my boyfriend and that we can go out there and talk footy because I know what I'm talking about - do you know what I mean? You can understand it more and you can like relate to like boyfriends and stuff.

Kelly found, after getting used to the idea of her playing football, boys at the school where she teaches would invite her to kick with them. One boy asked her how her game was on the weekend and since then it has become a regular topic, giving her a connection with male students she did not have before.

6 SCHOOLBOY FOOTBALL

There are several reasons for studying a schoolboys' football team. As part of the broader study of football, gender relations and embodiment, it is juxtaposed to the research on the schoolgirls' football team, providing both a broader context and comparison. This is important because "[m]asculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition" (Connell 1995: 44). Thus, as Flintoff says, feminist research "on by and for women" no longer suffices, to research women's oppression necessarily involves the study of men and male-dominated institutions (Flintoff 1997: 167). However, it is important when "studying up" powerful groups to look not just at the way their power is successfully reproduced but also at the cracks and fissures in its reproduction. Therefore, though it has long been established that football is a major masculinising institution in Australia (Walker 1988), the question must be posed whether football necessarily and unproblematically reproduces hegemonic masculinity.

As already explained in more detail in the methodology, I observed the Waratah High's boys' football team for one school term and interviewed 19 of its 24 members, using the life-history style interview technique. Case studies for each of the young men interviewed were then produced and from these, dominant themes and issues were then teased out to produce the material for this chapter.

Following a description of the schoolboys' competition, the team and their coach to "set the scene" of the study, the rest of the chapter is devoted to analysing the interview material. This begins with a description of the various patterns of masculinity within the team. Then, because for almost all of the young men there was a strong association between their involvement in football and their relationships with their fathers, a large portion of this chapter is devoted to the issue. The extent and universality of the football/fathers/masculinity nexus was a somewhat unexpected outcome. This is followed by a consideration of how playing football affects the young men's relationships with their male and female peers.

Being a central theme of this thesis, the role of football in these young men's embodiment is explored, looking at the contact element, injuries and those

young men who actively avoid a lot of the more violent aspects of the game. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the reactions of these young footballers to some of their female peers playing football. This anomaly presented the opportunity to pose questions to these young men about previously taken-for-granted understandings of gender, sport and embodiment.

Setting the Scene

The Competition

The Quit Cup was started by the FDT in 1988, in conjunction with School Sport WA, the body within the WA Education Department which oversees the running of inter-school sports competitions. As the development arm of the governing body of men's football in WA, the FDT is charged with the task of enhancing the quality and quantity of participation in football (WAFC 1999). To this end, the various youth competitions run by the FDT form a systematic programme promoting and providing Australian Rules football to young boys of all ages. The Quit Cup is an upper-secondary school competition for boys in Years 10 to 12 (roughly aged 15-17). In 1999, the year of this study, 87 teams from 81 schools in the Perth metropolitan area competed, comprised of approximately 2,000 boys. The competition is sponsored by Healthway, a body set up by the State Government to promote community health, which also sponsors the girls' football competition.

The Coach

Tim Broad (34) is a PE Teacher and coach of the Waratah High boys' football team. Football has played an enormous part in his life. He still remembers his first game at age five, the park they played in and the team he played for. He remembers receiving his first football on his birthday. Being from Scotland, Tim's father knew nothing about Australian Rules football but when Tim began playing, he soon learned. He kicked with Tim and became a member of Gordon, taking Tim to their games every Saturday. Tim looked forward to this every week and now looks back with great nostalgia for a by-gone era of community-based football, since subsumed by the nationalisation of the game:

TB: I still remember going to [Gordon] Oval to watch my first game with Dad and then the next big memory is the 1974 Grand Final, beat

[Wesford] by 18 points... I can still picture myself standing on the old terraces underneath the old score board. Back in those days the newspapers, everything was WAFL. The VFL got a mention but it was secondary and the Game of the Round, there was the big pictures and headlines of all the WAFL players or whatever and used to come home on a Sunday night and watch "The Winners". Had to watch "The Winners" on the telly... That was just it, just absolutely loved it.

During winter, at primary school Tim and his male peers took turns bringing their football to school to kick at recess and lunch time. Tim continued to play throughout school and in Year 11 was selected for the State Schoolboys' Squad. He had aspirations to play WAFL right from the start but not long after being selected to play WAFL Colts he got a part-time job and had to choose between earning money to go out with his mates and attending football training on Saturday mornings - "and effectively that was the end of the footy". He started playing again years later when teaching in a country school but played half a season then broke his leg and "that was definitely the end of it".

Tim loved PE at school and was in the school football, baseball, cricket and swimming teams. In athletics he specialised in sprinting, hurdling and throwing. He was also in a local swimming club and did surf life saving for a few years. Being an A-grade PE student, he received a lot of encouragement and inspiration from his male PE teachers. Like many of the young men on the boys' team who excel in sport, Tim decided to become a PE Teacher, though unlike many of them, he had the grades to do so.

Tim described his university course as an extension of high school PE. He went through with a large group of students, slightly more women than men. They had one unit on gender which Tim feels was biased because the lecturer was "a known lesbian" and does not remember much about the unit, other than "she wanted to get away from the notion that the old-style thing where the girls do the gym and the dance and whatever else and the guys do the rugged-type things". At Tim's high school, male and female PE was segregated but boys and girls learned the same sports, with the exception of football and cricket for girls and rhythmic gym and lacrosse for boys. Tim felt "In terms of what she was saying was going on in schools I found a little bit irrelevant. I don't know whether that says that lecturers are still living in their fantasy world thinking that's what goes on in schools."

Football has continued to play an important part in Tim's life. School football matches provide Tim and other male teachers the opportunity to show off their football knowledge and skills and establish or reinforce their place in the male hierarchy of the school. Before a match male teachers often joined in the warm-up kick, sometimes getting carried away and taking over the warm-up session before a girls' match. Knowledge about football is also frequently exhibited. At both girls' and boys' matches, Tim would coach from the boundary line and several male teachers would usually be spectating nearby on the sideline. They would talk "knowledgeably" about refereeing decisions, tactics and skills. They regularly competed and put one another down, questioning each other's knowledge with comments like "Why? Were you a bit of a football star when you were younger?" The notable exceptions to this were the one female teacher (besides Janice) who regularly attended the games and the Principal, who often stood away from the other teachers, probably to distance himself from this behaviour. Coaching football is a part of Tim's gendered identity and any "helpful" suggestions from the sidelines from other male teachers, were always politely but firmly rejected. For example, during one game, a male teacher was pacing up and down the sidelines and yelling out to the team (as Tim always does) and Tim, evidently feeling an incursion had been made, comically rolled his eyes around and said "It's all in hand". Also, though the boys' team took losing the 1999 semi-final in their stride, Tim was disappointed, his pride dented and reputation discredited. Conversely, when he stood in as coach of the girls' team when Janice was ill, the team won convincingly and Tim was very pleased with himself. He rang Jan after the game on his mobile to say "This is the stand-in coach reporting we've won!"

Sometimes Tim used sexist language, for instance, describing the play of one young woman as "blousy" (that is, "like a big girls' blouse"). During the girls' team's Grand Final, the Chaplain yelled out "Woman up!" instead of "man up", which means to tag one's opponent. I noted that a male teacher who always ran water for the boys' team never ran water for the girls' team. Another male teacher who coached the girls' soccer team, made a derogatory comment from the sidelines at a girls' match about the female player's lack of goal-kicking accuracy and then said loudly so Janice could hear: "It must be the coaching". This hit a chord and Janice chimed back: "Hey, have your soccer girls won all their games so far this season?" Ironically, they won that game 113 points to zero. At another of the girls' matches, the umpire did not turn up so Janice, a qualified umpire, took to the field. I heard the usual band of male teachers on the sidelines question and ridicule several of her umpiring

decisions, thus asserting their superior knowledge and authority. However, at other games they were equally critical of male umpires.

The Team

The team has always been reasonably strong in its region but not as strong as the Waratah High girls' team, who won the Smarter Than Smoking Schoolgirls' Cup in 1999. The boys team have not won the Quit Cup since 1989. Tim has coached the team since 1990, bar one year when the Head of PE, Brian Cox, took over as coach and Tim was reduced to team manager. Tim was furious as Brian had not taken any interest in the team before and believes it was because they were strong enough that year to win the Quit Cup. Indeed, they made the Grand Final but lost. The following year, most of the team left school and Brian left Tim to build it up again. When Janice arrived at Waratah High she offered to be assistant coach. Later, when she started the girls' team, Tim became her assistant coach.

In 1999, the Waratah High boys' football team consisted of 24 players, 19 of whom I interviewed, the rest declined. A good proportion of the team have been playing in the same community football team since under-8s, thus, through football know each other well. They have played football for an average of 8 years (see Table 3). More than half of the team come from lower middle class families and the rest from working class backgrounds, whereas the girls' team are mostly working class. The majority of players are of White, Anglo Saxon origin, except for two Aboriginal players, one Italian/Australian and one Pakistani/Australian (see Table 3).

Most of the team are physically well-developed for their age (see Fig 25). One reason for this may be that many of their more slightly built peers are deterred by the contact element of the game. For instance, though the Quit Cup is for Year 10, 11 and 12 boys, Waratah High only had one Year 10 player in their team and he was larger than most of his peers and his teachers. However, not all young men of the same age are the same size nor develop at the same rate (see Figs 26 and 27). One player expressed concern that if he does not "bulk up" in the next year, he may not take up an opportunity to play Colts in the Westar League, as it is quite rough and many of the players are big and bulky. Ultimately, size matters and the young men are acutely aware of their physical potential and shortfalls.

The young men's career aspirations varied from trades to professions but more than half wanted to make a career of football or sport (see Table 3). This highlights the extent to which football and sport form a part of their embodied identities, unlike the girls' team. PE Teaching was the first or second preference of six players but few had the grades to pursue it. Professional football was the first or second preference of eight players, two of whom also listed PE Teaching and three of whom are all-rounders, excelling in every sport and athletic activity they try. Since football is the sport which promises the greatest financial reward and social status, all three have chosen football over other sports.

For instance, when Drew was younger he also played State baseball. When faced with a choice between the two sports because training sessions and games began to clash, he chose football because it gets a lot of public exposure, is frequently televised and has greater status in WA than baseball: "Like everyone plays footy and they talk about footy and kicking the footy at school". In doing well at football Drew earns greater respect from his mates than doing well at baseball. He has been compared by his teammates to Robert Harvey, one of his football idols, whom he admires because he runs all day, gains around 50 possessions a game and is a dual Brownlow Medallist: "he's a star". Drew also wants to become an AFL star. Of all those in the team, Drew is the most determined to play at AFL level: "Even when I just think about it I get a real good feeling in my stomach, like make it to the AFL. Just stuff like that, really inspirational stuff".

The climb up the professional football ladder often begins in an FDT development squad for 15s, 16s, 17s or 18s, which quite a number of the young men in the current study have been given the opportunity to do (see Table 3). To become a professional footballer they must work their way up from there through Colts, Reserves and League level in one of the nine Westar League clubs and from there *may* be drafted to the AFL. Their chances are statistically slim, the competition is tough and if they do not succeed, they may have limited their own career opportunities. Indeed, Leif, Jason, Scott and Doug, are faced with a quandary because they have been given the opportunity to play Westar Colts. This involves training four nights a week and playing on Sundays, and may cause their school work to suffer. Therefore, Doug, Leif and Jason have decided to continue playing for their local club and take up the offer to play Westar Colts after leaving school. Scott, who is a promising young player, plans to study science at university. He will try to negotiate only

going to two training sessions per week while still at school. Even Cory, who plays football for the fun, fitness and social side and has always planned on going to university is tempted by a football career after being approached by a Westar club: "that's not to say that I wouldn't consider it now. I might have a go but I've never been really strongly wanting to play pro. footy".

The cases of the two Aboriginal students on the team, Zach and Todd, pose this dilemma most sharply. Their parents are very keen for their sons to do well academically. Todd, however, has put all his eggs in the football career basket. He is more interested in sport than studying, spends all his spare time playing sport and his favourite subject is PE. He will stay at school until Year 12 only because his parents want him to but has no desire to go to university so will not do his TEE. His football hero is a very good Aboriginal player who "came up to [town] as well and was talking to me for a good say 2 or 3 hours". Todd enjoys everything about football but his favourite aspect is "knocking my opposition around a bit". He is very tall and well-built for a 15 year old, indeed he looks like a man. His masculinity is expressed through physical violence, skill and toughness. On the football field, Todd can legitimately dominate his male peers, including non-Aboriginal players. The sense of power he feels from this and the rewards and accolades are immediate: "your team looks up to you as well once you do a good hit". However, in the adult world, his skill, aggression and size (even if he does continue to be bigger than his peers) will amount to little in the way of actual power, unless he is successful in the AFL. Despite his parent's wishes, he is not inclined to study as the rewards and pay-off are long-term and relatively imperceptible to Todd. In the US too, African-American men often utilise sport as a means to attain status and mobility in an otherwise limited structure of opportunity (Messner 1992: 11).

The other Aboriginal on the team, Zach, has not been distracted from his studies by football and is trying equally hard to excel in both. He plays football for his school team, the Waratah under-17s and for a Westar club under-17s team but is doing very well in his TEE because he does three hours a day of homework, even after football training. When he finishes his TEE, he wishes to join the army to train as an electrician and also hopes to be drafted into the AFL. Zach has chosen a career he can pursue while playing football professionally and, if his aspirations to be a professional footballer are dashed due to injury or other reason, he has another career to fall back on.

Almost all of the young men in the study plan to play football after leaving school, though not all want to be professional players. For a few, the knowledge that their football skills will not take them much further up the football ladder of success, leads them to fulfil their need to achieve and excel in sport elsewhere. Trent and Dale are both confident of being selected to play for the State team in cricket, which is almost as popular as Australian Rules football in Australia, although a slightly poorer cousin in the masculinity stakes due to its lack of body contact. Liam may make a career out of tennis coaching but plans to continue playing football because he feels it makes bonding with other males a lot easier. Likewise, Brett's main sport is basketball, which he aims to play at State level but will probably keep playing football into adulthood at the local level as a social activity - not to mention an avenue for the construction of hegemonic masculinity and male-bonding - "Yeah, just to have a laugh, sort of thing and watch the Friday night stripper".

Patterns of Masculinity

Given that full-contact sports like Australian Rules football ritually celebrate hegemonic masculinity (Bryson 1983: 413), it is little surprise that the majority (10) of the 19 young men interviewed embody and reproduce a familiar pattern of hegemonic masculinity. The remainder can be divided into two categories for analytical purposes; their "members" do not necessarily hang out in groups. The first is a small group of young men who have constructed defensive masculinities. The second is made up of young men with contradictory masculinities. The patterns of gender relations in all three groups largely reflect the gender regimes of their families but is most pronounced among the defensive and contradictory groups.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The hegemonic group - Jimmy, Rick, Scott, Cory, Todd, Leif, Steve, Brad, Drew and Zach - are characterised by their interest in conserving the current gender order. Seven of the ten young men in this group live in households with a gendered division of labour and of the three who live in households with a non-gendered division of labour, the mothers of two work night-shift, creating a practical rather than ideological impetus for their husbands to do domestic chores. Being confident in their masculine status, these young men do not display the low-level misogyny which will be seen in the defensive group.

Having made enormous personal investments in the current gender order, they do not develop the egalitarian relationships with females which will be seen among the contradictory group.

For example, Drew gets along well with the females in his life, as long as traditional gender relations remain undisturbed. He is close to his Mum, whose "life more or less revolves around us, our sport, our school and just everything to do with us really". She has retained her role as housewife and primary child rearer since her divorce when Drew was six, and now also works as a carer in a nursing home. Drew does not do housework beyond the dishes and cleaning his room. His Mum has recently resumed the traditionally gendered division of labour she had with her first husband with her fiancé. Drew is closer to his younger sister than his younger brother, sharing a love of sport with her. When she made the school leaderball team, Drew helped her practice and she wants him to be her basketball team's coach. Drew enjoys the role of "the big brother kind of thing, I can look after her". He also takes a paternal role with his girlfriend Janela, who plays football in the girls' team: "like she likes me to teach her, like just how to do different stuff, like how to tackle, get help sort of". Drew is superior to Janela in his greater knowledge and skill levels and has more power in his role as informal coach. Drew and Janela watch one another's games if they do not clash. However, Drew is not so respectful when he does not hold the upper hand. He told his whole community football team that his ex-girlfriend, Simone, was a slut when her new boyfriend, who also played on the local football team, bragged about going out with her.

When discussing girlfriends, the hegemonic group revealed a stereotypical heterosexuality. Many of the hegemonic group expect their girlfriends to watch and be supportive of their football but do not reciprocate. Some, like Brad, literally embody hegemonic masculinity. He had been going out with Jacinta (from the girls' team) for a year when he went on a field trip and on the way back in the bus at night when everyone was asleep, one of his female peers performed fellatio on him. He proceeded to brag about this to his mates at school and the news spread rapidly. Jacinta was distraught, the other female involved was labelled in accordance with sexual double-standards, but it was difficult to establish what punishment by the school, if any, Brad received. He remained Clan Captain and Year 11 Councillor - positions of honour and leadership.

Defensive Masculinity

Brett, Dale, Levi and Liam all dwell in highly gendered worlds in which all that is feminine, including their mothers and sisters, is implicitly regarded as inferior to all that is masculine, including themselves. This low-level misogyny is fostered by the gender regimes of their families, characterised by a traditionally gendered division of labour. Their mothers have all foregone careers to raise children, while their fathers have "achieved" in their careers. Those mothers who have since returned to work full-time still do all the cooking and housework. Other family activities are also gendered, such as father-and-son sports outings on weekends or "boys only" annual fishing holidays. None of the four young men in the defensive group had girlfriends, not surprising considering the misogyny they exhibited. For example, Dale has difficulty respecting females and also finds them frightening. He actively distances himself from all things feminine and has no female friends because whenever he likes a girl he ends up asking her out, thereby sexualising his relationships with female peers.

The young men in the defensive group are characterised by their insecurities and defensiveness about their own tenuous masculine status. For example, Dale is not quite at the bottom of the male hierarchy at school but is what might be colloquially termed "geeky". He is short and plain and fails to project an aura of confidence. Dale also plays chess every lunchtime, a rather "uncool" pastime, and admits "I'm a bit of a computer geek, inherited from my brother". Playing football appears to be his way of seeking acceptance and conferral of his masculinity from his male peers (Buchbinder 1994: 35). However, simply being on the team does not guarantee this. He must also project a physical presence on field. Lack of skill, or more specifically, the lack of a spectacular display of skill, is problematic as far as peer conferral of masculinity is concerned because to be skilful is to be masculine, to lack skill is to be or play "like a girl".

Dale describes himself as an unselfish player who might get 15 possessions in a game, whereas "starring" players might get more than 30 possessions and 5 goals a game. This pattern Dale calls "hogging the ball" as opposed to being a "team player". So he did not get many votes in the Fairest & Best vote count nor was he selected to play for a Westar club like some of his team mates. Yet he was chosen as Captain of the Waratah High boys' football team in 1999. This somewhat surprising outcome was a decision by the PE Teachers coaching

the team, who valued the fact that he had trained hard. Some of the more skilful players let it be known they felt they should have been chosen on the basis of their superior skills. Dale was forced to defend himself: "Well, I done all the work, so that's it". Captain of the team in theory, in practice Dale was fairly quiet and modest in his comportment. He could not adopt a highly visible leadership style because his team had neither confirmed his status as Captain, nor conferred upon him his masculinity.

Simply joining the school football team or being able to play but not very well or without "putting their body on the line", is not enough to have their masculinity conferred upon them by their peers. It is the success or lack of success with which young men learn to be skilfully and/or powerfully embodied which determines their place in the male hierarchy.

Contradictory Masculinity

Though not defenders of the patriarchal gender order, the contradictory group - Jason, Trent, Ethan, Doug and Nick - seek to "pass" as reproducers of hegemonic masculinity in order to be accepted in the world of men and thereby avoid marginalisation. Thus they could be said to have a "relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project" (Connell 1995: 79). However, the term "complicit" does not adequately represent the complexities of these young men's relationship with the hegemonic project. Because they develop egalitarian relationships with females, they are agents of change, rather than merely passive beneficiaries.

All of the young men in the contradictory group live in households in which the division of labour is shared equally and tasks are not gendered. Unlike the other two groups, they do not dominate females. For instance, Trent's parents' divorce resulted in his Mum becoming the breadwinner and boss of the household. This also resulted in a close and egalitarian relationship between Trent and his Mum (not always the result of divorce). Unlike many of his male peers, Trent was happy to talk openly about his girlfriend with me, describing Kelly as intelligent, with a good sense of humour and fun to be around - "so I'm pretty happy". Trent has watched Kelly play netball despite his lack of interest in the game, because she watches his football matches. It is probably his relationship with his Mum which has allowed him to have a relationship with a young woman based on mutual respect and reciprocity. Ironically, Kelly was at first attracted to a young man she saw embodying

hegemonic masculinity - a footballer whom she approached outside the change rooms after a match. I asked Trent if he thought she was attracted to him because he plays football; he said she may have been initially but now she likes him for who he is. Not all footballers are what they ritually represent.

Jason, from the contradictory group could easily be marginalised by his male peers, as in Dale's case (above). He refrains from the excesses of hegemonic masculinity, like fighting, dominating females, being "cocky" or striking a superior attitude. Nor does he compromise the Christian value system with which he has been raised. He belongs to a Christian Youth Group, not a very "cool" pastime. His best friend is Aboriginal. He gets along well with his female peers and is particularly close with an ex-girlfriend who plays on the girls' team. He is only slightly built (though tall), thus does not have a physically menacing presence on-field and he does not approve of, nor participate in, illegal violence in football. However, unlike Dale, Jason has gained the respect of his peers because he is fast, can kick goals and, being light, takes some spectacular aerial marks. As Jason says, "if you're into football then pretty much everyone likes ya [embarrassed laugh]... if you're good at it, it's like 'He's good, he can play footy'." His peers have likened him to his football hero. Being a highly-skilled footballer, the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity, allows Jason to have his masculinity conferred on him by his male peers and to successfully "pass" as a reproducer of hegemonic masculinity though he is not.

Fathers and Football

In Mac an Ghaill's study of "the making of men" in an English school, fathers taking their sons to the football was more meaningful for working class than middle class boys (Mac an Ghaill 1994: 108-9). In the present study football, masculinity construction and fathers proved to be inseparable in the lives of most of these young men, regardless of class, race or ethnicity. From my interviews it is possible to discern three distinct aspects of the father-football-masculinity nexus: fathers inducting their sons into the world of football as a masculinising institution; football as an emotional proxy for fathers and sons; and football as gender demarcation within families.

Peers play an important role in motivating some young men to play football, like Jimmy whose father is Pakistani: "I was a bit of a late starter, I only started

liking footy in about Year 7, because all my mates did". The media, in particular the coverage of Australian Football League (AFL) games, Australia's elite national competition, also provides inspiration. However, most of the young men in the study were introduced to football by their fathers when they were very young and their fathers continue to inspire, encourage and/or support them.

Many of the young men's fathers introduced their sons to the basic skills of the game from a young age with miniature footballs - some as early as three. Most have taken an active interest in their son's football careers, taking them to their first football game (under-7s), watching all their games and occasionally volunteering as coach or manager for one of their junior teams. Most also indoctrinate their sons to barrack for the same team as themselves, dressing them in that club's jumper or colours from a very young age. Even some fathers who have not played Australian Rules introduced their sons to the game. For example, neither of Cory's parents are sporty and Cory learned to play football from his maternal grandfather, who played in the VFL. It was Cory's Dad, though, that "has always been a part of the footy club, not because he played or anything, he just knows a lot of people down there and he just sort of got me interested in it, so I went".

A few players willingly emulate their father's masculinity construction projects, like Levi who says he was "born into the game" because his Dad, who played in the state's top level league, is now Director of their local community football club. However, some fathers (and mothers) are more explicit than others about football as a masculinising activity. Doug vividly recalls when he "did not get a touch of the football all season" and his parents called him "a ballerina". Such a sexist taunt was effective as it "really got me revving and next year after that I just went out and played good and got Fairest & Best". However, it also carried a message that if he was not good at masculine pursuits he was like a woman and therefore inferior to other males. Ironically, this message was given by his mother as well as his father.

Australian Rules football is what Dale describes as his Dad's "adopted sport". Before he emigrated from New Zealand, his father played rugby union. He got Dale playing Australian Rules in a team when he was six and was his team manager when Dale was younger because "he just wanted to be part of the club". He loves watching Dale's games but does not do *post mortems*: "He doesn't watch the game, he more or less just watches me, like he says "Oh you

did good there, you got a couple of things there". His Dad indoctrinated Dale into following a New Zealand rugby union team at a young age but Dale was quick to point out that in all other sports he barracks for Australian teams. When I asked him if he had played rugby he said "Nup never! Never!!! I'm true-blue Oz" [staunchly patriotic, genuinely Australian]. Dale is keen to proclaim his Australianness through playing Australian Rules football - more so than those with little doubt about their Australianness. This is not to say that for the rest of the team, which is overwhelmingly Australian, playing the game is not an expression of their nationality; for them it goes unspoken. Their Australianness becomes more evident when compared to the large number of ethnic minorities in the Waratah High soccer team. Walker, in his ethnographic case study of boys attending an Australian single-sex boys' school, found Australian students "nominated and dominated the prestigious forms of sport, and this was simply the most salient feature of their overall cultural ascendancy" (Walker 1988: 29). Conversely, some Greek students, who made up the largest ethnic group in that school, were assimilated into the Australian culture through playing rugby and being part of the footballer group. Other Greeks "defined themselves ethnically, notably in contradistinction to Aussies" - one way of doing this was by playing soccer (*Ibid*: 49). Dale referred to soccer as "a pussy game!" on the basis that it is not a full-contact sport, thus, through playing football he is asserting his superiority over females and ethnic minority males.

Emotional Proxy

For some young men, football has another function in father-son relationships, as a proxy for emotional closeness. When I asked the young men if they were close to their fathers, many said they were because they have football/sports in common to talk about, watch or play:

DT: Oh we're pretty close, on a different level, not to do with emotional stuff, more just like mates really, like we're good mates, that's how you could describe it like we're just good mates but he's my Dad and I respect him.

Drew was keen to make a distinction between "emotional stuff" and being "good mates". In a society in which women do the majority of child rearing and nurturing, emotional closeness with fathers is not only less common than with mothers but also problematic, since expressions of emotion (except anger)

are socially defined as feminine. Being a masculinising institution, football provides an opportunity for sons to bond with their fathers without the risk of emasculation.

Nexus Problematicus

The father-football-masculinity nexus is mediated and shaped by the gender dynamics of each family. This is particularly evident in families which have been disrupted by divorce or in which the father-son relationship is problematic.

Liam's Dad, for example, always tells him what he did wrong in a game, never giving him positive reinforcement:

LR: I pretty much know that if I do something wrong he just bags me out and stuff, oh not bags me out but just lectures me about it because he was pretty good and stuff so he knows what to do... He coached [in two country towns] and they won the Grand Final so [laughs] he sort of lets you hear about it and stuff.

In several areas of Liam's life, his father focuses very strongly on achievement and tends to dominate and compete with his son, rather than simply share a common interest. In this case football shows the same patten as music, tennis and academic work.

Several fathers appeared to be living dreams of success vicariously through their sons, after their own promising football careers were prematurely ended. For Ethan, this has become a double-edged sword. Ever since he was selected to play in an under-16s carnival his Dad has been saying he should ask the coach if he is going to be in the team. Ethan told his Dad he does not like being pressured and his father has backed off. I asked Ethan if he would like to reach the level his father could have and, in an embarrassed, quiet voice he said:

EA: It's really hard like cos of my size, I'm not that built for a footballer, so... I'll see what happens in the next couple of years. I'll see, my physique, how it goes, yeah but yeah I really want to go further, yeah.

This is complicated by the fact that his Dad sends him clear messages that: "If you want to play football, you're obviously going to get some hard hits, so, you know, if you want to be a footballer, you've got to know that".

For those young men who are separated from their fathers through divorce, football sometimes becomes the focus of their relationship. Drew's parents have been separated since he was six, but his Dad still watches most of Drew's games and gets him "pumped" before a match. If he does not watch a match, Drew phones him afterwards to discuss it in detail.

In other cases, as with Trent, football is no longer shared, leaving a vacuum symbolising their estrangement. After taking him to freeball, under-8s, under-10s and under-11s, Trent's Dad stopped taking him to football. They still get along well: "when I see my Dad we're still close because we've got so much in common", that is, they talk a lot about football and cricket. Their relationship is even mediated by the seasonal rhythms of sport. During summer, Trent sees his father regularly because they play in the same cricket club. In the winter, however, his father does not have time to see much of Trent. Trent misses having a Dad because "they usually take you to your footy and all that sort of stuff". Despite being very close to his Mum, she is not interested in football and, more to the point, cannot guide him in the ways of being a man, so his maternal uncle now takes him to his football games.

Like Trent, Leif has found a substitute father since his parents' separation. It is his girlfriend's Dad, and football is the focus of this new relationship:

LC: Their Dad's into sport and he likes [Shipton] as well, so that's really lucky... I can also bond with him as well because he'll also want to come to the footy with us when [Shipton] play... Tomorrow I'm going to stay at [girlfriend's] house overnight and then her Dad said he would take me to my game in the morning. They always come up and watch, so it's pretty good.

Not only has her Dad stepped in where Leif's has bowed out but Leif is playing the role of the son which her Dad never had (he has 3 daughters).

Exceptions

Unusually for Brett and his Dad, sport is alienating rather than bonding. Brett's father was selected for the junior soccer league for his county in England at 14 but his family moved to Australia. Then he was asked to represent WA in soccer but his parents could not afford the uniforms and travel expenses, having recently emigrated. Rather than live his lost opportunities through his sons, Brett's father is making up for lost time,

playing golf and indoor cricket in his spare time. It is Brett's Mum who takes Brett to basketball and athletics training every weekday afternoon as well as his games and athletic events on weekends. Because his Dad also plays a lot of sport on weekends, he does not see Brett's games and Brett feels that as a result he is not as close as he would like to be to his Dad.

Zach's father was Anglo Australian and his mother Aboriginal and it was her father who taught Zach how to play football, which is reflected in his Aboriginal style of play and embodiment. He has an exceptionally high skill level with a fluid, seemingly effortless style of embodiment often described by White Australians as "natural talent". Zach said being Aboriginal and wanting to be a good footballer are connected and some of his maternal uncles who play in the state's top level league, give him inspiration to play. That he seeks his male role models from his Mum's family rather than his Dad's, indicates the importance for him to learn not just how to be a man in man's world but how to be an Aboriginal man in a White man's world.

Gender Demarcation

As well as sorting the men from the boys, football often serves to sort the boys from the girls or men from women within families. For example, Dale does not like his Mum watching football on television with him:

DW: [big sigh] Well when she does she annoys me, she sits there going "Come on!", sits there and I go "There's no crowd" [sarcastic tone] and all this. She annoys me a bit.

Her presence seems to be an intrusion into an invisible males-only zone. He defends the definition of sport as masculine by trivialising and sexualising her interest in, and knowledge of, football: "my Mum's not sporty at all - she just likes looking at Ben Cousins and all that - shocking!" Whereas his own knowledge of football is superior: "Well, I basically know everything about every team like, I know a lot about football. Like history and stuff as well".

Not all boys denigrate women but they may still use football for gender demarcation. Jason lives in a household in which he and his father are outnumbered by females 4 to 2. Their family has a consciously egalitarian division of labour and Jason enjoys the company of females. However, he and his father have created for themselves a small island of masculinity through

football-related activities. Jason's Dad watches most of Jason's football matches but his Mum and sisters do not. They occasionally kick-to-kick, but often watch football on television. For this they get told off by the rest of the household but continue regardless. Even if Jason's Mum or sisters do watch, barracking is gendered. Jason and his Dad barrack for the same team, while his three sisters and Mum all barrack for different teams. If their team beats one of his sister's teams Jason and his Dad "just show them the colours [holds his jumper out at the chest]".

Football and Gendered Embodiment

Physical Contact, Violence and Masculinity

Football is an institution in which many young Australian men learn a specific form of physically assertive embodiment, which comprises an important part of their masculinity construction projects. Such an embodiment is developed through learning to: take spectacular aerial marks (Fig 28); kick long, penetrating bombs with power and accuracy (Figs 29 & 30); evade or relentlessly tag opponents through fitness, explosive speed and determination (Fig 31) and; physically dominate the opposition with overpowering tackles, invasive shepherds and recklessly dangerous bumps (Fig 32). I wish to take a closer look at this process.

All 19 players enjoy the body-contact element of football. For instance, Levi says he could not play a game like tennis simply because there is no physical contact and Jason, despite his lack of bulk, says:

JF: It wouldn't be so good without it, you know in certain games, say against [Ashgrove], it's pretty physical so you get into it and the crowd starts cheering up real big and you get pumped. If you take a hit, you get back up.

Jason's description elucidates the public performance aspect of male football. The crowd's enjoyment and encouragement of his display of male physical power and toughness inspires Jason to more heroic acts: "that feeling when you get into the game and everyone's yelling and you get out there and take a big hanger [high mark]". He experiences the crowd's positive response to withstanding his opponent's physical aggression, not just at a cognitive but also physical level: "you get pumped". Certainly some of the girls' football

team feel an adrenalin rush after giving a good bump or tackle but the resultant increase in confidence is personal. For the young men it is a public display of physical power.

The young men were more comfortable thinking about themselves as powerful beings than the young women. Many reported that when they lay a good tackle or do a good bump they feel "pumped", powerful, tough and ready to do it again or, as Todd put it, "rough to go". There is certainly peer pressure to display macho prowess through physically dominating other young men. Doug, very tall and bulky for his age, has recently earned himself the macho nickname "the bulldozer" because he has knocked two opponents out cold, playing community football. Although in each case his actions were "legal" under the rules of the game, he put both opponents in hospital. Doug (from the contradictory group) has mixed feelings about this: "I felt sorry for the bloke but it like inspires the team so the team gets like better for some reason". However, not only peer pressure and social rewards, but each player's gender practice strongly influences whether his intention is simply to assist his team with a shepherd or tackle, or to start a fight, play dirty and/or use excessive force to dominate his opponents.

During one match a Waratah player was punched by his opponent in the face when he did not even have the ball in his possession. However, generally, illegal violence, fighting and brawling are not tolerated in school football but are common in community football. Even so, attitudes towards illegal violence in community football varied among the young men.

Two of the four young men from the defensive group were keen to participate in violence, legal or illegal. Dale says "I don't mind my odd brawl, it's good" and his favourite aspect of playing is "Getting to shirt-front people" [a head on charge aimed at bumping an opponent to the ground, illegal because it is more dangerous than a side-on charge, ie "hip-and-shoulder"]. Similarly, Liam's favourite aspect is hitting people, legally or illegally. While a good part of these comments is macho bravado, they indicate that for some, community football provides a rare opportunity to reinforce their tenuous masculine status through physically dominating other men.

Attitudes towards legal and illegal violence varied among the hegemonic group but generally they were more likely to be physically assertive on field in order to maintain their dominant place in the male hierarchy. Brett's greatest

achievements have been in sport and it is through using his body powerfully and aggressively to dominate opponents that he constructs a dominant masculinity:

BP: My Mum was on the sideline with my Grandma and this guy turned around and tried to grab my friend and I just hip-and-shouldered him into the ground pretty good. He was out for a while. It was pretty good. Right in front of my mother and she was pretty happy.

NW: Do you feel pretty powerful in yourself, like physically?

BP: Oh yeah, you know you can do it again sort of thing.

If Steve does a good bump he feels "Real proud, like boast about it a bit" and if his opponent is hurt and lying on the ground as a result, he just laughs at him. His Mum tells him not to use excessive force but he says he just does it again the next game. Steve's step-Dad beat his Mum when Steve was very young which may well have influenced his penchant for physical violence on-field.

None of the contradictory group approved of, nor participated in, illegal violence or brawling. Indeed, they were more likely to hold their team mates back and try to break up brawls. They see contact as a practical and enjoyable part of the game but none enjoyed injuring opponents legally or illegally.

EA: I suppose people, some people might feel good if they get someone stretchered off, I mean I don't reckon it would feel good hurting someone else. I mean if you give them a good hip-and-shoulder or a good tackle and they're on the ground for a minute but then they get back up, I suppose that's alright, as long as you don't hurt them too bad.

Despite being tall and solid, the contact element in football does not make Nick feel powerful as he has been knocked unconscious twice playing older opponents. For Nick the enjoyment comes from the sheer exhilaration of using his whole body playfully towards an end: "It's just fun to be able to like, well not really hurt someone but just tackle and get them holding the ball, makes you feel better."

Moroney suggests it is because football "sorts the men from the boys" that violence in under-16s and under-18s is worse and more prevalent than in seniors football (Moroney 1998: 73). Certainly masculinity construction projects are particularly pressing during adolescence, the transition period

between boyhood and manhood. However, there is little evidence for the argument that football makes people violent. Admittedly, there is a fine line between physical contact in the context of the game and physical aggression for its own sake but it is worth drawing and indeed has been drawn in the rules of the game. The young men were generally more violent than their female peers in the girls' team and the specific association of masculinity, power and violence is an important factor here. Yet, those young men who did not approve of illegal violence refrained from it and even tried to break up on-field fights. Rather than looking at football as an indiscriminate inculcator of physical brutality and domination, it is more productive to view each player as bringing with him to the game his own gender construction project.

Injuries

With physical contact comes increased risk of injury. During my fieldwork there were few injuries in the school team. Nevertheless serious injuries such as concussion, muscle tears and ligament damage were mentioned in the interviews as an accepted, rather than exceptional, aspect of community football. This anecdotal evidence is supported by recent research suggesting that injury rates are much higher in amateur football than elite football, and higher among adolescent footballers than junior or adult players (McMahon, et al. 1993; Orchard, et al. 1998; Seward, et al. 1993; Shawdon and Brukner 1994).

I suggest that, as well as the physiological reasons suggested in such research, there are also social forces at work. There is enormous peer pressure on footballers to display bravery by using their bodies as weapons, with little care for their own safety, and to react with stoicism to any resultant physical pain. The young men respect players who "go in hard" and "put their bodies on the line". Dale cited those who have the courage to run backwards to mark a ball without knowing who is running up behind them to contest the mark: "that's why like Bluey McKenna [AFL player] and that are the best, they just go back, they don't care about their own safety when they go into packs to mark a ball".

As Messner has already shown, "playing hurt" is a way of displaying stoicism and bravery (Messner 1992: 74). In sports, boys are taught "that to endure pain is courageous, to survive pain is manly" (Sabo 1994: 86). Boasting about playing injured was common during interviews. For instance, Jason said he was stretchered off the field when he stretched a knee ligament but returned to play two weeks later despite the risk of further injury. He also hurt his ankle

in a school game but kept playing, kicking with his other foot until it healed. When he dislocated his thumb, he clicked it back and kept playing. The most frightening example of stoicism, however, was displayed by Cory. Doctors recommended he never play again after being concussed several times during community matches, but warned if he did he *must* wear a helmet. Although he wears one when playing Reserves for his community club against older and bigger players than himself, he did not wear one when playing for Waratah High. The embarrassment of wearing a helmet in front of his peers must have prompted him to take such an enormous risk - luckily he was not hit in the head. As Messner has argued, the instrumental rationality which teaches athletes to view their own bodies as machines and weapons with which to annihilate an objectified opponent ultimately results in violence against their own body (Messner 1990: 211).

Football and Peer Relations

The gendered relationships of these young men with their peers in and around football is complex but two strong themes arose from the study. Firstly, there is an intense rivalry between players, both on and off the football field, to establish their place in the male hierarchy, which adds complexity and confusion to friendships between team members. Secondly, a minority of their female peers appeared to be sexually attracted specifically to male footballers.

Male Rivalry

A lot of bonding and socialising with other males occurs around playing or talking sport. Trent says sport is pretty much all he talks about with his mates because "it's something pretty much all guys can relate to, is just a game of footy. So it's just something easy to talk about." It is easy because it does not involve emotional frankness which may lay oneself open to put-downs and ridicule in the highly competitive culture of boys. It also engenders respect because it serves as a marker of masculinity. In *Power at Play*, Messner found that young boys may initially find playing sport enables them to experience emotionally "safe" relationships with other males. But because their own success relies on another's failure, organised sport encourages boys to view other boys not as intimates, but as rivals (Messner 1992: 33-4). My research supported this finding.

Liam says of his team mates "they just get too pig-headed and try and do all fancy stuff and just try and impress everyone, by taking spectacular marks and not sharing the ball with team mates". This involves competing with team mates as well as opponents, creating a constant tension between friendship and rivalry, cooperation and competition. Jason, for example, regularly reminds his best friend, Zach, that he was voted Fairest & Best on the Waratah High team in 1998 and Zach was only Runner Up: "Oh yeah! We're always trying to get one up on each other".

Many in the Waratah High team play in rival community teams on weekends which regularly play one another. A lot of bragging, threatening and verbal one-upmanship occurs at school in the lead up to such a match. Jason calls this "doing the talk", saying things like "Oh, we're going to flog yous this week!" Then, on the day "you run pass them and give them a nudge, you know, you give them a stare sort of thing, let them know what's going on". Cory enjoys saying threatening things like "Watch out next time the ball comes down" to his mates behind play. After the game it is back to being mates, talking about the game and the friendly rivalry again. Monday at school, the victors brag and put-down those on the losing team. I asked Scott why he enjoyed the rivalry with his mates:

SD: I like beating them, stuff like that... It's just good to see them lose, I don't know. Gives you the upper hand, I suppose... I suppose you're with them all the time and always getting in fights with them and stuff like that so, it feels good to get out there and beat them.

Scott's observation highlights a constant source of conflict and competition within the patriarchal gender order in which males not only have to assert their superiority and power over females but also over other males, if they are to reap the benefits of the male-dominated gender order.

Physical aggression and physical expressions of rivalry and superiority are also expressed through football in a way which would not be legitimate outside of the sporting context. When Ethan, one of the contradictory group, plays against his mates he does not take it easy on them, but nor does he "go out there aiming to kill them, because they're your friends obviously". Dale, from the defensive group, says he plays the game the same way he normally would, with one slight change: "don't go in so hard when you hit them, like with a shirt front or something, because you need them the next game". Dale justifies

his physical concession to his mates with a pragmatic concern for his other team, the Waratah High team, thus denying any emotional attachment to his mates. He evidently finds friendship and rivalry contradictory in this context. For some, the masculinity hierarchy stakes make the prospect of physical violence against one's friends much less confusing. Several from the hegemonic group said they went in harder against their mates than other opponents. When I asked Todd how he approaches the "dilemma" of playing against mates, he said he tells his team mates to "just go and hit 'em hard, don't back down from them... just hit 'em hard that's all and if I get the chance I hit 'em hard myself". Being Aboriginal, Todd had both a greater need to prove himself a man amongst his mostly White peers and also less cultural capital with which to do so.

Friendships, not just rivalries, are also expressed physically. For example, if one of Todd's team mates gets knocked out in a game, the rest of the team "start to lift in their game, so yeah they just come back and win the game for whichever mate that got knocked out" and/or seek revenge by "hitting back" at the player who knocked their team mate out. Brad says "If I see someone who's hurt one of our players or something, I like to give them a good little - let him know I'm there - give him a good hip-and-shoulder and stuff".

When the coach of the boys' team, Tim, talked about his own football career, it mirrored that of his players. Twenty or more years later, the place of football in young men's lives as a masculinising institution, the rivalries, team camaraderie and what being able to play football says about a young man to others, is still the same. For example, during juniors Tim and several of his close team mates changed clubs after his father, who was team manager, had a "run in" with the club. Tim recalls it motivated him to play well that year, especially when his old and new club played against one another:

TB: It was a big motivation to get out there and really go to town, prove a point, you know the fact that they had let someone like me go, regardless of whether it was my sort of fault or the argument was my responsibility but I remember a couple of days before the game, you know we had our training jumpers so the guys from [new team] we wore our jumpers and the guys from [old team] wore theirs so it was like two gangs walking through the school ground.

Though his team lost the game, he won his own private battle by physically defeating the son of the man with whom his father had had the argument:

TB: I suppose it's probably a bit nasty but one of the guys I was very good mates with in primary school, we sort of drifted apart in high school and it was his old man that was probably the cause of the rift and was living his dreams through his son - unfortunately [his son] wasn't up to the challenge. He was reasonably good but the pressure of the old man was very, very strong and I took this absolute screamer [mark] over the top of him. Knees in the back of the head... he stayed down for a little while but I suppose, I don't know whether it's the right thing to say but it wasn't meant at [him] as such, it was more directed towards his old man.

Male Football and Cathexis

The young men were aware of the sexual interest in footballers of some of their female peers. They noticed some are more attracted to footballers than non-footballers, in particular the more skilled, popular players and when watching their games, are more interested in footballers than football, doubting "if they really know much about the game, they're just probably looking at the guys". Drew thought that most girls know little about skills and techniques but if they are told a player is good or if he is compared favourably to an AFL player then they will admire him. Though perhaps partly trivialising the role of their female peers in male football, this view was supported by my own observations, for a small minority of their female peers.

The boys' home games were social occasions. There were usually as many female as male peers spectating. Among the young women present, were usually two sets of football "groupies", one from Waratah High and another from the opposition team. The Waratah groupies would attract attention from the players by strategically positioning themselves outside the changerooms (see Fig 33) or near the interchange bench (see Fig 27), loudly cheering each player as they sat down. The opposition groupies were usually on the boundary further downfield. Sometimes the Waratah groupies would know the opposition groupies and stand with them rather than other Waratah High supporters. When standing next to some groupies once, I heard them talking about the players, in particular one who took some high-flying marks. "Who was that?!" one said. After being told it was Kyle Johnson she invented a nickname, "Air-Johnno" and would scream it out every time he got near the ball.

In contrast to their muscular idols, the groupies all have a very feminine embodiment - slim, long hair, not overly made up but acting very sexy, giggly and 'girlie' (see Fig 34). They attract attention to themselves by wearing

alluring clothes and screaming a lot and were fairly obvious when chasing boys. One yelled out to a male footballer who was leaving the ground after a match "Hey! You didn't say 'Hi' to me!" The young men were always careful not to respond to such overtures and he just turned, gave a wry smile/laugh, then turned away and kept going. It is this cool, strong, silent, stoic, aloof masculinity which many of the young footballers embody which attracts the young groupies in the first place.

Trespassers

The advent of the girls' football team at Waratah High undoubtedly posed a potential threat to the hegemonic masculinity reproduced through male football. How did this group of footballers respond to it?

Boys' Attitudes to Girls' Football Team

All of the defensive group and eight (of 10) in the hegemonic group gave lip-service to the idea of their female peers playing football, but had no real understanding or depth of support for it. Many said they thought girls should play but could not tell me why. Or they would say it was good because they could "look at them" while they played, even though they had never "looked at" a girls' match. By sexually objectifying the young women they were re-asserting power over them. Others would contradict themselves, like Brad, who said "it's good because girls have not got any sports in which they can get aggressive" but when asked if his hypothetical children would play football he responded "Well *he* definitely is because I'll be like very, very supportive but if *she* wants to but I don't think there's many Sunday Leagues for girls".

All of the defensive group and many of the hegemonic group had a very condescending attitude towards girls' football. For instance, Liam:

LR: [laughing] I reckon it's pretty funny. Cos it's like, cos you see the males playing it and it's like heaps faster and heaps more skilled but when you see them it's just fun to see them, it's like they're little kids running around. It's like they're under-8s or something.

Brett was even more critical: "The ones that play in our sport class are pretty hopeless but can you say that?" Cory, from the hegemonic group, made it clear he had absolutely no interest in girls football, had not watched it, did not know

when they played and dismissively said he did not have an opinion of it. However, he added that he had nothing against it, because he saw no reason why they should not play - "No, no way, they can play footy, for sure".

Only three of the hegemonic group appeared to genuinely support the idea of girls playing football. Of those, Drew has little to fear from girls' football because he is one of the most promising players on the boys' team. He was one of the few to put their lower skill levels down to lack of opportunity, rather than innate physical inferiority and to admit that "there are some good girl football players like [Jade] in the school team, she's a real good player... Yeah, there's some real good girls, like they've got good kicks on them and everything." Thus, the young men's reactions varied according to the perceived threat to their own masculine status. For instance, Dale's insistence on the superiority of male football and the need to keep it gender-segregated has particular significance for him because he has quite a small build and average skills compared to his team mates (see above):

NW: Why do you think it's good for girls to play footy?

DW: Might as well, it's anyone's game [begrudging], as long as they don't start playing with *us*, that's fine because they're physically not adapted to the game, like cos we're physically stronger, genetically and that.

All of the contradictory group, have a positive attitude towards girls' football. Ethan's response was the most compassionate: "I think it's good, cos I suppose if I was a girl I wouldn't be able to handle it if I wasn't allowed to play footy." Most of the contradictory group also support girls' football more literally by watching their games. Trent watches because his friend, Simone, is on the team and she watches his games and because he thinks:

TW: it would make girls feel better if some of the guy footballers were down there watching them, like it would make them feel as if their competition was important too, instead of just you know, fun or whatever.

Trent, Jason, Zach and Doug (all from the contradictory group, except Zach) watched several girls' home games during my fieldwork. They would join in the warm-up before the match, sometimes taking over in an effort to show off their skills (along with several male teachers). They would then spend the whole game cheering, yelling criticisms to umpires and generally "horsing around" to maintain macho credibility while watching girls play football.

Also, after the girls' team had played a home game, often the few young men from the boys' team who had been watching their game, would go onto the oval and start kicking before all of the girls were even off the field. This may have been less about owning gendered space than about showing off to and trying to attract the sexual attentions of some of the young female players. I noted too that, after quickly changing their tops, often in the open, some of the young women would then join in kicking with the boys.

The success of the girls' team seemed to threaten the boys' team as a whole. In the year of this study, the girls' team won their Grand Final and the boys' team did not. During the assembly at which each of the girls' team was presented individually to the school after their Grand Final win, some of the boys' team sitting behind us were saying "get on with it". I overheard several male players sitting behind me mock and deride the female players as Janice gave a short précis on each player's performance during the season. I also overheard derogatory remarks regarding the standard of the team and the girls' competition generally, such as calling them a "bush team". The majority of the boys' team laughed heartily when the final score of the low-scoring Grand Final was announced. They could barely contain themselves when Janice praised one player who had hand-balled all season for finally kicking the ball for the first time in the last game. They also laughed at a slightly overweight player as she walked up to the stage and a few made a comment about another being attractive. The boys' attitudes towards the girls' team is certainly different as a group than as individuals. Those with contradictory masculinities are more likely to act complicitly by laughing or remaining silent in such situations than they are otherwise.

The threat of female football to the collective and individual masculinities of the footballers on the boys' team, comes not from the girls' competition but from mixed-sex competition, such as in the annual staff vs student match.

Staff vs Students Football Match

The staff vs student match has been an annual event at Waratah High since Kurt, the School Chaplain, arrived at the school. In the fourth staff vs student match, which took place during my field trip, the "student" team was more representative of the schoolboys' football team than the student body as a whole. Only two schoolgirls were on the team, sending a message that male football is more important and meaningful than female football. Other sectors

of the school were also under-represented, for instance, ethnic minorities. However, the Welsh computer teacher, who is also the school's soccer coach, organises a staff vs student soccer match each year, comprised largely of non-Australian students, also mostly male, even though there is a schoolgirls' soccer team at Waratah High. There were many different accounts of why there were only two girls playing on the student team. My task was not to find out "the truth" but "the truths" to establish how the various people involved negotiated gender relations in the context of a mixed-sex football game.

Kurt, who originally trained as a PE teacher before becoming a Chaplain, says that the philosophy behind these matches is to engender school spirit through an event all the school can enjoy, either as participants or observers, and to show students a different side of the staff. The occasion was marked as an informal, fun event in several ways. The Principal, who was the commentator on the day, comically imitated television and radio commentary by using terms such as "mongrel punt kick", talking about "contenders for Mark of the Day" and giving players nicknames, like "God" for the Chaplain, which is also the nickname of a legendary AFL player. As well as fostering a fun atmosphere this showed the Principal to be human. Before the match, a vintage car drove onto the oval with a teacher who had, according to the commentary, "just come back from a knee injury sustained in last year's match". The teacher held his hands in the air in the manner of a sports hero and then jumped adroitly from the car before being handed a pair of crutches. As a student brought a wheelchair onto the ground, the commentary referred to "being prepared this year if he is injured again."

Despite the promotion of the match as a fun, playful occasion, there was an element of seriousness. The play was fairly rough, both teams were trying to win and those individuals who could play well were trying to star. As Drew reveals, the student players were well aware of the light-hearted nature of the event and enjoyed such an informal interaction with their teachers, but were also keen to take the opportunity to improve their status in the male hierarchy, especially *vis a vis* adult males, who normally dominate them:

NW: How did you enjoy the staff vs student match?

DT: Oh, it's a bit of fun. It's a bit hard to play some good football but because you're too busy laughing!

NW: What's in it for you, what do you get out of it?

DT: I just give the teachers a bit of a hard time for the next couple of days, just have good fun really. Joke, laugh, get on with the teachers and that.

NW: Bonding with the teachers but also

DT: Showing them how, yeah [laughs].

Some teachers did not take the game very seriously, such as the teacher who had been driven around the ground before the match. At the end of the game, when it was obvious the students had won and the bell was about to sound, he got another football and began kicking goals. However, most of the teachers appeared to take the match quite seriously.

Before the game, Kurt prays there are not too many injuries, violence or "pay-backs". He plays on the staff side but joins the student huddle just before the match starts to reinforce the importance of "clean" play. Drew said that, given this, the students were surprised at how hard the teachers "went in":

DT: the Chaplain said have a fair game, don't go in too hard, just play footy and they come out taking heads off and everything. You know [Carl] with blond hair, pretty big, played in the middle? Well, he got clotheslined by this woodwork teacher. I don't know if it was deliberate but I think it hurt him! It was pretty rough out there!

NW: What about you, did you get hurt?

DT: Yeah, some big guy in the sports department... took my head off a couple of times. It was pretty rough but no-one really got hurt.

This was not true as one male PE teacher damaged his knee when a student fell on it accidentally. Another teacher suffered a broken rib. When the Principal announced the toll in a staff meeting the following day, I overheard an older female teacher say to a colleague "If people are going to get hurt, they shouldn't play it. What's wrong with croquet? [laughs]"

Kurt, in particular, appeared to have much invested in the match. Perhaps because when he was younger he got as far as playing Colts for a Westar League team before his football career was ended through injury. After the game, Kurt discussed the game and "the worst goal umpiring he'd seen in his life" for about two hours with various other members of staff. Nor could he believe the statistics, that more than 10 students gained more than 10 possessions each. He seemed annoyed the following day when the Principal announced the best

players, "Goal of the Day" and so on, over the PA. Perhaps it was because his name was not mentioned. The biggest indicator of how much playing in the game meant to him, as opposed to just organising it for others, was the fact that a few weeks before the match he retired from the Waratah Seniors League after receiving two breaks and a compound fracture in his cheekbone during a match. On the day of the staff vs student match, he had his cheek checked-up by his doctor and was cleared to play "if he was careful".

When Kurt recruited the teachers for the staff team he was only able to attract two female teachers. Kurt and Janice, the "games committee", selected two players from the boys' team to organise the student team and instructed them to include two female students to play on the two females teachers. The logic behind this is that all female staff and students are weaker and less skilled than all male staff and students. This is not true. Gemma, at 15, is taller than many of the male and female teachers, can kick 50 meters, ruck superbly, is a national javelin qualifier and has a reputation across the school for her sporting and athletic excellence. She would have been an excellent choice, her height being a special advantage when playing against adults. However, she was ill the day of the match and I was unable to establish if she had been selected.

The young men chose Simone and Jasmine as the two token females in their team. Both are talented footballers but not in the same league as Jade, Gemma, Kelly and several others. Unlike others in the girls' team, neither Jasmine nor Simone have played combat sports against males before. Indeed, when I asked Simone why she did not get more possessions of the ball during the match, she said "I was just shy, I didn't want to get the ball, they're pretty rough".

Jasmine is a tomboy but slim and attractive. Simone acts sexy, especially around male footballers. She runs water for the Waratah Colts, many of whom also play for the Waratah High boys' team. They say she is their good luck charm and is somewhat of a team adornment. She has been out with three of their players, two of whom also play for the school. Thus, even though Simone is a good footballer, she poses little threat to the boys' team, as her flirtatious relationship with them means she remains sexualised and therefore an object of their desire. Jade, conversely, has elicited a different response from the boys' team because she has a masculine embodiment and is a skilful player, by male and female standards, who competes (often successfully) with male footballers, rather than trying to sexually attract them.

If the young men who selected the team had made their choice based on skill and experience, they most certainly would have chosen Jade above all other players from the schoolgirls' team. Jade played in the boys' football team in primary school until she was legally dismissed at 12. Brad recalled Jade was told to play football in primary school because she was "too aggressive" in netball and basketball. Doug remembers Jade playing on his team in Year 6 and kicking further than the boys, including himself. Doug felt he should be able to at least kick further than her, highlighting the fact that masculinities are socially constructed in opposition and as superior to, femininities. Brad was on her team in Year 7 and said she "made all the boys look fairly poor [laughs] she was pretty good". I asked Brad how the team reacted to her being there: "To start with, we sort of thought "Err, girl on our team!" [negative] and when she started playing and beating us, we thought 'Ah yeah, she's one of the team, sort of thing'." Even though she was on his team, Brad talks about her "beating us".

Now Captain of the girls' team, Jade "plays like a boy", has the confidence to play with or against males and would have had no qualms about playing against male teachers. In the year of the study Jade was the only member of the girls' team to be selected for the Schoolgirl Allstars Team, was one of nine to be selected from Waratah High to play in the Perth Representative team, was voted Best on Ground in both the Semi Final and Grand Final, and was a recipient of the Pierre de Coubertin Award for excellence in sport. On top of this, she is one of the few female boundary umpires of men's football at Westar League level. She was not selected to play on the student team.

Jade says she gets "crap" from the boys' team, who say "Oh you should come play for us and show us up!" in a mocking but threatened manner. Before the staff vs student match, a student in Jade's PE class asked two of the young men from the boys' team, also in her PE class, whether any girls would be playing and they said they did not want girls on their team. Jade was infuriated, retorting:

JE: "Screw ya, I'm umpiring and the ball's not going to go out of bounds, it's going to go out on the full for you". So I called two out on the full for this one guy because he said he didn't want girls playing [laughs]. I'm not biased.

NW: Were they out on the full?

JE: No, no, out of bounds. Serves him right! It wasn't nice.

Jade said bitterly that she decided to umpire because it was the only way she would get her hands on the football. Janice and three other students - Kelly, Jacinta and Janela also umpired the game.

The females on ground during the match really were token. Not only did the domestic science teacher not know what she was doing and Simone and Jasmine "hung back", but none of the male players appeared to be trying to include the female players. Only one possession of the ball was made by a female throughout the whole match, when one of the young men on the student team passed to Simone and she kicked the ball. For this, she won "female with the most possessions". Twice during the match Kelly, who was umpiring, changed from her umpiring outfit into her football gear and ran on and played, a rebel player so to speak, but she did not gain a possession either.

The young women I interviewed were unsure who selected players for the teams but many perceived the boys did not want girls on their team. Simone, who was selected, said "the boys wanted us to play, they didn't care. And the guys were the ones who passed to me as well." She was under the impression that Kurt was not too keen on girls playing. Some young women who would not have minded playing with boys and against men knew nothing about the match until the teams were announced over the PA. Some knew about it and were disappointed they were not asked to play. Others were not fazed. Several said they would not have played even if asked because they were frightened of playing against adult males. Even so, as Lisa said "it would have been nice to have been asked".

Jimmy was aware that quite a few of the girls' team wanted to play on the student team but was not one of the selectors. When I asked if his teammates who selected the players were not too keen on having girls in the team, he said "Oh, I just think they overlooked them, just put all the boys first". He added "the people organising [Kurt and Janice] said that even if there are girls in the team, the boys probably wouldn't pass it to them and stuff". Drew, one of the most talented players on the boys' team, focussed on the frailty of female players when I asked him would he mind having more girls in the team:

DT: Oh yeah [casual tone] didn't really matter I don't think. You probably wouldn't be able to put them in the middle because it would get pretty

rough in the guts but up forward somewhere, because it wouldn't be that bad, like people would be wary of them, like they won't go in as hard like the teachers, but it wouldn't have been too bad I suppose.

Kurt was certainly aware of gender issues in sport. He had taught PE at a primary school which had single-sex PE classes and did his Honours research on female perceptions of single-sex PE. In the past, Kurt wanted to have more females playing in order to slow the game down, reduce injuries and to foster a more fun, less serious approach to the game. However, since the profile of the girls' football team has increased he has realised more even numbers of males and females is important because it really would be a staff vs student, rather than male staff vs male students match. However, in the year of this study he could not "drum up" enough female teachers for the staff team but says he plans in the following year to work out a different quota system or insist on a minimum number of females in each team in order to increase female participation in the event.

It could be that Kurt simply told me he would make these changes because he knew I was studying gender issues in girls' and boys' football. However, it may also have been that slow but sure changes have come about because of the now well-established, high-profile and successful schoolgirls' team. Thus, although this tradition serves in many ways to reinforce and celebrate the existing gender regime at Waratah High, it is a dynamic, rather than static, event with the potential to challenge, as well as reinforce, the current gender order.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I return to the original questions posed at the beginning of the thesis to review what has been established by the research findings.

Football and Gendered Embodiment

It is doubtful that bigendered embodiment is peculiar to the young women in this study. It is more likely that studies on female sporting experiences have been so mired in dichotomous thinking, for example seeking to establish whether sportswomen are masculinised by participating in sport or whether they participate in traditionally feminine ways, that the more slippery reality of bigendered human embodiment has been overlooked. Indeed, in trying to make sense of why some females play football, there is a great danger of viewing their behaviour through existing paradigms, by focusing on the butch women who play and ignoring the feminine players, or on the very few who are feminist, rather than the majority who are not. Rather than try to explain away their anomalous behaviour, it is more fruitful to focus instead on the variety of females who play and to acknowledge their differently gendered embodiments, various motivations to play and varying attitudes towards the contact element in the game. By doing so, what becomes evident is a constant tension between their bigendered human embodiment and the social construction of "the masculine" and "the feminine".

The level of bigendered embodiment varied from one individual to another. For example, it was more apparent among schoolgirl than women footballers because adolescence is a very experimental stage, in particular with regards to gender and identity. It was barely visible among the young men who, though adolescent, had much more at stake and little to gain from experimenting with feminine embodiment. Nevertheless, by understanding those we research as bigendered, we can avoid merely reproducing the cultural dichotomy of masculine/feminine in our analyses and instead consider the ways in which this dichotomy is lived, embodied, repressed and perverted. Certainly, the ways in which we are embodied are emphasised and highly apparent whilst playing sports but there is no reason why the concept of bigendered embodiment should be limited to furthering our understanding of embodiment and of gender only in the sporting context.

Resistance or Complicity?

Bordo argues that women's bodies are "a site of struggle, where we must work to keep our daily practices in the service of resistance to gender domination, not in the service of "docility" and gender normalization" (1992: 28). Thus, a major purpose of this study was to establish whether full-contact sports like football are an arena of resistance to forms of feminine embodiment that are conducive to and complicit in the reproduction of male domination. The answer to this is complex and, at this stage, only partial.

For the young women for whom playing a contact sport is a departure from their sporting history, football encourages them to begin to come out of their physical shells and playfully experiment with their bodies. Once they get over their initial fears and doubts about their ability to tackle and survive being tackled, they quickly develop a sense of themselves as more powerful than they had previously thought. Their bravery, the exhilaration of being physically assertive and the discovery that they can actually do something which they had believed for so long only males could do, gives them a boost in confidence. Also, two women reported feeling more capable of defending themselves from physical attack by men, which concurs with Bart & O'Brien's hypothesis that learning to tackle and be tackled from a young age may make women more likely to defend themselves when attacked (1985: 106). Whether they would actually defend themselves or not is another matter. Thus, it is difficult to determine from this study whether these changes in embodiment translate into social power beyond the sports field. This was certainly more evident among adult women footballers in their relationships with their husbands or male partners but less clear in the case of the schoolgirls.

While few of the women interviewed consciously set out to resist male domination by playing football, many reported that it did disturb their gendered relations with partners or husbands, particularly those with traditional relationships or marriages. Conversely, for homosexual women, playing football rarely disturbs sexual relationships. As far as gender and sexual identities are concerned, playing football resulted in greater harmony than disruption for gay women because it provided a non-heterosexist, safe, empowering and supportive environment in which to be "out" and to meet other gay women. This concurs with Griffin's (1998) findings from her larger and broader study.

Another purpose of this study is to determine whether female footballers simply internalise the male value system embedded in football or bring to the game their own values and meanings. Certainly, some butch homosexual footballers are attracted to the culturally "masculinising" aspects of football and denigrate or eschew the feminine in favour of the masculine. In doing so, they somewhat paradoxically collude in celebrating the superiority of "the masculine" over "the feminine". Thus they have constructed their gendered identities within, rather than outside of, the gender dichotomy. Also, some of the schoolgirl footballers stereotype and denigrate other, more traditional females. Overall, however, female footballers do not uncritically ape male footballers. There are some important gendered differences. For example, female footballers do not develop the rivalries male footballers do, reflecting gendered differences in friendship networks and styles.

Furthermore, when considering these issues it is crucial to disentangle what is positive and what is negative about that which is defined masculine, before we dismiss the good with the bad. For my mind, being powerfully embodied is a good thing for both women and men. Just because powerful bodies have the potential to dominate and abuse other, weaker bodies does not necessarily mean they will. Obviously, dominating others, physically or otherwise, falls into the negative category of culturally defined male attributes and is therefore an undesirable trait for both males and females. But powerful bodies are less likely to be dominated and abused and more likely to be confident and to assert a greater social presence. Kelly's description of the social power she gained over her male students through her reputation for physical toughness and aggression, even though it was never directed at her students, and also through the visible muscles on her body, suggests that women who are physically strong and aggressive are less likely to be dominated, physically or in other ways. They may, however, be marginalised for not being embodied in a conventional heterosexually attractive way.

Defending the Gender Order

It would appear from the defensive response of most of the adolescent male footballers in the study and from many of the responses to women's football, that female football does indeed pose a potential threat to hegemonic masculinity and the current gender order. Not surprisingly, such a flagrant challenge to the patriarchal gender order does not go undefended but the

response to the women's and the schoolgirls' competitions have been different.

For the moment at least, the challenge represented by schoolgirl football has been contained and limited in two ways. Firstly, through the maintenance of separate male and female competitions by the schools and other organising bodies, the myth of male physical superiority is more easily maintained and thus the potential threat to the gender order is minimised. The real threat of female footballers to young men becomes apparent when this divisive mechanism is not in place. The staff vs student match and interviews with young men from the boys' team highlighted that mixed-sex football is much more threatening to the current gender order than females playing football in their own separate competition.

In Western Australian primary schools, however, girls are allowed by the WAFC to play in boys' football teams up to 12 years of age, providing one of the few opportunities for mixed-sex competition. Thus, occasional forays into enemy territory are made by renegade females, like Jade. This cut-off age of 12 is rather arbitrary and based on the assumption that as boys begin to develop into young men they become too strong and rough for their weak and fragile female counterparts to compete against. Ironically, primary school is the ideal time for girls and boys to develop the strong bodies, skills and assertive embodiment required to play skilful and aggressive football later on in life, like Jade. Jade's threat has been only partly contained by labeling her a tomboy - a cultural anomaly, which defines her behaviour as deviant and still belonging to boys. Most of the young women on the girls' team, however, minimised or off-set their unconventional behaviour with some conventional expressions of femininity, thus avoiding marginalisation from their mainstream peers. In this way, most were able to successfully negotiate the apparent contradiction between conventional femininity and playing football. This, however, has not been the case for the women's league.

The WAWFL is less successful than the schoolgirl competition in terms of the number of teams and players and the challenge it presents to the gender order. It is more marginalised than the SSSC because adolescent girls who play football are considered tomboys and tomboyishness is generally assumed to be a phase young girls outgrow but women who play contact sports are categorised as lesbians, deviant and/or not "real" women. It is no coincidence that women's football, despite its evident appeal to the few men and women who

have actually attended games, has received little serious media attention. Not only does the common homophobic reaction to women's football marginalise and demonise women footballers but it also serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy because it effectively deters many heterosexual women from playing, including up-and-coming schoolgirl footballers from the SSSC. Whilst women's football remains a relatively obscure and marginal sport, it poses little threat to the existing gender order. But because the Waratah High girls' football team is not a particularly butch team, they are not as easily marginalised nor dismissed as gender deviants. Nor can they be easily ignored by the rest of their school when the victorious girls' team is presented at assembly. Because schoolgirl football appears to be far less threatening to male football organisations and sponsors, the SSSC may be the acorn of resistance which, given time and the right conditions, could grow into an oak tree of embodied resistance to male domination.

The challenge which the women's league currently poses to the gender order is no less important or admirable but it is on a smaller, more personal scale. Playing football disturbs the traditional gender relations of some heterosexual players and provides a safe-haven for homosexual women in a society in which heterosexuality is 'compulsory'. Women's football also provides an arena within which heterosexual women share a common interest with homosexual women and, in doing so, gain an understanding of homosexual people as something other than deviants or the butt of jokes. This in itself is subversive to the current heterosexist gender order. However, greater acceptance of gay footballers by straight footballers does not indicate that the categories between gay and straight women are becoming blurred. Though the interviews with gay women who had identified as heterosexual earlier in life provide evidence of Freud's argument that humans are constitutionally bisexual, the women themselves revealed very categorical and fixed notions of sexuality, saying they had "become" gay or "used to be" straight. Bisexuality was generally frowned upon unless it was perceived to be part of a temporary transitional phase from heterosexual to homosexual. Thus they have constructed their sexual identities within rather than outside of the homo/hetero sexual dichotomy, in a sense defining themselves in opposition to mainstream heterosexual society.

Feminism, however, cannot be just about empowering women to resist male domination. It must also be about interrupting the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity.

Football and Hegemonic Masculinity

This research project has shown that schoolboy football plays an enormous role, along with community football, in schooling *some* young men's bodies in a specific type of masculine embodiment. To learn to play football is to learn to command attention which focuses on the hardness and skillfulness of men's bodies and their ability to dominate other bodies, thus asserting a powerful, masculine social presence. Yet schooling the body in this way is not unproblematic nor does it uniformly inculcate young men into reproducing hegemonic masculinity, despite football's ritual celebration of male physical superiority over women.

The profound and almost universal impact on young men of the father-football-masculinity nexus indicates that schooling the body begins (and continues) at home, in the context of gendered family relations. Because the gendered embodiment and masculinities of these young men are mediated by the racial, ethnic and gender dynamics of their families, not all of the footballers in the study have constructed a hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, some play football in order to gain peer conferral of their masculine status, while constructing a different, less dominant style of masculinity without the risk of being marginalised as feminine or homosexual. Though far from outspoken feminists, the small group of young men in this study with contradictory masculinities may be indicative of a small but positive change in gender relations since the advent of second-wave feminism. This finding highlights the importance of life-history interviews which, properly done, uncover the relationships which constitute the person through the raising of one generation of humans by another (Connell 1994: 33-4). Seeking to understand both society's role in shaping individuals and the role of individuals in reproducing society in this way avoids the trap of homogenizing groups of people who are not homogenous.

It is understandable that much of the research on gender and men's sports to date has focused on the reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity, especially since it is a prevalent aspect of male-dominated sports. This now being well established and, as the study of the schoolboys' team illustrates, it is important for feminist researchers to push our analyses of sport further by looking for instances where the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity is problematic, incomplete or successfully challenged.

Internal Contradictions

Though the father-football relationship was strongest for the young men in the study it was, unexpectedly, a recurring theme in all three teams. Playing and following football provides common ground not only for sons but also some daughters to interact with their fathers and develop a bond. The difference is that football is still defined largely as a masculine arena, so for sons it is a matter of confirming and constructing their own masculine identity, whereas for daughters it means eschewing traditional femininities in order to meet on their father's social territory. For some young women, wanting to play is directly linked with their desire to inspire love and admiration in their fathers the only way they know how. This forms an enormous contradiction in the gender order but it is not the only one.

Australian Rules football is played at one time or another, discussed, watched and enjoyed regularly by the majority of West Australian males. It is this very fascination with, appreciation and love of the game itself that results in positive feedback from some men to female football. The skills, power, physical aggression and determination men admire in male footballers, are the same characteristics they praise in female footballers. Conversely, females who follow and enjoy male football or admire individual footballers play a crucial role in supporting an important ritual celebration of hegemonic masculinity. However, in the process, some develop a genuine love for a game to the point where they want to play it - an activity that ironically threatens to undermine the very ideology being celebrated through football. This is further complicated by the fact that sometimes the men in the lives of female footballers, such as fathers or brothers, become supportive of women's football through their existing relationships with the players. These "perversions" highlight the cracks and fissures in the current gender order, demonstrating that the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity is far from absolute, inevitable, unproblematic or universal, as many studies of men's sport suggest.

Future Research

This thesis opens up several further questions, most important of which is whether, as I strongly suspect, boys too are bigendered. Because football ritually celebrates hegemonic masculinity, it was not possible to establish this

in the current study. To do so, it would be necessary to carry out similar research in a non-sporting arena that nevertheless is very focused on the body. With this in mind I intend my next research project to study schoolboys in compulsory dance education classes. Such a study would not only attempt to establish whether males are bigendered individuals but would also seek to gain a greater understanding of how non-hegemonic forms of masculine embodiment are constructed and/or resisted because there are several elements present in most (though certainly not all) forms of dance which conflict with contemporary Western hegemonic forms of masculinity and masculine embodiment. To begin with dance movements are frequently associated with femininity in our society. Secondly, even though most forms of dance require varying levels of physical power, skill and stamina, the raw emotions and sexuality expressed through the body in dance conflict with the stoicism often associated with hegemonic forms of masculinity. That is, with the exception of certain forms, like slam dance, which express emotions compatible with hegemonic masculinity such as frustration, aggression and anger.

With regards to the bigendered embodiment of females, I suggest future studies 'revisit' PE and traditional female sports such as netball to establish whether, as I suspect, young women also experiment with boisterous forms of embodiment in other arenas, including non-contact sports, though perhaps this may not be so immediately obvious as it is in football and other contact sports.

Practical Applications

The implications of this study are not merely theoretical. The study shows parents, PE practitioners, Principals and curriculum developers that football is not an indiscriminate inculcator of physical violence and aggression. At the same time it also illustrates that the small number of schools providing female students with the opportunity to play full-contact sports are no longer simply schooling young women's bodies to be passive, submissive, weak and defenseless but are giving them the opportunity to experience their bodies powerfully, skillfully, confidently and forcefully.

With regards to the boys' study, the findings that excessive physical violence or aggression is successfully curbed in school football (at least at Waratah High)

but not in community football highlights the need for community football clubs, umpires and coaches to review their responsibilities when in charge of young men by developing 'zero tolerance' policies towards excessive and/or illegal violence and aggression.

Personal Note

In a sense I have also been a part of the research findings. My growth during this arduous four year period has been embodied as well as intellectual. But it has not been a linear process. Academic growth spurts have been followed by intellectual crises. And, though I was becoming more masculine in dress, behaviour, presentation and embodiment, this was interspersed with times when I dressed, behaved and presented myself very femininely. Much confusion about my embodied identity usually ensued such feminine outbursts. Towards the very end of the project, as I resolved this contradiction academically, I also came to terms with, and felt more comfortable with, the fact that I am indeed a bigendered human individual. This knowledge that we are all bigendered is empowering in itself. Thus, as I complete this thesis, I am left with the common dilemma (Enslin 1994) of making these findings something more than simply the process of gaining a degree and publishing papers to enhance my academic career.

TABLE 1
WOMEN'S INTERVIEW DATA

PERSONAL DATA						FOOTBALL			
Pseudonym	Age	Nationality /Race	Occupation	Mar. Stat.	No. of Kids	WAWFL Team Play for	Yrs Play -ed*	Age Start -ed	Football Achievements and Volunteer Work
Ali York	19	Wh/Aus	Shop Assistant	Sgle	-	Longdale	2	17	State team 1998.
Anna Lindfield "Linny"	24	Wh/Aus	Geography Student	Sgle	-	Greenway	8	17	1994 State team. Only female in Eagles Legends.
Arlene Rice	17	Wh/Aus	Engineering Student	Sgle	-	Perth Uni	4**	14	Team Vice-Captain.
Belinda Cross	28	Wh/Aus	Pattern Cutter (furn.)	Ptnr	-	Greenway	1	28	
Brigit Starr "Star"	26	Wh/Aus	Bricky's Labourer	Ptnr	-	Greenway	2**	24	1998 State team.
Caroline Strada "Jonesy"	30	Wh/Aus	Part-time Accounts Clerk/"Houseum"	Mar	2	Greenway	8	20	Team Captain. Committee Member.
Christine Foley "Boots"	30	Wh/Aus	School Psychologist	Ptnr	-	Greenway	1	29	
Danni Mills "Millisy"	25	Wh/Aus	PE Teacher	Ptnr	1*	Milton	3	22	SSSC Coach. 1998 State tm.
Elizabeth Chadstone "Beth"	33	Wh/Aus	Disabled Prog. Facilitator	Sgle	-	Greenway	10	23	League President.
Emma Richards	20	Wh/Aus	Media Prodct. Assist.	Ptnr	-	Milton	3	17	Committee Member.
Fiona Lawless "Freddy"	23	Wh/Zimb	Archaeologist	Ptnr	-	Coolaroo	3	20	Team Captain & Manager WAWFL's FDT Rep.
Gaya Hickman "Hickey"	25	Wh/Aus	Ops. Superv (ex-fitter and turner)	Sgle	-	Greenway	1	25	1998 State team.
Geraldine Fuller	24	Wh/Aus	Physiotherapist	Ptnr	-	Greenway	4	18	Committee Member. State team's physio.
Jay Brent	27	Wh/Aus	Duty Mgr - Rec. Ctr.	Ptnr	-	Milton	4	23	State team Captain. Committ Member. Team Vice-Capt.

PERSONAL DATA						FOOTBALL			
Pseudonym	Age	Nationality /Race	Occupation	Mar. Stat.	No. of Kids	WAWFL Team Play for	Yrs Play -ed*	Age Start -ed	Football Achievements and Volunteer Work
Jessica Conway "Jonesy"	35	Wh/Aus	Kitch. Hand/Clerk	Mar	-	Ridgley	10	25	V-Capt 1994 State team. 1998 State team.
Karen Munro "Kaz"	34	Wh/Aus	Prison Officer	Sgle	-	ex-Ridgley	6 ⁺	23	Coach. Committ Member. Best All-Rounder 2 yrs.
Katrina Ruhl "Trine"	21	Wh/Aus	Human Mvt Student	Ptnr	-	Perth Uni	2	20	Team Captain. Committee Member.
Kelly Hall	28	Wh/Aus	Science Teacher	Mar	-	Coolaroo	4	25	SSSC Founder. Team Mgr Committee Member.
Kitty van Lyf	21	Wh/Aus	Graduate Engineer	Sgle	-	Perth Uni	1	21	
Kym Fenn	25	Wh/Aus	Police Officer	Sgle	-	Greenway	1	25	1998 State team. All-Aust. Team 1998.
Lyn Cookson "Cookie"	32	Wh/Aus	Office Administrator	Mar	-	Ridgley	8	25	Team Capt. and Vice-Capt.
Marnie Tebbutt	22	Wh/Aus	Landscape Gardener (unemployed)	Ptnr	-	Greenway	1	22	
Martina Rushbrook	27	Wh/Aus	Full-time Mother	Div	1	Coolaroo	3	25	State team 1998. Team Manager.
Melanie Baines "Mel"	33	Wh/Aus	Librarian (Manager)	Ptnr	1	Ridgley	9	23	Most Improved Player
Natalie Emerton "Ginger"	22	Wh/Aus	Aust. u-23 Cricketer/ Greenkeeper	Ptnr	-	Ridgley	1	22	Deputy Vice-Capt. of State team 1998. All Aust. team 1998.
Nicole Abbott "Nicks"	42	Wh/Aus	YEO (ex-Primary PE)	Ptnr	1 ⁺	Ridgley	10	33	
Penny Willard	27	Aboriginal	Public Servant	Mar	4	Longdale	3	25	1998 State team. All-Aust Series Player 1998. Team Capt. Committee Member.
Peta Pencini	19	Ital/Aus	Media Student	Sgle	-	Milton	1	19	

PERSONAL DATA						FOOTBALL			
Pseudonym	Age	Nationality /Race	Occupation	Mar. Stat.	No. of Kids	WAWFL Team Play for	Yrs Play -ed*	Age Start -ed	Football Achievements and Volunteer Work
Rochelle Collins "Shell"	31	Wh/Aus	Public Servant	Mar.	-	Milton	5	24	1994 State team. Team Capt & Vice-Capt. Committee Member
Sally Dunning	33	Wh/Aus	Lending Manager	Ptnr	1	ex-Ridgley	7	22	League Founder.
Sue McKee	23	Wh/Aus	TAFE Student	Ptnr	-	Ridgley	3	20	
Tammy Austen "Megsy"	34	Wh/Aus	Coil Winder (trade)	Ptnr	-	ex-Ridgley	10	22	V-Capt 1994 State team. Committee Member. Team Capt & Vice.
Tania Ruhl	22	Wh/Aus	Lunch Bar Owner	Ptnr	-	Perth Uni	2 ^{††}	20	Team Treasurer. Coach - 1 year.
Terri North "Norrie"	32	Aboriginal	Storeperson	Ptnr	-	Ridgley	10	23	Capt 1994 State team. 1998 State Team. Team Capt.
Tina Kargotich	27	Yug/Aus	Financial Adviser	Ptnr	-	Ridgley	1	27	
Ursula Wilhelm	19	Germ/Aus	Geology Student	Sgle	-	Perth Uni	2	18	Team Vice-Pres.

Wh/Aus = White Australian
Wh/Zimb = White Zimbabwean
Germ/Aus = German/Australian
Ital/Aus = Italian/Australian
Yug/Aus = Yugoslav/Australian

† Partner's child.
†† Played six years and coached for two years.
††† 1 year playing, 1 year coaching while injured.

* Does not include season off through injury, having children, travel or just having a break from football and so on.
** 1 year playing in WAWFL, 3 years playing in SSSC at high school.
*** 1 year training with a men's team, 1 year playing for the WAWFL (also trained in a boys' team as a child).

TABLE 2
GIRLS' INTERVIEW DATA

PERSONAL DATA							FOOTBALL		
Pseudonym	Age	Schl Year	National -ity/Race	Desired Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation	Years Played	First Play-ed	Football Achieve-ments
Amy Vaughan	16	11	Wh/Aus	Asian Studies, uni Work in tourism	Primary teacher	High School teacher (soc. stud)	2	Yr 10	Repres.
Caroline Davis "Davey"	17	12	Wh/Aus	Naval Officer (BA in History Defence Force Academy)	Housewife	Bus Driver	1	Yr 10	
Dana Jordon	16	12	Wh/Aus	Environmental or Biological Sc. (uni)	1. Housewife 2. Bank teller	1. Butcher 2. Labouring jobs	1	Yr 12	
Elli Hughes	15	10	Aborig-inal	1. Police Officer 2. Join Navy	Clerk.	Lecturer, Aboriginal Studies	8		Repres. Runner-U Best-On-Grd in the Gd Final
Gemma Caffrey	15	10	Aborig-inal	University degree - not sure what in	Foster Mum and casual worker	Road worker	2	Yr 8	
Georgia Truscot	17	12	Wh/Aus	Animal or vet. sc. /marine biol (uni)	Machinist, clothing factory	Boiler-maker	3	Prim Schl	
Jacinta Kirk	16	11	Eng/Aus	Aeronautical Eng in airforce	Lab Technician	1. Prison warden 2. Dairy farmer	3	Yr 10	
Jade Elliot "Jado"	17	12	Wh/Aus	1. PE Teacher (uni) 2. Dip. Health Sc & Sports Medicine (TAFE)	Housewife	Bank Manager	5 of 7	Prim ary Schl	Allstar. Repres. Best-On-Ground in Semi-Final & Gd Final

Pseudonym	Age	Schl Year	National -ity/Race	Desired Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation	Years Played	First Play-ed	Football Achievements
Janela Kirk	16	11	" " "	Engineering in airforce	" " "	" " "	3	Yr 10	Repres.
Jasmine Najjar	16	11	Tur/Mal	1. PE Teacher (uni) 2. Bus. Mgt. (uni)	Housewife	Bus Driver	5	Yr 7	Repres.
Leah Aaron	17	12	Wh/Aus	Pilot in the forces, then police force	1. Waitress 2. Unemployed	Truck driver	3	Yr 10	Repres.
Lisa Murawski	16	12	Wh/Aus	Animal Care Certificate (TAFE)	1. Secretary 2. Housewife	Distribution Mgr	3	Yr 10	
Marnie Fernwood	14	10	Maori/Wh NZ	Actor	Beauty Product Sales Rep.	Labourer	1	Rug Prim Schl	
Miranda Southgate	16	11	English	Not sure	Curtain maker	Boilermaker	2	Yr 10	
Natasha Petrovisk	17	12	Czech/Aus	University, maybe medicine	1. Housewife 2. Dental nurse	1. 1st Class Welder 2. Wall & flr tiler	2 of 3	Yr 10	
Rebecca O'Shea "Becky"	15	11	Wh/Aus	Meteorologist (uni)	Housewife	Storeman	2	Yr 10	
Simone Grady	16	11	Wh/Aus	Law at uni	1. Served in a deli 2. Medical scientist		3	Yr 10	Repres.
Tanya Woods	17	12	Wh/Aus	1. Environmental Art (uni) 2. Health Sc. (uni)	1. Nurses Assistant 2. Invalid Pension	1. Shearer 2. Clerical	1	Yr 11	
Vanessa Barrett	14	10	Bur/Aus	Social work (uni) then police force	Printer and Reiki master.	In the army	4	Yr 7	Repres.

Wh/Aus = White Australian
Tur/Mal = Turkish father/Malaysian mother
Pak/Aus = Pakistani parents but born in Australia
Czech/Aus = Czechoslovakian parents

Bur/Aus = Burmese father/Australian mother
Allstar = selected for Schoolgirls Allstar Team
Repres. = selected for Perth Representative side to play against Albany 1999

TABLE 3
BOYS' INTERVIEW DATA

PERSONAL DATA							FOOTBALL		
Pseudonym	Age	Schl Year	Nationality/Race	Desired Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation	Years Played	Local Level	Westar Rules Level
Bradley Nijdovska	15	11	Wh/Aus	Airforce Pilot	Covert Security Officer	Policeman & own earth-moving bus.	7 of 9	U-17s	-
Brett Palmer	16	11	Wh/Aus	Carpenter or PE Teacher	Housewife	Sales rep.	5	Colts	
Cory Gibbs	17	12	Wh/Aus	Journalism or Politics at Uni	Primary School Teacher	Landscape Gardener, self - em	8	U-17s*	Offer from a Club
Dale Willis	17	12	Wh/Aus	PE Teacher	Receptionist (p/t)	Consultant	10	U-17s*	
Doug Holland	16	11	Wh/Aus	Trade	Housewife training to be a receptionist	Sales person	6	U-17s	Offers from Clubs
Drew Thompson "Thommo"	16	11	Wh/Aus	1.AFL Footballer 2. physio, sports sc. or sport psych	1. Housewife 2. Nursing Home Carer	Sales person	11	U-17s	U-16s Dev. Squad.***
Ethan Armstrong	16	11	Wh/Aus	PE Teacher/Real Estate	Casino Hostess	Self-employed mechanic	8	U-17s	U-16s
Jason Finlay "Finny"	16	11	Wh/Aus	1. AFL Footballer 2. Sports Science 3. PE Teacher	1. Housewife 2. Teacher	1. Church Minister 2. PhD student	10	U-17s	Offer from a Club
Jim Unger "Jimmy"	16	11	Pak/Aus	Landscape Gardener	Beautician	Roofing Estimator	3		
Leif Carter	17	12	Wh/Aus	Travel & Tourism & AFL footballer	Housewife	Cleaner	10	Colts	Junior Carnival/Melbourne

PERSONAL DATA							FOOTBALL		
Pseudonym	Age	Schl Year	Nationality/Race	Desired Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation	Years Played	Local Level	Westar Rules Level
Levi Jackman	16	12	Wh/Aus	No idea.	1. Housewife 2. History Student	Warehouse Manager	8	Colts	
Liam Reilly	16	11	Wh/Aus	PE Teacher/ Tennis Coach	1. Nurse's Assist. 2. Pre-prim teacher	High school music teacher	7	U-17s	
Nick Beamish	16	11	Wh/Aus	Cook or travel or hospit. industry	Nurse	Removalist	9	**	B-grade in Sth Aust.
Rick Marchione	16	11	Ital/Aus	Plasterer & AFL footballer	1. Nursing Home Carer 2. Train Hostess	1. Manager Cleaning Co. 2. Manager, Hospitality	7	U-17s	2 short seasons for U-16s
Scott Davidson "Davo"	16	11	Wh/Aus	Science - Uni	Receptionist	Chiropractor	9	U-17s	Colts
Steve Mitchell	16	12	Wh/Aus	Trade in army then Policeman	Driving Instructor	Does not know father	7	U-17s	
Todd Landers	15	10	Aborig- inal	AFL Footballer	Admin, ATSIC	Fieldwork, ATSIC	10	U-17s	Develop. Squad
Trent Whitford	17	12	Wh/Aus	Recreation Officer	Childcare worker	Storeman	10	Colts	
Zach Stoneham "Stoney"	15	11	Aborig- inal	Trade in Army & AFL footballer	Primary Teacher	Truck-Driver	7	U-17s	U-17s

Wh/Aus = White Australian
 Ital/Aus = Italian father/Australian mother
 Pak/Aus = Pakistani parents but born in Australia

- * Having a break from community football this year because doing TEE
 ** Not playing this year because only just moved from South Australia to Perth
 *** Also in State Development Squad

FIGURES

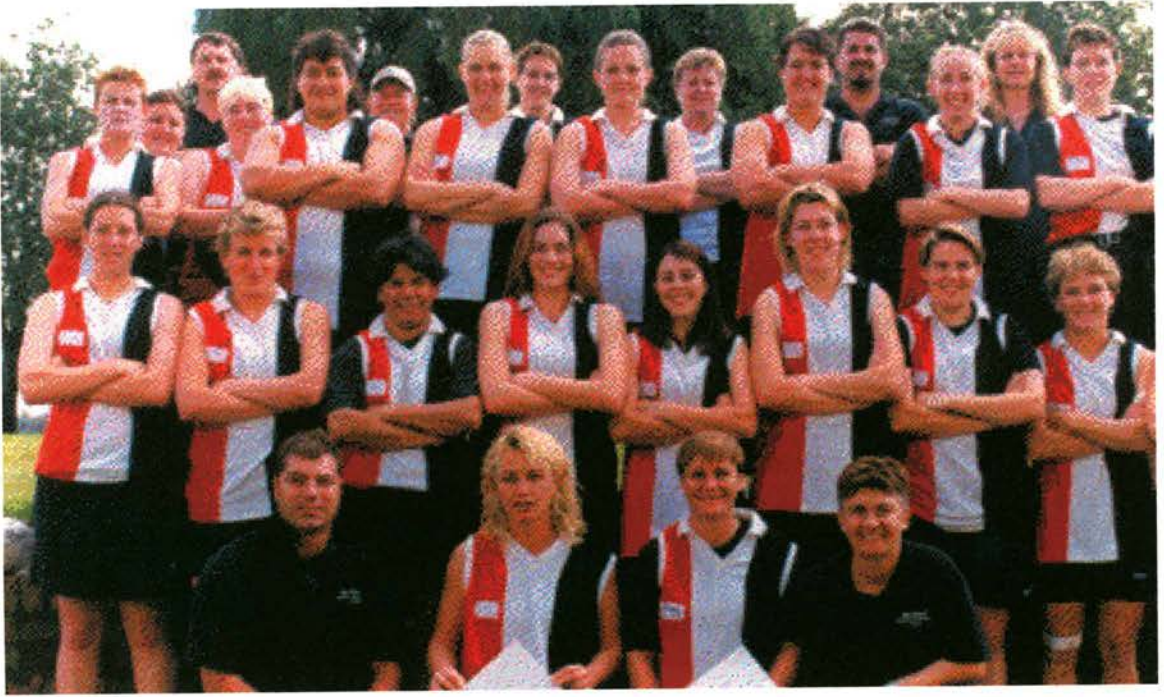


Fig 1

The Raiders women's football team. Note the great variety in size of the players and the traditional male stance/pose, arms folded to display biceps.



Fig 2

The Raiders singing their team song after a win. Caitlin, the two year old step-daughter of one of the players has joined in on this occasion.



Fig 3

The Raiders' post-match celebrations in the changerooms after their Grand Final win included drinking, dancing and singing "Simply the Best".

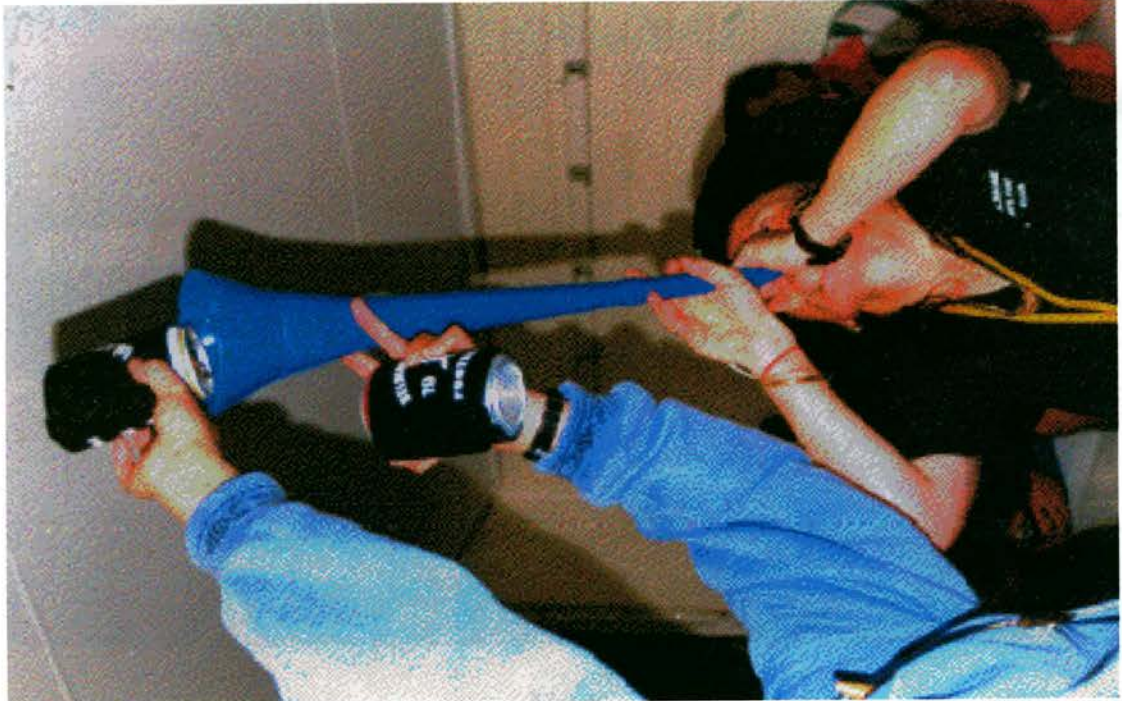


Fig 4

Drinking antics in the changerooms after the Grand Final win.



Fig 5

The Raiders' coach giving the team a 'talking to' at quarter time.

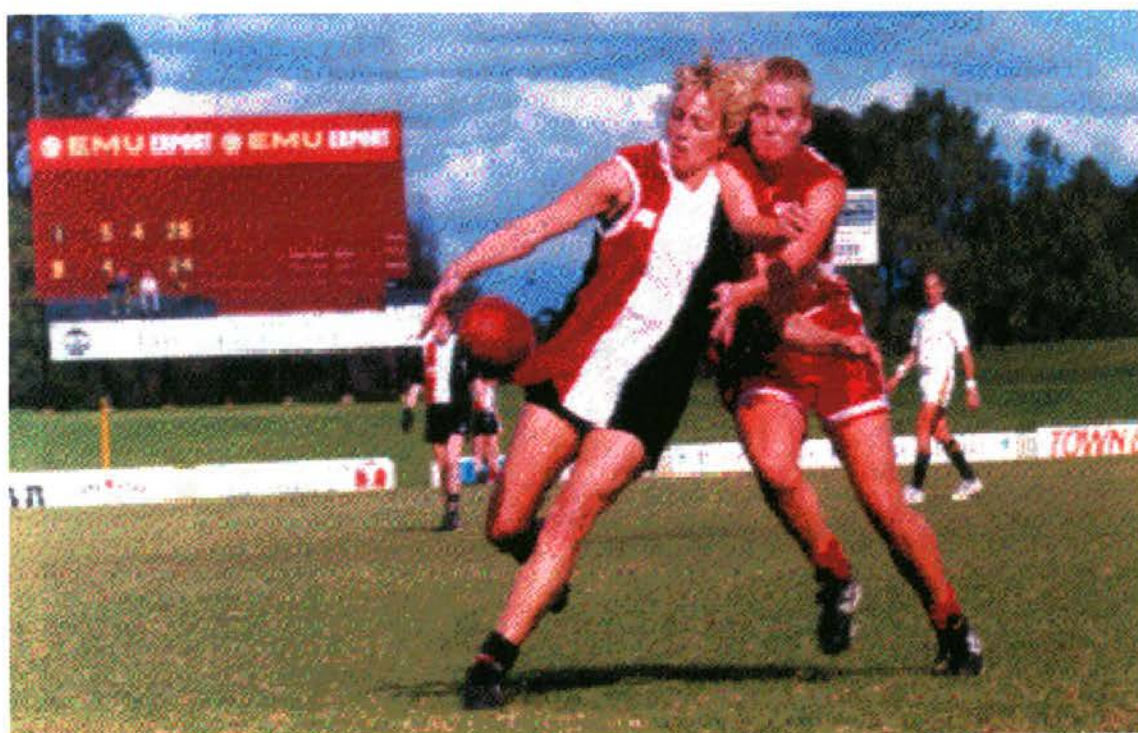


Fig 6

When I pressed the shutter to take this photo, only the player in possession of the ball was in view. I heard a loud thud and the smack of flesh-on-flesh and when the shutter opened the second player was in view.



Fig 7

A Raiders player giving a hip-and-shoulder to an opponent as she disposes of the ball.



Fig 8

Caitlin (left) wanders around the changerooms during the coach's pre-match talk to the Raiders.



Fig 9

Caitlin wanders up to the Raiders during a photo session, much to their delight.

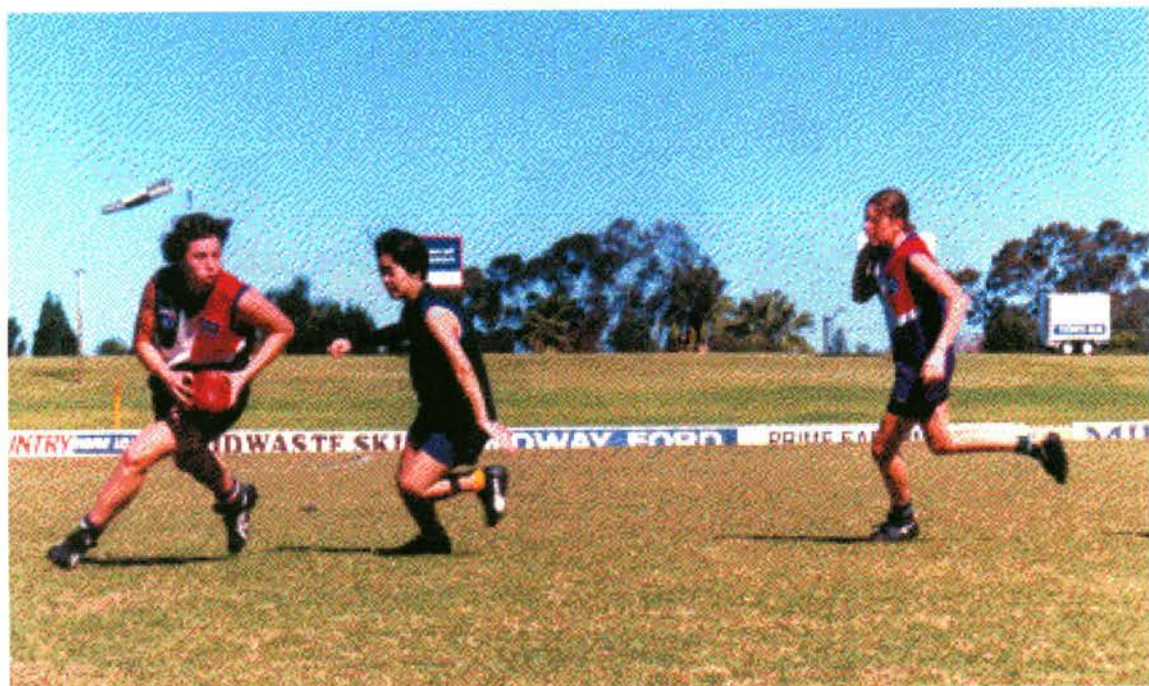


Fig 10 a

Gaya, in possession of the ball and with an opponent in hot pursuit...



Fig 10 b

changes direction then quickly kicks the ball to avoid being tackled.



Fig 11

Brigit, a masculinely embodied woman, kicks the ball during a match “like a man”, that is, skilfully, confidently, powerfully and accurately.

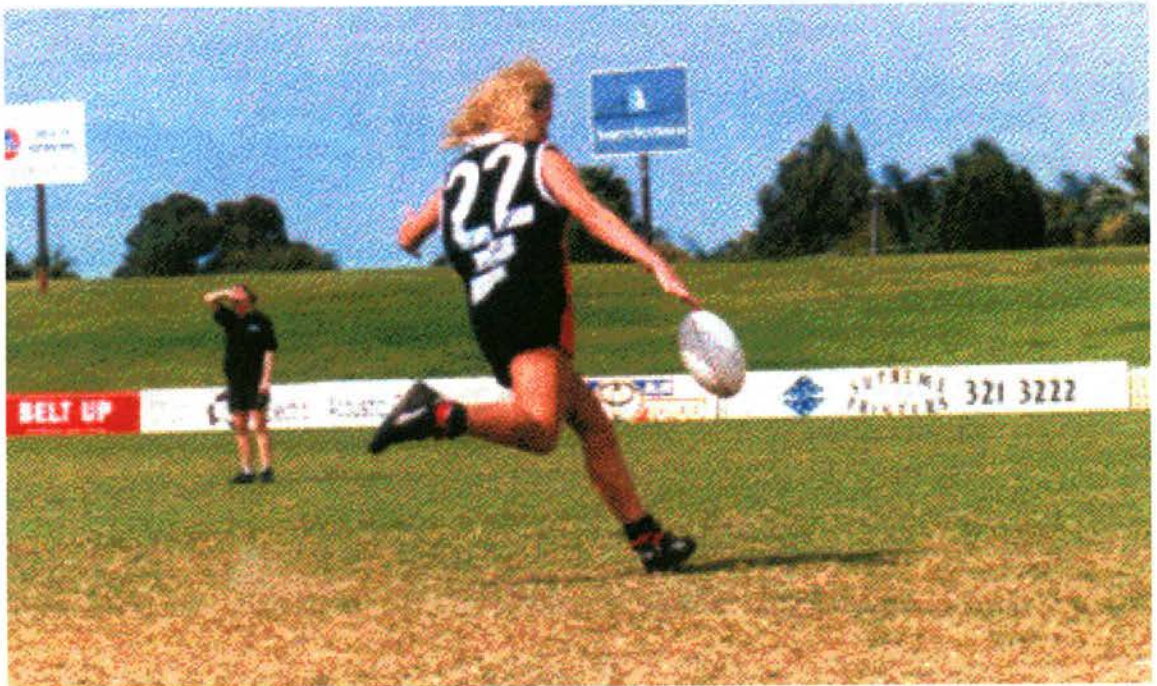


Fig 12

Jessica, who has played football for 10 years and is highly skilled, kicks a ball on the run during the warm-up session before a match.



Fig 13

These women are competing for the ball in the ruck without jumping off the ground (compare with Fig 16).

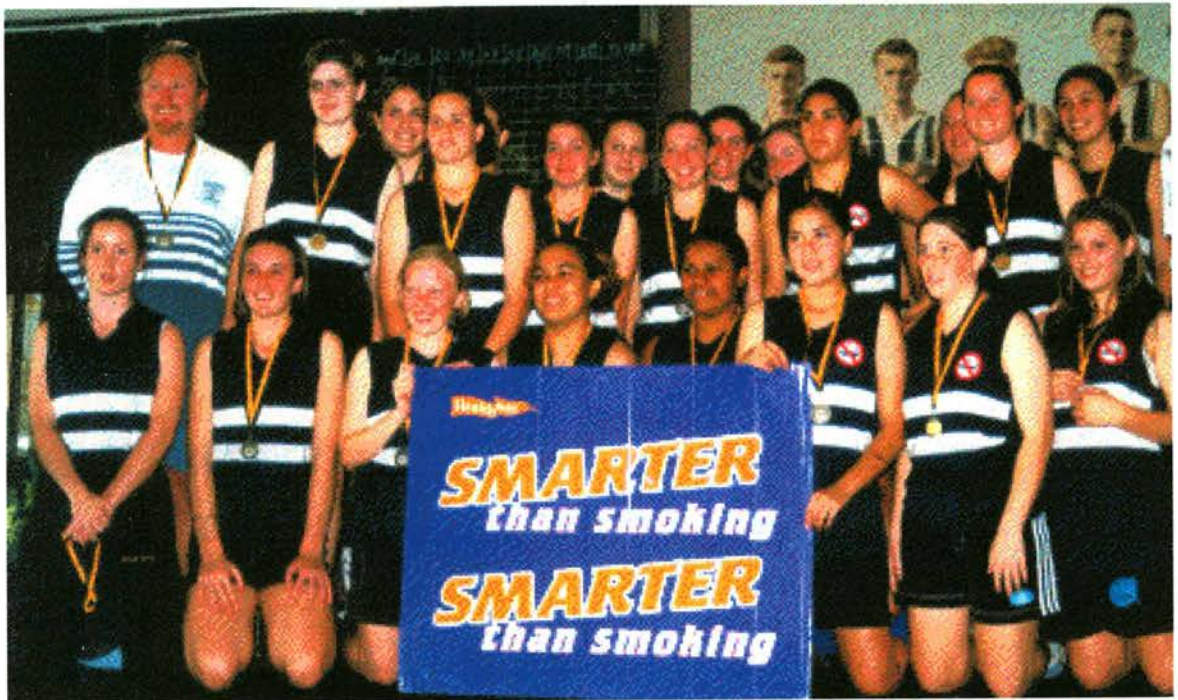


Fig 14

The Waratah High girls' football team. Note the variance in player size and also the painting of the men's football team in the background.

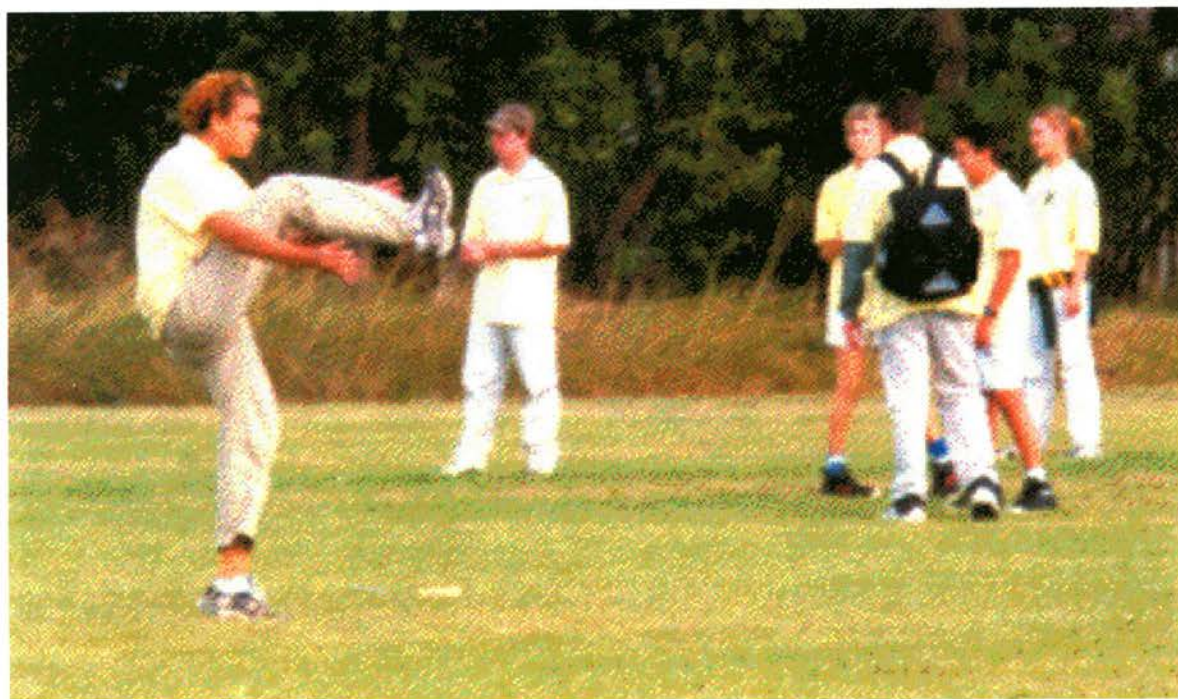


Fig 15

Gemma skilfully kicking during practice while some male peers look on.
Note the big follow-through of her leg in the direction of her kick.



Fig 16

Gemma and her opponent competing in the ruck. Note how high off the ground they are (compare with Fig 13).



Fig 17

Jade kicking on the run during a game. Note the balance and follow-through.



Fig 18

Jade attempts to take a "speccy" (spectacular mark) during a match. Note how high off the ground she is compared to the other players.



Fig 19

Leah kicking on the run during a game. Note her arms are out and legs apart.

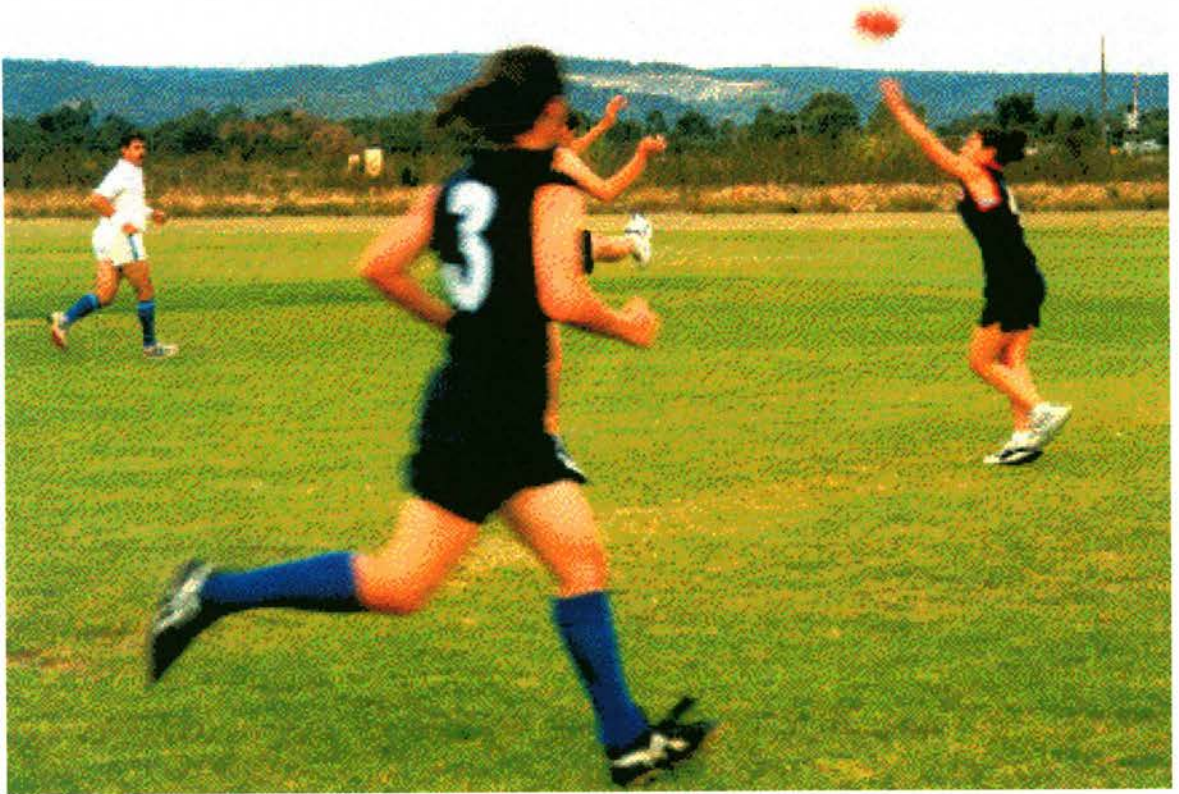


Fig 20

Jade running with a confident, purposeful stride, elbows out "like a man". Indeed, her stance is very similar to the male umpire in the background



Fig 21

Tanya about to kick a ball during practice. Note her elbows are in, legs together.



Fig 22

Janela (right) bumping an opponent larger than herself out of the way to gain possession of the ball. Note Leah (left) shepherding another opponent away to protect Janela from being tackled once in possession of the ball.



Fig 23

Vanessa and her cousin, Jasmine, delight in taking the opportunity to play fight during a lunchtime football training session.



Fig 24

The above close-ups of Carly (left) and Jade (right) are taken from the same team photograph (Fig 14). Despite the fact they are identical twins, are wearing the same uniform and both have their hair tied back, Carly looks more feminine and sexy and Jade appears more masculine.



Fig 25

The Waratah High boys' football team. Most of the players are physically well-developed for their age but there is quite a variety of shapes and sizes.



Fig 26

Three interchange players watching the game while waiting to play. Note the differences in height and build.



Fig 27

Players on the interchange bench varying greatly in build and height. Note several groupies loitering nearby (left).



Fig 28

Trent descending after taking a mark. Note how high off the ground he is.



Fig 29

Drew kicking during a game. Note his follow-through and balance.



Fig 30

Steve kicking on the run. Note his arms are out, eyes are on the ball.



Fig 31

A Waratah player in possession of the ball swerves to avoid being tackled.



Fig 32

A Waratah player tackles an opponent to the ground, causing him to lose possession of the ball.



Fig 33

Two Waratah High groupies (left) loiter strategically by the changerooms as the Waratah High boys' team run onto the ground



Fig 34

Groupies from Waratah and the opposition team watch a boys' game together from the boundary. Note their feminine, sexy comportment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Outline for Women Footballers

- 1 Do you have any questions about this research project?
- 2 What are your first sporting memories?
- 3 Do you come from a sporty family?
- 4 Have you always followed Aussie Rules football?
- 5 Who do you support in the AFL/WAFL? Why?
- 6 What does footy mean to you?
- 7 How did you find out about women's footy and when did you first start playing?
- 8 What do you like about playing football? Why do you play?
- 9 What, if anything, do you dislike about playing football?
- 10 Tell me about the highlight of your football career, so far.
- 11 Tell me about the lowlight of your football career, so far.
- 12 What would you say are the differences between male and female players?
- 13 Can you relate instances of both positive and negative responses to your playing football from:
 - your family
 - your partner
 - your friends
 - men generally
 - women generally
- 14 Has playing football changed you or your life in any way?