

Female and male athletes' perception of coaching careers

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Female and Male Athletes' Perception of Coaching Careers Gender equity in the coaching profession has yet to be achieved. This is despite federal legalization enacted over 35 years ago. After decades of discrimination against women in educational arenas, Congress enacted Title IX in 1972, which declares that " no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. ". The enactment of Title IX has prompted significant advancements in the opportunities available to female athletes. Within four years of its implementation, the number of female athletes in the United States increased by 600 percent, to include over two million participants (Shook, 1996). Universities worked to meet the increasing needs of female athletes by expanding women's athletic programs and offering a diverse range of sports. Title IX mandated that more money be spent on women's programs and paid coaching and administrative positions in collegiate athletics. This legislation opened the door of opportunity in sports to women; however, this opportunity also became lucrative and attractive to men. Despite increased numbers of women participating in sport, this has not translated into more female coaches in intercollegiate athletics. According to NCAA Member Institutions' Personnel Report in years 2008-09 men dominated head coaching and assistant coaching position in Division I athletics. Women comprise only 23. 3% of all head coaching positions and only 35. 5% of all assistant coaching positions. Moreover, according to Acosta and Carpenter (2002), between 2000-2002, 90 % of all head coaching jobs in women's athletics (326 out of 361) went to men. This fact has been

well documented beyond Acosta and Carpenter's widely cited work (see Pastore 1992 for a discussion). Research also suggests that females intend to leave the coaching profession sooner than their male counterparts. Knoppers et al. (1991) found that only 12.3% of female coaches, compared to 50.3% of male coaches, planned to stay in the coaching profession until they were 65. Similarly, Sagas, Cunningham & Ashley (2000) found that 68% of women assistant coaches, compared to 15% male assistant coaches, anticipated leaving the coaching profession by the time they turned 45. Today, it is important to understand why women are not in the professions of coaching and athletic administration in the numbers we would like to see and what the perceived barriers for entering coaching professions are.

Current Knowledge of Under-Representation of Female Coaches In recent years, interest in the coach's role and the reasons why people do, or do not, choose coaching as a career has been growing steadily (Gilbert, 2002). Interest in coaching as a career for women parallels the increasing rise in the number of girls involved in sports. This increased participation has in turn generated greater demand for people to coach girls. Based on this demand and the ongoing under-representation of women in the coaching ranks, some researchers have launched projects aimed at understanding and explaining the processes involved in recruiting, retaining, and losing women coaches. Most of the studies concern high performance coaches who have been active for a number of years (Acosta and Carpenter, 2002) and unearth the factors working against or contributing to the involvement of women as coaches and the main reasons why they drop out. Choosing coaching as a career Findings from Hart et al's (1986) study on entry and exit aspects of the job cycle, and

Pastore's research (1991 & 1992), suggest that women enter coaching and athletic management positions to extend involvement in competition, work with advanced and skilled athletes and serve as role models. Moreover, "to help other females reach their potential" was one of the most frequently cited reasons why women choose a coaching career (Hart et. al 1986, Kamphoff & Gill 2008, Pastore 1991& 1992). However, only Kamphoff & Gill (2008) concluded that women athletes were interested in entering the coaching profession to address women's issues such as equal pay and opportunity for women to be involved in intercollegiate coaching. In most studies the positive aspects of coaching careers cited by females primarily involved human qualities and relationships. Females indicated that they enjoy seeing people grow through sports and the importance that they attach to developing the whole person, including helping athletes achieve academic success. In addition, they found it enriching to be able to work with a number of different individuals. Female coaches indicated the sport community to be like a family, which gives an opportunity to socialize with people who share the same values (Doherty & Casey 1996). Perceived difficulties facing the female coach Coaching at the intercollegiate level can be considered as an "unfriendly" job where there is little chance for a life outside of it. Time pressures, practices, games and recruiting trips at hours outside the 9-to-5 timeframe were indicated in previous research by female coaches to prevent a normal family life (Pastore 1992 & 1991, Fox, 1999; Roffey, 2001). Also, in the studies conducted by Polachek (1981); and Reskin & Padavic, (1994), some of the possible explanations of occupational gender stratification were proposed. Authors found out that for many women the

family is a higher priority than the job and that this value system limits both their attention to preparing for high-responsibility jobs and the time they spend in the labor force paving the way to job advancement. Many women seek only part-time positions that enable them to spend time with their families but also limit their job responsibilities and income. Discrimination was shown to be another explanation for underrepresentation of females in coaching (Hart et al. 1986, Pastore 1992 & 1991, Fox, 1999; Roffey, 2001). Thorngren (1990) interviewed past and present female coaches, athletic directors, and leaders in U. S. collegiate athletics and found that women felt that because they are female, people frequently questioned their role as a credible coach. Many of the women indicated that they believed athletic administrators, athletes, and the community assumes that a male coach is more knowledgeable about athletics than a female coach just because of his gender. Also in the Kamphoff & Gill (2008) study, gender discrimination was found to be a perceived reason for not entering the coaching profession and a barrier that would prohibit female athletes from entering the profession. The results showed that female athletes were more likely than male athletes to agree that female and male coaches are treated differently in sports in general. Kamphoff & Gill (2008) also concluded that both men and women had similar responses to coaching conflicts with family commitments. Moreover, there was no gender difference for factors that included the item "Low salary" in the Coaching Interest Survey used in this study. This factor has been suggested to contribute to a lack of female coaches in the profession (Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, & Forrest 1991; Humphrey, 2000). On the other hand, Hart et al. (1986) argued that the reasons why females exit

coaching positions also include other factors such as: burnout, lack of job satisfaction and role conflict. Hart in his widely cited study examined a large population of female high school coaches (256 current and 105 former coaches). However, this study was conducted over 20 years ago, which raises the question, do females still face the same barriers nowadays? Similarly, two Australian studies (Fox, 1999; Roffey, 2001) identified a number of specific factors impinging on female participation in coaching. Both authors interviewed female coaches to find out what motivational and structural issues affect the coaching profession. Fox (1999) interviewed ten female coaches from five sports whilst Roffey (2001) surveyed and held open forums for female coaches, also from five different sports. Lack of compensation, lack of opportunity and perceptions of a strong old boys' network were cited as common barriers by both authors. Furthermore, Roffey (2001) concluded that when the benefits of coaching are weighed against the perceived negatives, coaching was often viewed as a career that offers little reward in return for considerable personal expenditure. Despite the fact that Fox (1999) and Roffey's (2001) studies provide interesting information on the topic of women in coaching, they were conducted in Australia where socio-economic aspects of coaching might be different to America. Moreover, the studies were conducted only on few coaches, who might not accurately represent the coaching population in Australia. Sex differences Cunningham, Doherty & Gregg (2007) in seeking to partially explain the underrepresentation of women as head coaches, used social cognitive career theory to examine the influence of sex on the head coaching intentions, and antecedents to those intentions among male and female assistant coaches

of women's teams. Social cognitive career theory was developed to provide a way of understanding the " mechanism through which career and academic interest develop, career-related choices are forged and enacted, and performance outcomes are achieved" Lent et al. (1994). Data was collected from 66 assistant coaches who represent 15 different sports within the Ontario University Athletic league. The results showed that men, relative to women, had greater head coaching self-efficacy, anticipated more positive outcomes associated with being a head coach and possessed greater interest in becoming, and intentions to become, head coaches. Nowadays, there are fewer female coaches in competitive sport compared to males, and most female coaches have fewer years experience in coaching than their male counterparts. This could be one of the reasons why female coaches have lower confidence levels in coaching compared to male coaches.

Athletes' perception of coaching careers Although, many studies have been done on the lack of women in coaching, few have examined the differences between male and female collegiate athletes' perceptions of the coaching profession. In the study conducted by Kamphoff & Gill (2008), college athletes completed measures of their intention to enter the coaching profession, reasons for entering and perceived barriers that would prohibit them from considering the coaching profession. The results indicated that male athletes were more likely than female athletes to intend to enter coaching at the Division I and professional levels. Kamphoff & Gill (2008), proposed more research to be done in this area, however, findings from this study provide valuable information about student-athletes' perceptions of coaching careers. In another study, Cooper et al. (2007) explored female

university students' beliefs about coaching as a career since university students make up current and future coaches as well as parents of athletes and may be responsible for hiring coaches some day. They found that although women were generally interested in entering the coaching profession (78.7% of their sample indicated they would like to coach), the women named several barriers to entering the profession. A lack of administrative support was the most common barrier mentioned followed by family conflicts, inadequate salaries, negative attitudes of co-workers, a lack of professional role models, a lack of professional connections/networks, negative attitudes of athletes, lack of self-confidence, and homophobia. In general, it was found that the women were concerned about institutionalized and individual sexism and the authors recommended more research in this area. Conclusion Numerous reasons have been provided to explain the lack of women in Division I athletics. Research concentrated on and provided strong evidence for underrepresentation of women in athletics, however only limited support was found for proposed explanations. Moreover, many earlier studies were focused only on women's reason for entering and leaving the coaching profession (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985; Hart et al., 1986). Such an approach does not address the critical question of why men enter and remain in the coaching profession in greater numbers than women. Thus, a primary purpose of this study will be to investigate whether women differ from, male athletes in intentions to enter the coaching professions and reasons and barriers when considering the coaching profession. First, college athletes' intentions toward entering various levels of the coaching professions will be examined. Second, the reasons athletes would want to

enter the coaching profession will be examined and lastly perceived barriers to enter coaching profession. It is hypothesized that gender differences will be found in intentions to enter coaching professions, reasons to enter the coaching professions and perceived barriers. A sample of Division I athletes will be surveyed to address the hypothesis.

METHOD PILOT STUDY A sample of 20 undergraduate students will complete a packet of questionnaires including the Coaching Intention Survey, the Coaching Interest Survey, the Perceived Hindrance Scale and demographic questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot study will be to finalize the measures as well as pilot the administrative procedures. The participants will be the undergraduate sport science majors at a university in western US. The pilot sample will include 10 males and 10 females who will be asked to comment on the clarity and understandability of the questions. Based on their feedback some questions might be added to the surveys.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE MAIN SAMPLE A total of 100 Division I athletes from university of western US will participate in this study. The sample will be equally distributed by gender, including 50 males and 50 females participating in sports such as: basketball (n= 30), volleyball (n= 30), tennis (n= 10) and water polo (n= 30).

MEASURES The athletes will complete a demographic questionnaire (age, gender, sport they participate in, year in school), the Coaching Intention Survey, the Coaching Interest Survey and the Perceived Hindrance Scale.

Coaching Intention Survey. The coaching Intention Survey will include questions about the participants' intent to enter the coaching profession. The survey items will include how much the participants want to coach at each of 5 levels (recreational league; high school; college; Division I, professional level), with a response format of

1= not at all to 5= very much. Coaching Interest Survey. The items comprising the Coaching Interest Survey will be adapted from Kamphoff & Gill's (2008) study with 201 Division I athletes. Kamphoff & Gill selected 29 reasons based on a review of the relevant coaching literature to examine reasons why those athletes would want to enter into the coaching profession. Given the goal of the present study, several key items will be changed. The original scale included items related to the minority issues, which will not be considered in the study. Therefore, two items related to the minority issues will be excluded from the survey. The response format of the Perceived Hindrance Scale (1= not at all to 9= completely) will be adopted for consistency and the final version of the Coaching Interest Survey will include 27 items. All items in this survey were grouped into logical and meaningful factors which were labeled: 1) To develop young people, 2) Like the coaching role, 3) To stay in the sport, 4) Women's issues, and 5) Love of the sport. See Table 1. Perceived Hindrance Survey. The items comprising the Perceived Hindrance Survey will be adapted from Everhart & Chelladurai's (1998) study with collegiate basketball players. Everhart and Chelladurai selected items from the NCAA's Perceived Barriers of Intercollegiate Athletic Survey that explored perceived discrimination and work hours as a barrier to enter the coaching profession. The questionnaire addresses reasons women may leave the coaching profession and includes several items related to gender issues in coaching. These 34 items will be used with the language changed to be inclusive of all sports with a response format of 1= not at all to 9= completely. See Table 2 PROCEDURES Ten coaches from Division I University will be contacted to obtain permission to

administer the questionnaires to the athletes. After obtaining permission, student-athletes will meet with the researcher before of following the practice to obtain basic information and to complete the questionnaires. The purpose of the study will be explained to the athletes, as well as the information about the confidentiality (no names requested, coach will not have access to the data and only group statistics will be reported). After that athletes will complete and return the questionnaires with the signed informed consent to the researcher. DESIGN A multi-variance design will be used in this study to explore gender and particular sport influences (independent variables) on athletes' intent to coach at various levels, Coaching Interest Survey factors, and Perceived Hindrance Scale factors (dependent variables). Athletes were chosen from four, Division I sports (basketball (n= 30), volleyball (n= 30), tennis (n= 10) and water polo (n= 30)), where coaching jobs are widely recognized and accessible. References Acosta, V. R., & Carpenter, L. J., Women in Intercollegiate Sport; A Longitudinal Study Twenty-Five Year Update 1977- 2002, Unpublished Document, Brooklyn College, 2002. Bracken, N., 2008-2009 Gender Equity in College Coaching and Administration: Perceived Barriers Report, National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2009, <http://www.ncaa.org>. Cooper, M., Hunt, K., & O'Bryant, C. P. (2007). Women in Coaching: Exploring Female Athletes' Interest in the Profession, *Chronicle of Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education*, 17-19. Cunningham, G. B., Doherty, A. J., & Gregg, M. J. (2007). Using Social Cognitive Career Theory to Understand Head Coaching Intentions among Assistant Coaches of Women's Teams, *Sex Roles*, 365-372. Doherty, A. J. and Casey, C. (1996). The influence of sport

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