

IT'S ALL ABOUT BUSINESS:
AN EXPLORATION OF DIVISION I FEMALE COLLEGIATE ATHLETES'
INTERPRETATIONS OF COACHING PHILOSOPHIES AND PRACTICES

by
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ABSTRACT

In the setting of Division I Inter-collegiate athletics, the purpose of this study was to examine a female athletic program and the player's interpretation of their head coaches guiding philosophies and behaviors. In particular, how do female athletes make meaning of their coaches' style of facilitating practices, team meetings, and coaching during game play? A qualitative approach including one-on-one interviews and field notes were used. Upon distinguishing the coaching style of leadership methods and measuring player interpretation, the study found that players choose strict enforcement that comes with the battle of becoming a championship team above the need or want to create a positive coach-player relationship. In the findings, it was clear that the players revealed a true understanding their coach, they made meaning out of his unique coaching style methods, and they interpreted his overall coaching philosophy as impersonal yet preferable in the measures of how they wish to be a successful athlete.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It was the 7th inning, down by one, bases loaded, and a full count in the national collegiate championship fast-pitch softball game. The crowd roared in the sold out stands behind home plate, obstreperously cheering for Ann up to bat, her eyes peeled at the bright yellow ball rotating in the pitchers hand. The pitcher fiercely acknowledged the catchers signal, shook her head in agreeance, and began her wind up. Her right arm looped in a full circle, and she released her pitch. Ann tracked the ball as it rapidly curved towards the outside corner of the plate. The drop ball dove towards clumpy orange clay on the softball field, Ann briskly swung her bat, and watched the ball ricochet the very tip of her Louisville Slugger.

“Foul ball!” the umpire screeched. “Two Strikes, Three balls!” He reiterated.

The crowd exploded with resounding intensity, her teammates behind her rooted and chanted at the top of their lungs. Ann glanced at her coach from the sidelines, their eyes briefly made contact; she recognized the look of distress in his eyes as he proceeded to speak with apprehension:

“Jump on it, Ann,” Said Coach Liall.

Overwhelmed with anxiety, Ann stepped back into the box and eagerly anticipated the next pitch. Silence flushed the stands behind. The ball was in motion, rising abruptly towards the inside corner of the plate. Eyes glued to the red rotating seams, Ann swiftly took a step with her left foot toward the pitch, and abruptly adjusted her hips in position to the soaring inside rise ball. She viciously swung with every fiber of energy left and just barely knicked the bottom of the softball. The ball thumped the web of the catcher’s mitt.

“Strike Threeeeeee!” The umpire bellowed.

The catcher burst from home plate, threw the ball and mitt in the air, and rushed to the pitchers circle to join the team in celebration of their championship victory. The dugout cried out, fans burst into tears. Coach Liall ripped off his ball cap, threw it to the ground and kicked it to left field, cursing under his breathe.

Mortified, Ann drug her bat back to the dugout, reluctantly collected her gear, and disregarded the pats on her back from teammates.

The emotional state Ann experienced may illustrate feelings that numerous female collegiate athletes experience at least one time or another during their career. However, certain athletes may be able to relinquish feelings that result from such commentary and could interfere with performance on the field. What about those student athletes who have a difficult time blocking out negative comments from coaches on the sidelines? The effects of a particular coaching style and accompanying behavior have the ability to play an influential role in the development of an athlete, both physically and mentally, on the field and off.

In light of such a context, this project explores female intercollegiate athletes' interpretations of male coaching philosophies and behaviors. While considerable research exists on coaching styles and philosophies, almost no research considers the issue from the standpoint of female players. In short, there is an important gap in the scholarship, which has resulted in women's experiences being completely ignored.

Intercollegiate Sports

Since the passage of Title IX, a federal law that promotes gender discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funding, there are various factors that this law drastically created in making space and opportunity for female athletes. Substantial factors such as funding, leadership positions, and increased athletic participation. As for funding, federal

laws were enacted for all division colleges and universities to create equal opportunity in scholarships for both men and women sport programs. Therefore, many male athletic teams funding significantly decreased, or for some colleges, cut out of the athletic department completely (i.e. men's swimming, wrestling, boxing) Yurako (2002). In her research, Yurako discovered that prior to Title IX (1960-1972), fewer than 10% of girls participated in high school athletics. In the year 2000, that statistic seemingly leaped to 40% of girls participating in varsity sport, and by 2001 intercollegiate athlete participation accounted at a whopping 44% (Yurako, 2002). Why is this important? Because while female athletics, the proportion of female sports, and the proportion of females involved in sports are continuously on the rise, the number of women in athletic administration has significantly decreased in comparison to men. The passing of Title IX has yet to balance the entire spectrum of female sports. Although modern sport has made significant equality strides since the passing of Title IX, research shows less opportunity for women in leadership positions in a collegiate athletic department, compared to men's leadership positions in an athletic department. This may be another reason why women are apprehensive to lead male teams, or that the percentage of female collegiate coaches still remaining lower than male coaches, the gender barriers are yet to be broken.

A longitudinal study conducted by Acosta and Carpenter (2012) found a significant gender disparity between female and male representation in leadership positions at the college level. In fact, in their latest study, Acosta and Carpenter found that women comprise 36.2% of the athletic administration of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) compared to 63.8% of males in leadership. These declining numbers resulted after the passing of Title IX within college athletics in both the administration and the coaching realms. Despite NCAA efforts to increase female representation by means of leadership programs, job trainings, and

additional initiatives, males have outnumbered women in coaching positions (Bower & Hums, 2013). According to Bower and Hums (2013), women actually fill less than a quarter of head coaches and athletic director positions in colleges. The latest study concluded by Acosta and Carpenter found that 37.5% of the athletic departments did not have any women in their administrative departments structure when the athletic director was male. This being said, women although Title IX's purpose was to present opportunities for women, because of a variety of factors, women are actually seemingly underrepresented in leadership positions within college athletics (Buzuvis, 2010). According to Buzuvis, there is no easy answer, but rather a variety of reasons that exclude, deter, or cause an early exit for women who would have otherwise pursued careers in college athletics. In another study conducted by Buzuvis in 2014, 83% of NCAA women collegiate athletics were coached by men prior to Title IX, however the current statistics in her latest study portrayed 66% of male coaches compared to 33% female coaches. How many of these women coach men's teams? None of them. Which also adds value to the current study, too. Males coach women's teams but not the reverse. This shows that sports are still considered a "men's domain."

Although the barrier has still not been broken – improvement has certainly been shown. Even though the percentage has improved, women in coaching continue to lack interest (or opportunity). We would hope that women sports could be coached by a majority of women, but because of this gender dynamic, perhaps females interested in pursuing this career may be deterred in choosing this path. This could later on affect female athletic participation/interest at an earlier age due to the lack of women role models in coaching.

The Role of the Coach

Most collegiate athletes spend between 30-50 hours a week outside of academia consumed by the athletic setting, their coaches, and teammates. Given this time commitment, the coach plays a crucial role in the development of players' lives. Generally, a coach instills fundamental values such as lessons applicable towards life choices, responsibility, and work ethic that will influence their adult life experiences and decisions post-graduation. Life skills such as being punctual to practice, working as a team, and thriving academically are examples of personal development factors that could lead and prepare an athlete for future career endeavors they will utilize in the work place.

Many female athletes choose a university solely to be a part of a given team. As a result, negative interactions may affect this type of athlete more personally than a player with alternative motives for college. In a worst case scenario, if this particular type of athlete receives a lack of playing time for one reason or another, given that their focus for college was *to be an athlete*, this leaves the athlete feeling a lack of value, self-worth, and usefulness for the team. Rather than an athlete with a career mindset, or perhaps an athlete who values creating friendships and networking above their athletic achievements, these types of players may not harbor feelings of hostility compared to the player whose vision depended solely on their achievement in their sport. Furthermore, feelings of hostility can build over time affecting the players relationship with their coach. If a coach chooses to bench a player as a means of punishment, this action is naturally going to affect communication and interpretation between the coach-player relationship for a player who only cares about participating. Athletes who learn and understand how to respond and make sense of coaching behaviors, rather than taking it

personally, could lead to enhancing their confidence, coach player relationship and overall well-being (Turman, 2001).

Typology of Coaching Styles

In general, coaches exhibit one of three types of coaching patterns when dealing with players. Strict forms of behavior are classified as an autocratic coach; one who prefers a more controlled, well organized environment for his/her athletes. Coaches who are open minded to the idea of letting their players take control of practice, or perhaps implement creative plays suggested of his players would be characterized as a democratic coaching behavior. This type of coach is open to suggestions of his players, yet still remains in control of the program, practice routines, game day starters. Lastly, laissez-faire describes a coaching behavior that gives the reigns to their player, in which players are mainly in control but the coach is there to facilitate. You might find this type of coaching behavior more often with younger children leagues.

Such characteristic patterns of interaction have been described as a coach's style, which is assumed to reflect an underlying philosophy about coaching and relating to players. The importance of coaches developing and articulating a personal coaching philosophy which encapsulates their values and beliefs is widely recognized and becomes an indispensable ingredient of leadership (Mohammad & Fauzee, 2009). Each coach has their own reasoning behind their teaching philosophies of their specialty sport, whether the passion stems from former first-hand athletic experiences, observing sports, or experiences with former coaches. In the absence of a coherent philosophy, a coach's team will lack effective leadership, which may in turn inhibit growth as a team and within individual players. A coach's purpose, core values, and leadership style are all essential factors in the process of developing a personal coaching philosophy (Turman, 2001). Furthermore, values such as respecting his/her athletes, showing

integrity with others, and creating a safe space/environment to learn are a few examples of traits that current coaches have validated personally throughout their careers (Turman, 2001).

Clarifying these particular techniques and style a coach can practice, the most broadly utilized styles can be classified relative to leadership models utilized with corporations and businesses such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Paul Turman's research serves as great guidance for these particular situational styles of coaching. Autocratic coaching is a style in which the leader needs to be in full control, encouraging athletes to follow their set rules and guidelines (Turman, 2001). A democratic style of coaching is an approach in which the coach outlines the vision s/he has for the program, but encourages the player to have a sense of independence. The coach may make final decisions based on the opinions and perceptions of the players (Turman, 2001). The laissez-faire style of coaching encourages players to take complete ownership and make the decisions and creates an environment in which the player primarily takes ownership in independent decision-making. In this style of coaching, a coach scarcely makes influential decisions. A position in which the coach does actually make influential decisions would align directly with the autocratic style of leadership. Autocratic leaders prefer full control and strong discipline above subordinates. The decision-making process of an autocratic coach would most likely follow a strict agenda for practice, little to no budge on player rules and guidelines, and an impersonal attitude towards his or her players (Sage, 1975).

Classifying these particular coaching styles and themes is important to athletes because a coach who is familiar creates a clearer vision on how to structure the season and clear vision on the goals for the team (Saldaña, 2012). A coach who lacks a coaching style or philosophy will lack direction and effectiveness for their team. The ability to create a philosophy is very beneficial for a coach and the success of the team because implementation of a style allows for a

coach to create measurable, effective development, and attainable long and short term goals (Turman, 2001).

Given the power that coaches wield over players, players' interpretations of coaching philosophies and behaviors are crucial for their success and well-being. This dynamic is further complicated by the fact that a majority of coaches of women's sport are men (Buzuvis, 2014).

Research Questions

With this background in mind, this study will be guided by the following questions:

1. How do female athletes in Division I inter-collegiate athletics interpret the guiding philosophies and behaviors of their coaches?
2. In particular, how do female athletes make meaning of their coaches' style of facilitating practices, team meetings, and coaching during game play?

In service of these questions, I intend to explore the experiences of players and coaches who are a part of a NCAA Division I women's sport program during the 2016-17 season.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter the researcher seeks to explore previous literature that supports the topic of female athletes interpreting their male coaches' behaviors. I will provide previous research in topics such as the importance of gender equity in female sport, the history of coaching behaviors and how they were initially established, understanding coach-player relationship dynamics and a general overview of feminist theory, in effort to provide sufficient evidence for the reader to gain understanding of the concept of my study.

In the setting of a Division I Inter-collegiate athletics, the coach player-relationship is an important one. Coaches' often influence potential player's choice of university, and once enrolled, coaches serve as important leaders and mentors for young adults who are still in the process of forming their identities (Tomlinson & Yorganci 1997). Female athletes' participation in a study conducted by in Dworkin and Mesner's portrayed slightly improved confidence upon understanding the mechanics that derive from a coaches philosophy of teaching and vision for the program (Dworkin & Mesner, 2002). In the case of women's university athletic programs, male coaches dominate the social setting of athletic departments, which adds additional complexity to the relationship. Previous research suggests that the interpersonal dynamics between a female athlete and a male coach begins with the perception of each other (Tomlinson & Yorganci 1997). Missing from the literature is any sort of investigation that explores female athletes' interpretation of their male coach behaviors.

Feminist Theoretical Perspective

In relation to my epistemological standpoint, Marianne Janack's standpoint on epistemology depicts important arguments of women's oppression and how these differences are

linked to sexist, racist and intelligence. In efforts to represent the position advocating for epistemic authority, I turn to Janack's standpoint:

Epistemic authority is conferred in a social context, as a result of other people's judgement of our sincerity, reliability, trustworthiness, and "objectivity". Such judgements are usually explained by an appeal to epistemic privilege: certain people are in a better position to "see" the world than are other people. Notice though, that the attribution of epistemic privilege is secondary, and it is private, not public. (1997, p. 133)

The effort of incorporating gender equity standards has been researched and explored for a number of years. Explanations for gaps in gender equity in sport organizations present various strands of arguments regarding the inequity of male and female athletic administrators. Studies have explored the gradual improvement of equal opportunities for women and some have shown that gender equity was not a problem. The reasons behind supporting this unrealistic theory that all athletes are equal is due to the fact that most universities' focus on centering in on maintaining their *status quo*. For all current universities in modern society, they must provide the same amount of scholarship opportunities for woman's sport as men's sport. However, despite these efforts to protect gender equity, the underlying argument of *true gender equality* still remains an issue in college sport. A study by Hoeber, 2007 provides the feminist framework of my research. They presented conclusions as to why there are important gaps between gender equity. A few of these arguments include: female athletes and administrators accepting conditions of inequity within a department due to being afraid to speak out, comments from male coaches that men sports simply generate more revenue, and men dominating the decision making process regarding positions in sport organizations (Hoeber,2007). For female administrators and athletes, the potential threat in speaking out could ultimately jeopardize their position within the

organization, or in an athlete's case, negatively affect their position on the team or relationship with their coach (Fletcher, 1999). It is important that if women find themselves in a similar position in accepting this gender inequity, they are unable to assist in change or be involved in the production of feminist alternatives (Hoeber, 2007). As for men dominating sport revenue, I rely on Hoeber's research for support on this topic. It is often presumed that certain men's teams attract more media attention, spectators and sponsors, and in turn, generate revenue that most women's teams do not (Hoeber, 2007). However, there has been little steps in challenging ideas that would create similar opportunities and media attention for women. This creates for men's team becoming more privileged than women's teams because of their 'breadwinner' status.

Lastly, previous research has recognized that men have completely dominated decision-making positions in sport organizations (Deetz, 2000). If males generally obtain the upper hand within a sport organization or collegiate athletic department, then it is their decision which sports are influentially funded, have access to facilities at particular times, and provide male teams with top-quality equipment and a fulltime stacked coaching staff; these decisions alone promote a higher quality male sport experience. Martin and Meyerson's (1998) study revealed that male administrators admitted to believing that female athletes should be content with the current situation and not complain about inequities because they were inevitable or beyond control of the department, so female athletes shift towards choosing to disregard any type of oppression behavior within a department (Martin and Meyerson., 1998). "These are purposeful decisions which have tended to favor men's teams and thus contributed to the situation whereby inequity completely and undoubtedly exists" (Hoeber, 2007, p274).

Despite these various strands in feminist theory, along with efforts for more empowered female programs, structural feminist standpoints are of importance to this study because a gender

gap is still very real, unequal and oppressed. The three examples described above are extremely important in rationalizing the inequalities of female sport. If these inequalities are continuously disregarded within collegiate athletic departments, women in the workplace and female athletes will consistently face an underlying gender inequity, which could affect top female leadership growth in the sport industry, and future participation of female athletes who choose not to participate in sport due to (in short) lack of respect, funds, opportunities, and a lower quality athletic experience compared to men's programs. This speaks volume to a study regarding a high caliber collegiate women's team, coached mostly by males. It also relates to my study because with these underlying issues amongst gender differences, there are little steps towards fixing the issue since most universities simply follow the '*status quo*' of gender equity (equal scholarships/sport programs as men), but disregard the underlying features previously. This could connect with male coaches and female athletes because of the male dominance in collegiate athletic departments' decision-making process and create gaps where female athletes may subtly experience oppression because they may feel they do not have a voice being a part of the program or that male sports is more important than theirs. While opportunities in collegiate female sport may have slightly improved courtesy of Title IX implementation, these strides have yet to reach full equity in sport programs based on these arguments.

Gender inequity could stem from even before Title IX, where the acceptance of being an athletic young female was quite tricky. Perhaps gender inequity today is shaped from viewpoints and accusations made by previous administrators in collegiate sport. According to research conducted by Vargya's, it is abundantly clear that before Title IX's enactment, post-secondary athletics are characterized as persistent discrimination in athletics (Vargya's,1992). Women experienced many encounters of sex discrimination being a female athlete 63 years ago because

it was socially unacceptable to sweat, play sports like a man, and achieve a non-womanly and girly figure (Byrne, 2000). According to Denise Thompson, she distinguishes a valid point worth addressing.

The authority that male athletes distinguish in the sporting realm results in sexist and misogynistic practices toward women such as, the exclusion of women from participation in certain sports, the sexual objectification of women's performance in sports by both the media and the institutions which organize those sports. But, the lack of female authority is also partly the result of patriarchal and phallogentric traditions and practices in sport which see the male athlete as the standard for excellence in sport, and which survive reforms to the sexist practices in sport (1994, p.174).

The feminist standpoint on the challenges women faced in society ultimately defined oppression reaching beyond internalization of sex roles, to the methods of making knowledge claims in society (Janack, 1997). These theories relate to how female athletes interpret coaching behaviors and practices because it creates a roadmap for the interpretation of gender equality relevant to females who have a male coach. A study conducted by Erving Goffman presents an excellent example of gender equality.

Gender may be routinely fashioned in a variety of situations that seem conventionally expressive to begin with, such as those that present "helpless" women next to heavy objects or flat tires. Goffman notes that heavy, messy, and precarious concerns can be constructed from *any* social situation. He distinguished that even though standards set in other settings for females, this may involve something that is light, clean, and safe when associating women expressively. Given these resources, it is clear that *any* interactional situation sets the stage for depictions of

‘essential’ sexual natures. In sum, these situations ‘do not so much allow for the expression of natural differences as for the production of difference itself’ (Goffman 1977, p.324).

Goffman’s research portrayed relevance to the current study on female athletes interpretations because of the distinguished gender dynamics between the image of a female athlete in society, along with a female athlete who is playing for a male coach. A deeper understanding of the gender dynamics between male coach and female athlete and also how a female athlete interprets their male coach have yet to be explored in previous historical research.

Historical Framework

The roots of coaching stems from as far back as ancient Greek sport (Olympics in Greece), to the emergence of coaching disciplines and framework that were first introduced in the 1880’s (Grant 2003). Similar to modern day coaches, the ancient Greek coaches (former athletes themselves) helped the competitors of their day achieve personal excellence (Brock, 2008). Coaching can be defined as a “Goal-directed, results-oriented, systematic process in which one person facilitates sustained change in another individual or group through fostering the self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee” (Grant, 2003, p262) The emergence of coaching was definitely a gradual process in which several historical findings support the roots and foundational teaching of coaching. According to Dr. Vicki Brock, historical observations in which coaching concluded five progressive influences in the root of coaching history. These five examples of emergence are:

1. Broad intellectual framework from practices and theories of many disciplines.
2. Emerged from independent sources and spread through relationships.
3. Filled unmet need in interactive, fluid world of rapid change and complexity.
4. Dynamic, contextual, customized and delivered across a set of attributes.

5. Evolved in open, integral social network from diversity and inclusion perspective (Brock, 2008).

While performed under the radar, these concepts of coaching were subtly introduced in the 1980's as a form of 'workplace counseling' which focused on business problems rather than sports. These practices were only open to executives of businesses (Tepper, 2000). Early on, much of the coaching was classified in business settings or sectors thus provided leadership methods for those who worked in management consulting and organization development (Brock, 2008). It is surprising to recognize the concept of coaching progressively spread during the 1900's, creating for dynamic and contextual modern coaching patterns and practices (Brock, 2008). The results of business workplace counseling created a critical foundation and justification that paralleled with a coach's purpose and value as a leader (Brock, 2008).

Leadership Models

Apparently assumed as regardless of gender, a primary goal of coaching is to facilitate the athlete with direction on growth and change. Instrumental leaders who focus more on the task at hand, versus leaders are expressive (emotional) leaders tends to be gendered (Moore, Heighstein, Moran, 2010). Results from past research portray leaders who tend to focus on certain tasks to accomplish in their behaviors tend to mostly be conducted by men. However, leaders who lead with emotions in their program or businesses fall under female leadership (Moore, 2010). Margaret Moore, Gabriel Highstein, and Bob Moran introduce excellent validation on why developing a positive coaching style is so important for college athletes. In their position advocating for the importance of developing an adequate coaching style, I turn to the book "Coaching psychology manual", these authors state:

A coach who develops a philosophy and style of teaching helps connect athletes to their strengths and assists them to get excited about change. The discovery of a coaching technique alone may be enough to move participants to the next stage of development. Increasing their awareness of compelling reasons to strive for success and getting them to connect with upper-classman who have successfully made the change are key motivational strategies. Developing styles will also assist athletes to connect the dots between the changes they seek as an athlete and the values they hold to their teammates. A clear vision of what coaches want (not what they don't want) is essential (Moore, Highstein, & Moran, 2010, p. 62).

In effort to dissect every leadership model to better understand why coaches utilize different strategies based the vision they have for their program, below are three of the broadly categorized leadership models: Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-Fair Style Leadership.

Autocratic Style Leadership

Strong discipline, rigidity of rules, hierarchical authority, and an impersonal attitude towards subordinates are all characteristics the autocratic style of coaching inhibits (Sage, 1975). Autocratic coaches utilize a 'telling' approach rather than an 'asking' approach. Themes portrayed in this style preferred by the coach are respect for authority, discipline, and highly organized practice sessions (Taylor, 1911) A leader who prefers to take full control instead of presenting an opportunity for players to handle the reins, utilizes subordinates as instruments of the organization with little opportunity to change or budge personality is a leader whom portrays autocratic leadership. There are valid reasons and circumstances a coach chooses to lead a team within an autocratic manner. Given the nature of the sport, division ranked team (For example:

division I collegiate team), further development within intense training measures are a few reasons coaches may integrate these styles (Sage, 1975)

Coaches are held accountable for the outcome of activities fraught with uncertainties such as injuries, poor officiating, mental lapses by athletes, bad luck, the weather and exceptional play by opponents (Sage, 1975). Autocratic decision-making characteristics are, arbitrary, stringent, and inflexible types of behaviors. Faced with these various uncertainties, coaches strive to control these as much as possible, which is a reason some autocratic leaders' function the way they do (Sage, 1975). A coaching style which inhibits a more 'gentle' form of teaching compared to autocratic and additional positively encouraging methods may drift from autocracy and fall under the democratic leadership bracket.

Democratic Style Leadership

In contrast to an autocratic form of leadership, the democratic form of leadership, can be characterized by equality and interpersonal relationships with individuals under the democratic leader (Pratt, 1989). Democratic leaders have a reputation of extremely supportive characteristics and shared decision making. They are effectively considerate of the needs and preferences of their subordinates, treating them humanely, and flexible with being open to considerations and suggestions of people. These types of leaders are consultative, participative, and democratic in decision-making (Filly, 1969). A coach will guide participants towards selecting and achieving their goals in the form of positive guidance and giving the athlete an opportunity to make decisions based on their own opinions and beliefs, rather than the coaches desires (Turman, 2001).

Rather than imposing tight rules, this type of leadership is one of supervising in a general manner rather than strict or harsh discipline. As a model leader in sports, the coach will manage

a program in which take precedence over the needs and desires of the team members. Preferences of the athlete will be given equal consideration with those of the team. Introspection, a sense of accountability, self-control, and freedom is important to a coach who displays this style of leadership (Turman, 2001). The objectives and method in connecting with the players will be achieved by consultation with all team members (Sage, 1975). The coach will be apprehensive in inflicting his authority upon the players and set up an environment in which players are comfortable and there is effective communication and player development in confidences that should enhance the relationship between the player's, the coach, and their performance (Sage, 1975).

Laissez-Fair Style Leadership

A more casual coaching approach with miniscule use of delegation one may consider the 'Laissez-Faire' leadership. With this type of coaching style, the player is considerably independent (Turman, 2001). Players take much ownership in making decisions and a coach scarcely makes influential decisions. Coaches who adopt this attitude allows for players to work out a pattern with a sense of independence in personal development without having the fear of judgment by the coach Acosta, V., & Carpenter, L. J. (2012). Efforts of successfully portraying this theme in his teaching tends to be a coach primarily concerned with high motivation to players and allows the athletes to learn and develop on their own, serving as guidance and support when the support is needed (Turman, 2001) More often than not, this model is primarily used in the context of professional sport. Players who are highly skilled, take considerable pride in their talent, and athletes who are trustworthy and experienced tend to need less direction in which this model would make more sense to utilize, rather than a developing high-school or collegiate team.

The various coaching styles lead to the behaviors of coaches that can be categorized as task-oriented and motivationally-oriented. Task oriented behaviors involve instruction on the particular task associated with performance, while the motivationally oriented behaviors involve providing either positive or negative input to players to foster greater effort (Amorose, 2001). Negative coaching behaviors can reduce the satisfaction of the sport because athletes perceive these as unsupportive or confrontational (Outlaw, 2014). Some of the research examining the effect of coach's behavior on athletes suggests that negative behaviors can lead to burnout and depression (Harris, 2008).

Coaching Behaviors

Seeking behavioral trends of a coach directing an athletic team creates for deeper value, and more meaningful and significant relationships created (Moore, Highstein, & Moran, 2010). If coaches have sufficiently displayed negative coaching behaviors identified and make little motivation to create for a compelling change in their behavior, critical development within players' attitudes and the success of the team had the opportunity to downspiral. (Moore, Highstein, & Moran, 2010). The negative behaviors a coach can exhibit are ones that can be "distractive and disruptive" such as a coach ridiculing and making an athlete feel uncomfortable and inadequate when he or she is working out. This negative example can drastically impact the kind of interpersonal relationship athletes obtain with their coach along with communication barriers. Athletes confirmed that the positive behaviors their coach exhibited strengthened and improved their relationship with their coach (Cho, Lee, & Magnuesen, 2013). Identifying coaching behaviors help examine not only the upside of motivating behaviors but also the downside of giving up old behaviors for new, healthier behaviors. An empowering behavior

coaches can display is positive but realistic thinking; setting goals for individual players, empowering them to be more confident in their performance and fundamentals, and providing a safe space in efforts to build self-esteem. (Moore, Highstein, & Moran, 2010).

Abusive Coaching Behavior

Athletes who observe abusive coaching behavior (regardless of whether they are targets of such abuse or observers) may come to mimic such behaviors themselves (Lescroart, 2014). Abusive supervision, is when supervisors engage in sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Abusive behaviors have the ability to instill a massive negative impact amongst players such as reduced self-efficacy, anxiety, and depression (Tepper, 2000). Athletes who engage in this type of coaching technique repetitively, eventually tend to display very similar hostile and disrespectful behaviors to teammates and opponents. This tolerance for difference leads us to predict that abusive coaching behavior would inhibit an inclusive climate on the team (Tepper, 2000). Poor coaching qualities has the ability to mentally distract the player from the game causing them to become reluctant of listening, inhibiting the chance for future growth.

Ethical Behavior

An ethical leader can be classified as both a moral person and a moral manager. In previous research, perceptions of ethical leadership involved being seen as a moral person who portrays characteristics such as honesty trustworthy, caring, open to input, principled, and respectful of others (Lescroart, 2014). As moral managers, ethical leaders set and communicate ethical standards and hold others accountable when those standards are violated. Coaches who demonstrate these few characteristics ethical behavior create an environment that is encouraging,

positive persuasion, discourages athletes' the temptation of cheating, and to inspire athletes to achieve athletic and ethical excellence (Brown et al., 2005).

Transference

Sports has a unique way of creating an environment in which the athlete feels as if they are a part of a community, something bigger than themselves. Team comradery, fellowship, building friendships, together understanding and believing in the philosophical views of the coach's vision are all a part of the development that leads to building community and healthy adult relationships. Participation in sport leads to the ability to function in a mission based organization. Athletes apart of a program will naturally inherit essential characteristics developed such as the ability to understand a strong vision and mission, in which they will carry outside of the sporting realm into their future careers (Brown et al., 2005).

A coaching style that not only leads them athletically, but has the ability to instill intrinsic motivation and realistic lessons the athlete will cherish in transference to their future non-sport endeavors. There is much more than just the game that is developed mentally in a student athlete's college experience. Life skills instilled from the coach specifically with accomplishing fruitful grades, becoming punctual, the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Ultimately, coaches have the ability to instill transference outside of the sporting realm and into real life responsibilities (Amorose, 2000). The transfer from learning sport to non-sport contexts lies specifically in transference. Transference is crucial for the development of a young adult. The definition of transference is generalized as the action of transferring something or the process of being transferred. Transference in sport to non-sport context is created within the disciplines of a college athlete as well (Brown et al., 2005). This process is inevitably present in young athletes

using educational transference from experiences in which they have gained knowledge as a college athlete, to incorporating these practices towards their professional careers.

Keeping transference in mind, it is important to understand the growth an athlete will endure during their experience on the team, and how this will lead into their post-athletic career. Lifelong friends are made, the vigorous challenge of growing to be better and stronger player, juggling academics with late night practice schedules, and grueling conditioning play a vital role in their experience (Amorose, 2000). In dealing with these life experiences, the main source of mentorship should be instilled from the place they spend most of their time, in the athletic setting with their head coach and the assistants of the program. It is through leadership models provided by the coaching staff where transference carries over from lessons learned in effort to aid athletes to prep for life after college.

Coach-Player Relationships

The coach-player relationship is influenced by the uniqueness and individuality of each athlete (Lidor & Ziv 2009). Much like every human being is unique, athletes' demands portray similar concepts in uniqueness. Furthermore, each athlete has a history of former coaching styles and behaviors in which may differ within their preference due to agreeing and disagreeing with tactics and philosophies previously facilitated. (Bloom, Duchesne, & Sabiston, 2011). Player-coach relationships that are inhibited can usually stem from distrust and negative energy between the coach and the player (Pratt, 1989). In order to cultivate a productive and positive connection between the player and the coach, the coach-player relationship must be based on trust and earned respect (Pratt, 2001). Research reveals that when a player has a good relationship with a coach, she is more likely to perform better on the field (Amorose, 2000). Conversely, a poor player-coach relationship can result in poor performance on the field of play, as well as negative

psychological outcomes for the player. Previous scholarly results in Jowett, Yang, and Lorimer's research determined that the way in which coaches and athletes interact, relate to one another, and communicate with each other can have a critically significant impact upon the success of the athlete (Jowett, Yang, & Lorimer, 2012). The coach-athlete relationship is related to the positive and negative behaviors that a coach exhibits in his style of facilitating practice and displaying his philosophical views and style of coaching. Positive behaviors are those behaviors that are supportive and emotionally composed such as a coach recognizing an athlete's improvements in their physical appearance after coming back from training in the off-season (Cho, Lee, & Magnuesen, 2013). According to Pratt, negative behaviors a coach can exhibit are ones that are "distractive and disruptive" such as a coach ridiculing and making an athlete feel uncomfortable during practice, competitions, weight room sessions, and additional events in the athletic setting (Pratt, 1989).

Winning and losing also plays a role in significant impact on the perception, respect, and outlook an athlete has of their coach and the program. In further support of this position, a research study conducted by Rui Trocado Mata and António Rui Da Silva Gomes concluded information imperative to the current study which reads the following:

Athletes on winning teams were predominately satisfied with their coach's strategy and relationship with their coach (2013). Trocado and Silva discovered that winning coaches displayed transformational inspiration, vision and technical instruction leadership, the two positive dimensions of transactional leadership (positive feedback) and decision making (active management) lead to more satisfied athletes in terms of motivation, relationship with their coach, and their performance" (Trocado, & Gomes, 2013). As a

result of Trocado and Gomes' findings, the impact of winning and losing on the coach-athlete relationship became evident. Furthermore, in terms of athlete participation, based on this study, winning has a positive impact on coach-player relationship leading to higher retention and satisfaction among players. (Trocado, & Gomes, 2013).

Gender As Relates To Player Relations

A study conducted by Goffman portrays results of when human beings interact with others in their environment, they assume that each possesses an "essential nature" (1976, p. 75). Femininity and masculinity are regarded as "prototypes of essential expression; something that can be conveyed in any social situation and yet something that strikes at the most basic characterization of the individual" (1976, pp. 69-70). Research conducted by Owens and Steward found that male athletes tend to prefer a coach who makes all the decisions and coaches in an autocratic manner. Their results of female coaching preferences indicated more democratic nature in which is inclusive in nature allowing the athlete to have influence on decisions based on their thoughts and feelings (Owens & Steward, 2011). Contrary to these results, an additional study on gender differences portrayed no significant difference between the preferred behaviors from a male or a female but that they both preferred coaching styles in which inhibited characteristics such as inclusion in decisions, a focus on developing skills and techniques and recognition for accomplishments (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000). Regardless of sex or gender, in order to cultivate a productive and positive connection between the player and the coach, the coach-player relationship must be based on trust and earned respect (Pratt, 2001). Academic research reveals that when a player has a strong bond and a good relationship with the coach, they are likely to perform better on the field (Amorose, 2000).

With the exception of these studies, we know very little about how players interpret interactions with their coaches. Interactions in practice and game time is when players can begin to establish the type of behaviors their coach prefers and eventually form an interpretation of their own. Among studying the coach-athlete relationship, it is important to take in consideration the differences of gender and keep in mind that gender plays a role within differentiating perceptions and preferences of coaching styles. Gender differences cannot be ignored when studying the preferred coaching behaviors and interpretation of a female athlete's perception of their male coach. Coaches' beliefs, philosophies and how they influence his/her coaching procedures will differ, but these are all important factors to consider between male coaches and female players. Female athletes, especially at the collegiate level, have experienced various types of coaching styles up to this point in their lives. Their response to a particular behavior will vary, and this study seeks to dissect player's interpretation of their relationship with their coach.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study is to examine and explore how female players of a Division one athletic team interpret their coach's behaviors and coaching philosophies on and off the court. Qualitative inquiry best suits this exploratory study because it is essential to take the participants personal feelings and thoughts seriously. A qualitative approach allows me to explore players' interpretations of the world that are both nuanced and contextual. Further, the development of interpersonal relationships are essential for allowing participants to express thoughts and feelings that may otherwise be left unspoken. Another reason qualitative inquiry is the best approach is because it facilitates the exploration of the team's micro-culture as well as the nuance of coach player interactions as expressed through body language, demeanor, and dialog. My methodology for this short-term project is described as ethnographic research that focuses on participant observation and interviewing. Additionally, there are systematic approaches regarding the data analyses that will be explored through field notes, initial and focused coding, and analytic memos that also fits with a feminist methodology.

Positioning Myself

My passion and interest regarding this work stemmed from my previous collegiate athletic experience. I can relate to the participants in my study because I understand what life is like as a college athlete. As a former college softball and soccer player, the expectation and grueling dedication that comes with the experience can be life-changing. The importance of being successful academically, consistently honing your skills, and maintaining a positive and motivating relationship with your coach are all imperative factors an athlete faces. During my experience, the negative coach-player relationship began to take an emotional toll on me as a

player and individual. This study is important to me because upon distinguishing a players' interpretations of their coach's behavior, hopefully the findings can show what female athletes (generally) prefer, what they do not prefer, and the manner in which they interpret coaches' behaviors. I will never be able to fully immerse myself into the mind of another, or in this context, the mind of a coach. However, with effort, an athlete can better understand the style of teaching and behaviors their coach portrays on a day-to-day basis. A prosperous coach-player relationship creates an opportunity for an athlete to be successful in various contexts, including 'on the court', emotionally as an individual, and after they have finished a competitive athletic career.

Site Selection and Participants

Most of my data will be generated from practices, home games, and online streaming access for away games that will take place through observational methods and interviews. I have been given access to Johnson Center arena for practice sessions along with an assigned seat for participant observation. Additional private access to stream online games through Conference-USA.com have been administered by the coach and his staff. The participants will include the 12 players who are part of the Division One program and the four coaches associated. I chose this particular team above the various athletic teams associated with the University for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the selected Coach has a successful track record with the studies women's program. During the past ten years of his coaching career, he has managed to guide and build his basketball team to a winning record. With eleven seasons under his belt, he has led his female athletes to nine NCAA Tournament appearances, three WNITs (Women's National Invitation Tournament), and holds the title of becoming the program's all-time winningest coach with 276 victories. To add to his success, he has coached five All-Americans who were drafted

for the WNBA and was inducted into the MTSU Hall of Fame in March of 2017. There are a total of 35 games; 19 home games, and 16 away games. The ladies will face a total of 7 conference competitors, totaling 18 overall conference games. Generally, the player's condition year round but the first day of practice starts on October 1st and ends after their season is over (their last game). Their spring 2017 practice schedule is Monday – Friday 1:30 – 3:30pm, Weight lifting from 3:30 – 4:30pm and study tables from 6-8pm. Study tables is a hub for the athletes to come together and study for their classes in the library. Upperclassman with a good GPA (3.4 or above) can opt out of study tables after granted permission from the head coach. Game days are always on Thursdays and Saturdays, sometimes Sundays. Upon completion of the season, the players usually receive about a two-week break and then begin open gym conditioning for the next season. For example, their spring 2017 season ended when they were defeated in the WNIT conference semi-final on March 12th, 2017. They began conditioning for next season on April 1st, 2017. The roster for this program includes three freshman, four sophomores, three juniors, and one senior.

Data Generation

Given the need to explore participants' interpretive processes, observational and interviewing methods will be employed to document and analyze the subtleties of team culture and player-coach relations. The 2017 Spring Semester will be an important one with watching practices, creating field notes, and interviewing a number of the players. The interview transcripts and research findings will follow closely after in the 2017 summer semester. Qualitative methods will facilitate a more nuanced inquiry into participants' meaning making process as well as the subtleties of behavior in the context of an intercollegiate athletic team.

Non-Participant Participant Observation

During the observation process, I will be observing the participants from the sidelines during practice and game sessions. I will not be actively engaging in the game of basketball with the coach or participants, therefore, this labels me solely as an observer. Wolcott (1999) explained that it is important for researchers to distinguish the difference between observers and participant observers. “A non-participant participant observer is a label for researchers who make no effort to hide what they are doing or to deny their presence, but neither are able to fully avail themselves of the potential afforded by participant observation to take a more active or interactive role” (Wolcott, 1999, p25). I will not be making an effort towards hiding or denying my presence while watching the practice from the stands and do plan on interacting with their coaching staff. Besides small passerby conversations with the players and interview conversation, I am not actively participating in the game with them, which, according to Wolcott, puts me in the positions as a “Non-participant participant observer”.

In observing the coaching style, I will be taking notes and examining through body language, demeanor and dialog how the head coach interacts with his players. I will analyze concrete behaviors, such as his discipline tactics, coaching instruction, and team cohesion and motivational strategies. I will closely examine how practice is conducted through noticing which drills are being used and why (will bring the reasons behind each drill up in the interview with the head coach, certain drills he chooses could portray his type of coaching style), the layout of a practice, practice agenda, and game day strategies in order to form a better understanding of the coaching styles, behaviors, influences on the players as well as the effects of coaches' leadership decisions regarding players.

Field Notes

In order to form a well-rounded interpretation and better understanding of the coding process, field notes will be conducted during the participant observation process. I will type field notes during any form of observation I undertake throughout this process which will include, but is not limited to practice sessions, game days, film sessions and shoot-around practices. These field notes will be typed daily upon observing interactions between player and coach. My field notes will illustrate information regarding players, coaches, surroundings, smells and dialogue between coach and players. I will record careful description of subtle forms of expression, such as tone, inflection, slang, and body language. A jotting process is another important aspect of field notes that I will also utilize during the observation process in order to quickly record important incidents or phrases. I will re-visit these jottings after an observation session is finished to better extend on them, and possibly inquire later on about certain incidents that happened with participants through the interview process. Subjective reactions will create for a place to start and make sense of the data collected. Additionally, the analysis process will help me decide as the researcher what information is important to include for interpretation, and what information from the field notes are not important to include for interpretation

Interviewing

Interviews with participants will allow for a more personal approach contrary to a quantitative method such as using surveys in data collection. In comparison to using surveys as a form of data collection, this tool is not able to probe for a deeper understanding of the thoughts and perspectives of an athlete that interviewing allows qualitative researchers to do. A more in-depth exploration will be utilized upon examining players on a universities women's program through one-on-one interviews. These student athletes whom are a part of the program will be

interviewed regarding their meaning making processes of their coaches' behavior. Interviewing participants will complement the observation process because I will be able to make relevant connections that I may notice during the field note taking process. For example, suppose during the observation process I see a player walk out of practice crying after they made a mistake on the court, I will be able to mention that incident later on in an interview with that particular player, which will allow me to connect the reasons as to why they felt and reacted that way. Interviewing will allow participants to have a greater role in shaping the conversation. It is important that the participants have a greater role in shaping the conversation because this shows that they are engaged during the interview process and creates a comfortable platform for them to be open and honest about their experiences with the coach and the program. A wide range of questions in effort to navigate a comfortable environment for participants to have full opportunity to influence the interview will include:

- Childhood athletic experiences;
- Decisions leading up to becoming a collegiate athlete;
- Their reasoning for choosing their particular college program and coaching staff;
- Hardships they have experienced both in previous experiences and their collegiate experience;
- Previous coaching and current coaching relations;
- Coaching behaviors in which they generally prefer

Interviews will range from 30 to 60 minutes and as many as three interviews may be necessary with each participant. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed in order to facilitate subsequent analysis. Utilizing these interviewing tools and methods will help me better understand the player's standpoint on their feelings and interpretation of the coach.

Data Analysis

The analysis process specifically deals with systematic procedures followed by the researcher in order to identify essential features and generate findings of the study (Wolcott, 1999, p24). I will follow specific guidelines suggested by Wolcott in effort to find critical elements regarding the participants. Upon following this systematic procedure it will later assist in my overall interpretation of the data collection. As for a more detailed description of the process, I rely on Kathy Charmez's publication "Constructing Grounded Theory, 2006". In her writing, Chamez describes the step-by-step process that takes place in analyzing the data to better construct a participants meaning and experimental views in order to gain a better understanding of the data. First, the process of analyses will follow initial coding from interviews and field notes. I will start breaking down an interview transcript and focus on reoccurring words and phrases the basketball players have said during the initial coding process. Next, I will examine the initial codes and create focused codes. During the focus coding process I will create main categories (most likely a phrase/word the participants often mention) with various topics closely related to the category listed under. I will group primary codes into concentrated categories through focused coding. Phrases utilized by the coach and players will be broken down into concentrated categories in order to better organize the coding process. For example: phrases or lingo used by the participants during games, practices, pre-game and private meetings. Following the coding process, advanced memos will be created refining conceptual categories in which may lead to the beginning of my interpretation process. The data will be managed with a physical organization system including establishing a hierarchy of each quote or observation as it pertains to the category or research question (Saldaña, 2012). According to Charmez, the next

step in creating memos is sorting the memos, and adopting certain categories as theoretical concepts and integrating memos into a diagramming concept or graph (Charmez, 2006). Upon performing these essential steps within data analyses, I should have a firm foundation to move forward with my approach for interpretation.

Wolcott lists alternative strategies in which a researcher should utilize during the interpretation process in order to maximize the possibility for their findings. A strategy I will implement within the interpretation process as suggested by Wolcott is to not be afraid to connect with previous personal experiences to consciously form an understanding from the results of the study. According to his book on *Transforming Qualitative Data* he states that “I-witnessing offers two interpretive options. The first is to personalize the interpretation ‘this is what I make of it all’ and the second is to make the interpretation personal ‘this is how the research experience affected me’” (Wolcott, 1994, p30). This method of data analyses is best suited for interpretation, understanding, and explanation as it will allow me to physically organize all the data in a space where I can see everything at once making it easier to look for in/consistencies in responses, as well as to assess how we might incorporate the data into our writing. These data methods will provide the foundation for subsequent analytic memos as well as presentations and publications.

Maintaining Rigor and Trustworthiness

In order to ensure trustworthiness through data collection, the quality of my study relies on measures to ensure reliability by adequately utilizing a handful of strategies. I do realize that I need to be sensitive as to how my experiences might compromise the rigor of my work. While my own interpretation and personal experiences will serve as an asset to this project, it is still important that the results of my study reflect a sense of understanding for the reader and future

researchers. In efforts to improve understanding on the subject of how players interpret coaching behaviors, I will maintain rigor and trustworthiness during this experience through a systematic process through analyses management. In order to stay transparent, my research should be available to where if other researchers want to replicate and achieve similar results, they will be able to do so (Green & Thorogood 2004). Secondly, in order to be sure that my interpretations are in line with what others are thinking, dependability plays a role in maintaining rigor. A mean for improving dependability is regular discussions about coding themes and accurate analysis's with my colleagues involved in this project. In effort to maximize the quality of the interview, I also want to create an environment where participants can trust and depend that the information they share is confidential.

For a critical evaluation of trustworthiness, I rely on Wolcott's (1994) examination for the usefulness of my study. In his writing, "Transforming qualitative data, 1994" Wolcott explained his outlook on validity in which the term is most often used when it comes to scientific accuracy; however, as a qualitative researcher, the term validity tends to haunt us due to various reasons like miss-interpretation of data or a sense of 'inaccuracy'. In other words, Wolcott is not too fond of the term "validity" but rather offers qualitative researchers an alternative way to focus on reliable, trustworthy results, without tirelessly satisfying on the term validity, or, in essence, creates his own meaning that identifies understanding. Wolcott disregards the term validity because he does not agree that it fits within qualitative research. Validity is a term he believes falls in line with quantitative research because the results can be measured accurately through numbers; and qualitative research cannot. A more reliable term for qualitative researchers that Wolcott strives to help qualitative researchers achieve is the term of

understanding. Wolcott created a process that helps clarify and guide a qualitative researcher in presenting the reader with a new form of knowledge and understanding to the topic explored.

As a qualitative researcher, I can relate with Wolcott's systematic steps to improve understanding because results are not always (if ever) cut and dry when it comes to qualitative work. In his stages of recognizing validity within qualitative work, he guides the reader with nine points in efforts to satisfy trustworthiness as a researcher. Nine points to consider are "Talk little, listen a lot, record accurately, begin writing early, let readers 'see' for themselves, be candid, seek feedback, and write accurately". These nine points will aid in qualitative research efforts of validity and trustworthiness (Wolcott, 1994). An inquisitive stance during the interview process and making a strong effort to sit back and listen prompts others to do most of the talking, thus leading to greater explanations by the participant (Wolcott, 1994). While the importance of being social and likable is imperative for seeking greater honesty, this is a reasonable circumstance in terms of validity to let the participant have the stage in carrying the conversation. If the participants wish to view my findings (i.e., Field notes, interview transcripts), they will have access to check these documents and confirm findings. Wolcott also suggests that recording interviews and beginning to write and encrypting immediately will minimize the potential of misinterpretation by the researcher.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

This study took a qualitative approach in effort to resolve the question, how do female athletes make meaning of their coaches' style of facilitating the program? Furthermore, how do female athletes on Division I inter-collegiate athletics interpret the guiding philosophies and behaviors of their coach? By observing and conducting interviews with participants, it was hoped that participants would be able to explain their interpretation of their head coaches leadership, philosophy, and teaching styles through reminiscing with the researcher on personal experiences and encounters with their head coach during practices and games. It was also hoped that players could explain their meaning making processes of the coaches' philosophy and vision for the team, and how that has influenced their experience while being a member of the team.

There were a total of 16 participants in this study: Twelve players, three assistant coaches, and one head coach. The three assistant coaches were two female's named Coach Sheller and Coach Kelley. The male coaches who were a part of the program were assistant Coach Henry and Head Coach Matt Ingram. As described in chapter three, I used a coding process to place repetitive words utilized by players and coaches', where certain terms and quotes were placed into trending categories. These trends developed into clearer representation of the interpretation the players made from the coaches' style, and lead to developing themes based on repetitive actions the researcher found during the observation process and similar experiences that repeated during the interview process with participants.

The three presented themes in this chapter are organized around player terminology. The themes are headed with specific quotes that stem from specific words or phrases that players and coaches specifically stated during the interview and/or observation process. The taglines provide relevance to both previous research in the current study's literature review, player's rationalizations of their current coach-player relationship, and the mental process each participant has applied during their experience in effort to interpret and make meaning of their head coaches' behavior. The three themes distinguished in this chapter are as follows: "It Is All About Business If You Want To Be A Champion", "Leave it on the court" - Players Rationalizations Of The Coaches' Behavior, and lastly, "Momma Bear" - Interpretations of Emotional Work. Findings revealed that the players interpreted their head coach as a powerful authoritarian who used explicit communication tactics and the power of respect to run his athletic program. Participants made meaning out of the coach's style by realizing that he is a coach who carried a variety of success and accomplishments for over twenty years in his experience as a head coach. Therefore, because of notable recognition over the years from the community, university, and professional league players that once played for him, the consistency of all of these factors and much more were enough for participants in the current study to develop an immense amount of trust that his philosophy of teaching (despite troubling coach-player experiences) was what was best for the program as a whole.

Theme One: *"It Is All About Business If You Want To Be A Champion"*

The tagline "If you want to be a champion" and "it's all business" stem from actual quotes that players and coaches utilized during the process of the interviews. It was important for this study to properly distinguish the coaching style and later identify how players interpret and make meaning of this coaching style. Post observation and interview process, findings clearly

replicated that the coach's style is along the lines of an autocratic coach. As discussed in previous chapters of this study, the leadership models continuously used in sports and businesses can be described broadly as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire type leadership. Relating with the literature review of this study, an autocratic coach, according to Sage and Taylor, is a coach who displays a strong discipline, rigidity of rules, hierarchical authority, and an impersonal attitude towards subordinates Sage (1975). Taylor (1911) determined Autocratic coaches utilize a 'telling' approach rather than an 'asking' approach. Characteristics of autocracy preferred by the coach was the respect for authority, discipline, and highly organized practice sessions. These findings from previous studies were more than substantial in identifying, classifying, and making sense of the head coach's philosophy.

Amongst many hours of observation, it was clear that the coach demanded respect, sometimes literally. Direct quotes from the coach during field notes portrayed highly disciplined and organized practice sessions. Every practice session was planned and executed each day. If a play was not executed the correct way, or carried out the way the coach wanted it, players would repeat the same process over and over until the coach approved players to move on to the next scheduled routine. This was also stated in interviews by the assistant coaches, but a process that the researcher specifically recorded in field notes. During the observation process, the researcher noticed that all of the coaches had a freshly printed daily practice plan prepared with drills, notes and organized routines; the daily practice documents broke down each routine with the hour and minute next to it, and what time they needed to move on to the next drill; this example explains the model of an autocratic coach at their finest.

Another example of autocratic leadership relies on data found during the observation process of demanding discipline said by the head coach while disciplining athletes during

practice. This happened on several occasions. Below demonstrates a substantial example of the coach's communication to the players during practice.

(Field note, Johnson Center Arena, 02/13/17)

2:34 Coach Matt Ingram: "Hold up. Get Charlie out. I'm not liking what I'm seeing. Get her out. Not liking what I'm seeing at all. I don't know what you're doing. You're spectating out there, Charlie. He looks at #20 and starts to talk and point "Now what I tell ya to do. I said you go the other way through the defender. You done went the other damn wrong way. Ya'll gotta freeze her man so she can't move. We're not being strong enough. If that opens up your done at the hoop. I done told you this. Alright, Let's go, same thing."

2: 40 Coach Matt Ingram: "Charlie! Where do you need to be? Alright, we're done. Sit out this one."

2:40 Coach Matt Ingram: "Charlie, you're not thinkin. Think honey. He's givin you ideas you gotta trap her in that corner. Come here, I ain't got time for you to diddle around."

2:40 She cracks a smile, looks down at the floor with her hands on her hips, and shakes her head.

2:41 It's dead silent, no movement in the gym. Coach Ingram rolled up his paper in his hands, and slowly walks towards Katie. He approaches her at about an arm's length distance. Still no movement from the players.

2:41 Coach Matt Ingram: "It ain't funny to me. You see me laughing."

2:41 "No sir." Charlie says.

2:43 He walks towards the sideline, blows his whistle, and continues to play. Kylie trots to the sidelines to watch.

This field note illustrates an example of his tough demeanor, thoroughness and his hard nose dedication to not budge until a specific drill is carried out by all players how he wants to see it. Assistant coach Kayla supports this finding in her quote below.

Assistant Coach Kayla: On the court, he's autocratic. It's his way, and the only way. His way is what is going to work, his way is 'proven', whatever. He has to keep his mind clear. He can't let his mind go somewhere else. Like that intensity is always kind of there. And he can't really get rid of it. He tries to make practice harder than what they are gonna see in the game. So if they can handle whatever can be thrown at them in practice, then they're going to be able to handle whatever comes in a game so they're not going to be in surprise or panic. And that's just high in crunch time and that's why he keeps that demeanor, that's his goal, and he's amazing at it.

Anderson: "It's all about business here. He has a system. I'm not gonna say like his system isn't strict but it takes like a special individual, a special female to play for Coach."

As Kayla and Anderson quotes demonstrate, Ingram is a leader who prefers to take full control instead of presenting an opportunity for players to handle the reins, utilizes subordinates as instruments of the organization with little opportunity to change or budge personality is a leader whom portrays autocratic leadership. Gibby and Anderson continue to explain his coaching style in the quotes below.

Gibby: All business. He is all business. The most you'll talk with him is if he needs a meeting with you and that's about it. But if we're on the court you know he'll tell stories, give examples of other players, and let you know maybe that'll help you out."

Anderson: Like, if you come you could pick the top player from wherever, but coach is the type of coach that not everybody can handle. Not everyone can handle him because he digs and he pulls apart of you out that you didn't even know that you had, he like touches your soul [laughs] and I mean that's why we had people that quit. They were the best but like I said not everybody can play for him. If you can't handle him, you've got to get off the court, like you definitely gotta be mentally tough. You learn to deal because the education is getting paid for. He's gonna push you to your peak, and when you get to your peak he's gonna push you some more. So yeah, a lot of people can't handle that.

Business is a familiar term that Gibby and Anderson refer to during their interview. They portray that they agree with the coach's outlook, and they treat the game of basketball like a business. Their job is to show up to practice ready to play, be determined, and work hard, no time for complaints or goofing off. Anderson is a senior player who made her trademark on the program during her time as a part of the program. She is a record setting player, one of the best point guards ever in the program at the studied university, the leading scorer of all time, and retiring her number on senior night, her words come with experience and growth that she has endured the past four years. Given her experience, Anderson explained that she quickly became familiar with the coach's ways, took little to heart, and was there to work. Because she interpreted the coach's style of coaching early on, it helped her become more successful in the long run with the accomplishments and awards previously mentioned.

Anderson: He has taught me through his teaching style to never be afraid to fail. I think that's probably my favorite of the whole thing because like, Coach Ingram is a very successful coach, but if people knew his background, you know it took a lot to get him to where he is now. And he talks to us about that and I don't think to motivate us but to tell us how it is as well because when we leave here, there's some people out there who's not gonna be straight up with us and some people like Coach Matt is gonna tell you how it is and he's going to tell you what to expect so like now, I know when I graduate I'm ready for whatever life's bad stuff that's thrown at me because I'll be prepared for it. I used to get down on myself a little bit but Coach Matt was motivating me.

This is an example of how a participant chose to try not to take Coach Ingram's blunt outbursts and comments during practice to heart, but instead realized that he may not have been saying rude comments to discourage players, but, for her case, to improve motivation, to help them realize they can and will do better than how they are practicing. In the beginning of her response, Anderson also reiterates his success, which shows that she values his success in the past and justifies his tough coaching style.

For many participants, this coaching style was simply a way of life that they learned to conform to. They leaned on their teammates for understanding and re-shifted their mind and basketball technique to adjust their norm to his needs and wants because they realized that even though they may not be used to the intensity as compared to other lax coaches in their past, this coach has developed so much success over the years which has overpowered the mental and physical challenges they faced during their experience on the team. Becky explains the dynamics of her dealing with altercation between the male coaching staff, along with how the business like structure the coach has created in his coaching style has influenced her.

Becky: As long as you're doing your role in the business I guess you could say then he's like you'll do you and I'll do me. But if he has an issue with you you're definitely gonna have some one on one confrontation in his office for sure. Probably more than once. When you get called into coach's office, he very rarely just wants to chit chat. It's not really like that with him. If you get called in there, you're in trouble. So really I'm never in the office talking with him, more with Coach Shellar and Kelley I go to for that. we just kinda keep it at practice or maybe sometimes in the locker room. He's good about not trying to get all up in your personal life.

Below are continued examples of players making sense of his philosophy and break down the term "business structure".

Becky: I realized I can't take things he says to heart, or else they will eat away at me and let it affect my whole day. I need to do my best to leave it on the court and move on after practice. Pick up again tomorrow. I know that he wants to make me a better player, he just has a tough way of doing it.

Kylie: He knows better than me so I just kinda give him the reigns and keep to myself, keep my nose down and work hard. I respect his success and I just let it motivate me to be better.

Right here we see the term "business" come up again from the participant. It is a specific term they associate with in the program. This term seems to be interpreted by the players as impersonal and a disregard of feelings and emotions. When they say "it's all business" this is a distinguished interpretation, an effort to understand his vision, and the players treating the game just as they state, like a business. They interpret his philosophy as "business"; which leaves little

room for emotional factors to be considered by the head coach. Players, despite their passions and reasons for being a part of the program, which differs on a broad spectrum, they all treat this basketball program like a job. Show up on time, do as told, work hard, and even on days of tough criticism they do their best to leave emotions out of the picture, because they realize this is just the way the coaches process works. This type of leadership has been carried out by this coach for a decade, and with this mentality, the coach has created “success.” He was a head coach for 28 seasons, accomplished 16 NCAA Titles, 10 conference championships, and was a 2017 Hall of Fame Inductee. The players in these interviews have realized that he is who he is, and his system ‘has not changed for any player.’ Players who do not agree have quit in the past, and the coach has never made an attempt to chase them regardless of their talent.

There are valid reasons and circumstances a coach chooses to lead a team within an autocratic manner. A study conducted by Sage (1975), found that given the nature of the sport, division ranked team (For example: division I collegiate team), further development within intense training, strict reinforcement, and organized practices are a few reasons why coaches may integrate these styles towards leading a program to a winning season. His coaching system follows an extreme authoritarian model, and the players clearly understand that.

Theme Two: *Players Rationalizations Of The Coaches’ Behavior*

In this theme, I begin to unpack coach-player communication both on and off the court, and why the coach may use certain communication tactics to build structure within his program. During the interview process, players actively rationalize the coaches’ behavior during their experience. The term “leave it on the court” was a repetitive tagline participants used while explaining that they must not take anything personal on the court (during practice or games) and to let go of any negative coach-players encounters once they walk off the court or ‘leave’

practice sessions. Examples of this tagline stated during interviews can be found in this section later on.

Being a controlled and autocratic leader, it would make sense that the coach limits communication and personal relationships with players in an effort for players to continuously work for his respect and in some sense, his approval. Limited communication with players may be a strong factor of why players work so hard, to gain respect, to gain a starter position, which (in the coaches' favor) ultimately leads the team to strive even harder to win games. This theme is valuable because we begin to see a clearer interpretation from participants regarding their meaning making process of the coach from specific experiences they have had via coach-player contact.

An example of the controlled and structured communication the coach has created between him and his players can be described in various ways by participants of the current study. The first example of his daily communication style is demonstrated below by participant Gibby.

Gibby: "So me and the assistant coach Shellar, we always have meetings and stuff and talk about stuff like this. Like I would just like be done completely after practice if I got frustrated or if I got yelled at I would just shut down. Well now, I'm in the mix of things. She taught me that everybody's gonna mess up, coach gets on to us. I really just try and look at him, make sure I make eye contact like yes sir, you know, if he wants me to get off I'll get off you know, I'll just sit over there but in my head I'm just thinking alright common Gibby you know you can do this, you're the one making it tougher on yourself.

Taylor: “So you’re close with assistant coach Shellar and have one on one talks with her—do you ever talk with Coach Ingram outside of practice?”

Gibby: “Nope. Unless we see him in the halls and we’ll just say hi.”

According to Gibby, the coach-player relationship dynamics between her and the head coaches communication measures remain at a distance emotionally, but the coach-player relationship with her female assistant coaches reflects personal relationship, personal growth, a person to vent to, and someone who is actively willing to listen to her problems, issues, and feelings. Perhaps this coach-player relationship between male head coach and female player can relate with previous research on male/female dynamics and feminist theory.

Taylor: So what kind of convo’s do you have with Coach Matt? Is it more one on one contact or collectively on the court during practice?

Kylie: It’s a good mix of both. I mean, I never had to go in to his office but if he has something to say something to really talk to you about he will call you in and talk to you about it. But more so it’s like during practice they’ll kinda pull us off to the side and talk and say what they need to say, tell you things that they see and what you need to work on as a player during practice. But sometimes we’ll have these team meetings and not do anything but just talk and he tells stories for like an hour and a half just to establish things and be on the same page. He really communicates with us like in the locker room and on the court.”

Taylor: Who would you say you gravitate towards more the most when you’re stressed out? Is it your teammates, coaches, family or does it vary?

Kylie: I would say my teammate Charlie the most because she's my roommate so there's some days where we'll both have bad days and we'll just go home and sit on the couch and be like "what the heck was that, have we ever played basketball, we suck!" but we're also thinking "alright, alright bro we just gotta let it go, let his words slide. it's all on the court."

A quote below from a participant of the current study illustrates data that explains what players are expected to carry out or their particular role on the team that is specifically established and set by the head coach as a strategy to help the team be more successful in the long run.

Gibby: He always says 'I recruited you to do this, you to shoot, you to handle the ball, you to shoot' it's almost like all these pieces come together and create a good hard nose team. It's crazy.

Gibby: Well really (...) Coach Matt is a person that it's his way. That's not a bad thing because his way has worked for so many years. At first it was kinda hard for me to figure out what he wanted from me. Like I couldn't figure out what exactly my role on this team was and what did he need me to do. And he basically just came out and said I need you to rebound the basketball, I need you to get a put back if you can but I need you to be a rebounder, and a hard nose defensive player. That's what he wanted from me. He didn't want me to score, he didn't want me to do this this and that. So in my head I need to rebound, rebound, in my head I gotta play defense okay I gotta rebound, then defense like that's all I stuck to. That was the only thing in my head I was trying to focus on. Then after a bit my sophomore year I was like okay, okay. I'm starting to get more into it, more in the swing of things and doing those things, and I saw more playing time.

According to this participant, it seems as if the coach chooses particular players to join the program for a specific reason that fits his vision. He expects them to create a specific dynamic for the team as a whole. Does every girl know their role? What if a player wants another role? He may want players to be focus on a specific item, master that, and if it takes them all four years, then it takes all four years. What matters is what they can contribute to the team and that they are restricted to work on other positions or technical moves like ball handling and rebounding until further approved by him.

Kylie: (...) He kinda dropped a ball on me. Right off the bat, he wanted me to change from a shooting guard position to a post position. And I've never played the 4 post position in my life. So when I got here and he told me I'm playing post, I almost died. Cause it was like asking a fish to walk on land. I had no idea how to play there.

Kylie: He wanted me to be able to go back and forth between a three and a four. (guard and post) I was upset most days at practice. Like, a lot of the days honestly. Because like when he got on to me or whatever I felt like I really couldn't handle it. He really has a way of like, breaking me down emotionally. I wanted to use my excuse like come on, I've never done this in my life. I've never played here before. I don't know what I'm doing ya know (laughs). It's not fair, you didn't recruit me to do this. I assumed I was going to play my position I was used to when I got here."

Becky: Up until this point, I've always been a post player. But he established early that I need to rebound, defend the paint, score when it's my turn to score, and be solid all around. That's what it was kinda right off the bat, but now this year he's trying to change everything. He's on this big kick where I should transition into a three shooting guard. He wants me to shoot it more. So now it's totally different and I'm

working on all new stuff for this season. I feel like my role now to him is “we’re just gonna play Becky where we need her.” But yeah, every position he looks for specific jobs for players to do. Like Gibby is a rebounder, Alex is a scorer, Anderson Initiates offense, and you fit into his mold and then we go play basketball.

Both Kylie and Becky have endured experiences of changing up their position entirely, and the stress is put on them to learn the new positions, plays, and their struggle to fit in. Perhaps they are working to ‘find their niche’ on the team, because the coaches have changed up technical fundamentals they have inhibited for years.

Anderson: The whole thing with coach Matt is to gain his trust. Doesn’t matter how good you are. Not in the slightest though [Laughs] don’t matter where you came from, if you don’t gain his trust then its not a good thing. My freshman year I came in and I just worked out and got close with him to see what he needed out of a point guard. Everything he wanted I went and I made sure I tried to accomplish that, which was mainly outspoken leadership, and my senior year you know he kinda didn’t really have to coach me. He put it in my hands to lead by example. He didn’t really have to coach he just put it all in my hands.

Participants have illustrated a program where the head coach expects and explicitly demands aspects out of each player. He will voice to the player what he wants out of them, their ‘specialization’ or ‘role’ on the team. As these three players have stated, they have worked towards their ‘specialization’ the coach seeks from them in effort to perfect it over time. They clearly trust the specialization he wants out of them and they believe in his vision. For Gibby it was rebounding. For Kylie is was improving communication (leadership) and passing the ball (assists). Charlie and Becky changed up their position from guard to post entirely. And for

Anderson her role Coach Matt wanted was solely to be a key leader, a leader players can lean on off and on the court.

Because this is a study of players' interpretations, an integral component of the players meaning making process is rationalized by the success of the head coach., the head coach was notorious for changing player's positions and technical form in order to enhance their performance. For certain players, they molded quickly. For others, it took two or three years to learn and master another position that they weren't used to performing growing up playing this particular sport in travel leagues or high school athletics. Participants have stated during the interview process that they hold the utmost amount of respect of the coach because of his all-star coaching status. Referring back to data in the literature review, they have gained respect over his many accomplishments over the year such as becoming the National Collegiate Athletic Association title of becoming the program's all-time winningest coach at the Division One University that was used for this current study.

At the studied university, Ingram has 276 victories in a Division one female program. During the past ten years of his coaching career, he has managed to guide and build his basketball program to a winning record. With eleven seasons under his belt, he has led his female athletes to nine NCAA Tournament appearances, three WNITs (Women's National Invitation Tournament), and to add to his success, he has coached five All-Americans who were drafted for the WNBA and was inducted into the Universities Hall of Fame in March of 2017. With this current track record, head Coach Matt Ingram has held the players to a high standard, and upon interviews with the assistant coaching staff, he is vividly clear about his standards before players decide to come be a part of the program.. As mentioned in the current chapter, participants Anderson, Kylie, Gibby and Charlie make sense of his behavior and negative coach-player

encounters of losing his temper during practice because they trust his philosophy, his vision, and his teaching as an overall component.

All in all, the players rationalize the head coach as rigid and strictness with the vision of becoming a champion at the end of it. They interpret their sport like a business, but when they experience difficulties on the court, they lean on teammates or female coaches. When it comes to personal conversations with the female coaches, they are more willing to open up.

Communication between male coach and female athlete can be very complex for various reasons that will be covered in the third theme: Interpretations of Emotional work.

Theme Three: “*Momma Bear*” - *Interpretations of Emotional Work*

In this theme, the researcher looks at the study through a gender lens in effort to look dissect why terms like “momma bear” or “As a male coach, I can’t connect with them like female coaches can” were mentioned in the interview process of the study. As mentioned in the literature review of this current study, the differences and dynamics of gender differences should not be ignored when studying the perception of coaching behaviors and interpretation of a female athlete’s perception of their male coach. Previous studies that were influential to the current study provide results how motivation in college athletics were measured by gender.

According to Sherry and Zellar (2012), comparing men sports to female sports, female student athletes tend to be vulnerable population to work with. Additional gender inequities can be summarized by Sherry and Zellar’s (2012) findings that female athletes have a higher percentage of getting injured compared to male athletes, and that the admission prices differentiate where the prices for the female games are cheaper than male games. There is very

little to no research available specifically regarding male coaches leading female athletes, however previous research in gender dynamics provides for how the head coach of the current study may make sense of utilizing the female assistant coaches for emotional support, and the male coaches for the technical and critical parts of basketball. Because female athletes tend to be more vulnerable than male athletes, the findings portray that although he may not be of emotional support, he still provides that support in different ways that women are able to reach it, and that is specifically to lean on the female assistant coaches. A quote by female assistant Coaches Shellar and Kelley illustrate that below.

Assistant coach Shellar: I just want to take care of the players. Making sure the players are okay and taken care of. I really try to talk to them about stuff that's going on in their life. I think that coach kinda puts us in a bubble, which I don't care for, because it's hard to have that one on one contact with the girls, and I want to know how they're doing, all the time. But the girls are also in a bubble. They're so involved with basketball that they don't really know a lot of what's going on with the outside world. So I try to fill them in and also talk to them about stuff they deal with in their real life and be there for them. Just talk to them about stuff besides the game too. But there are times, because they're females, that they kind of need that momma bear. But on that court he is definitely extremely strict, has control and has an autocratic demeanor towards the girls.

Female Assistant Coach Kelley supports the 'Momma bear' and 'Mom away from home' tagline associated with this theme.

Assistant Coach Kelley: Well yeah, and most of these girls you know I recruited and within that I built relationships in the process. I have grown to be there mom away from home so they know that anything that they have issues with that I'll support them. My

door is always open. And they need that. They need that extra push. They need to know that we love them and if they need something that they can get that. Another thing I tell them, is I have two daughters and I treat them like I would want my two daughters treated or just as equal as them. We usually keep that real interpersonal relationship after they graduate or they know they can call me. It's kind of like a ministry to me, too.

It is clear that the female coaches take on the role of a mother away from home, and they love having the opportunity to do so. They solidify the fact that Ingram is tough, and his personality has never reflected one of his ability to provide the girls with comfort. His vision was to teach them how to be champions, and sometimes within that vision they are going to be broken down after hard practices, and while his office might not be open when players are feeling down, he still provides another route for them to receive that emotional support through the female assistant coaches. Below is another example from the male assistant coach Henry on regards to the difficulty of connecting with players on that level like the female coaches can.

Coach Henry: The female coaches are great at it. They can relate to the girls in ways I just can't. On the level I can never relate. That's why there's a lot of different flavors of ice cream. I feel like if I can just help them out technically, whatever it might be footwork positions, angle, if I can help them technically, that is going to be a lot more effective for me than their feelings. I'm just not real good at that. Because in my experiences when males go that way with opposite sex it can come across as really condescending, then you got a worse problem.

Coach Henry explains that gender becomes a huge factor when it comes to relating with the players. Him and Ingram keep a distance emotionally because they are there for the technicality and strict reinforcement spectrum of basketball. He realizes that the players were

going have challenging days where they are broken down emotionally whether that be at a practice or a game, and they may need support to lean on. But he is also honest with the researcher admitting that feelings are just something that he's not good with as a coach and the same factor applies to coach Ingram, and that it is because he is of the opposite sex. Below is an example of how Gibby would lean on the female assistant coaches during times of trouble throughout her experience.

Gibby: When I need to vent and am having a pretty rough time, I gravitate towards my teammates and Coach Kelley. Kelley our assistant is really good about that like if she sees your down she'll come and try to pick you up and try to help you get through it. She'll say like look I know he's saying it like this but he really is just trying to make you a better person, better player. So definitely Kelley. I'm very close with her. I've talked to her about a lot of different things. She would be the one on the coaching staff that really helps me process things. She's just been around him for a really long time so she knows how he thinks, what he's trying to do, what he's trying to get across, even when he doesn't do it in the best way. She serves as a good mediator for those times. Explains it in a different way.... A nicer way.

Findings suggest that the head coach utilizes the female assistant coaches to cover the emotional support he realizes these female athletes may need on a stressful day of practice, a poor performance during a game, or just a shoulder to lean on in general. This relates with gendered findings from West and Zimmerman's research "Doing Gender" Coach Shellar explains relations of relevant findings of emotional work that were similar to West and Zimmerman "Doing Gender" findings in her response below in regards to how she wishes she could build more of an emotional bond with players.

Taylor: If you could change something, what would you change?

Assistant Coach Shellar: I'm definitely going to bring back that personal aspect. You know if I want to have a team dinner, I'm gonna have a team dinner. I'm going to help them grow technicality wise but I also want their mindsets to be strong. I don't want them to be weak in their heads because it always shows on the court. No matter how hard you train them. I just have tunnel vision of building personal relationships with them. I realized in my past that if I spend time with them they're gonna want to put out that effort for me and work hard because they know I'm in their corner both mentally and physically.

Taylor: What would you do different as a head coach?

Assistant Coach Shellar: I've always wanted to be a head coach, it doesn't have to be division one exactly. Division two or three would be just as good for me. We'll have a tough practice and then after maybe go bowling. That's what I'm missing here. Is the personal interaction. And don't get me wrong, I have it with the girls, but not as much as I'd like to. I want them to know it's genuine. Because that's how I learn my respect, is just being genuine. And people really appreciate that and I want my team to be ran like that, other than just playing ball. I get the business aspect too. But It's all just a balanced act. That one on one connection with them is what will change their lives forever, and I want to have that everlasting impact on my players. That's what means the most to me right now.

Coach Shellar understands Ingram's coaching style, however, if and when she has the opportunity to head coach, she prefers to take a more personal route with her players. Because

she talked about bowling, and spending time with players outside of the game, building relationship, it shows that communication is of value to her. Communication is a way to ‘connect one on one’, to create an ‘everlasting impact on players’. Coach Shellar’s outlook on coach-player connections and relationships relates to research conducted by Amorose (2000), and his belief that when a player has a strong bond and a good relationship with the coach, they are likely to perform better on the field. Below, Coach Henry demonstrates how difficult it is for him to connect with the athletes on a personal level because of the gender barrier.

Taylor: What do you mean by mental tolls you and Ingram would put on the girls?

Assistant Coach Henry: The yelling and screaming, they would just shut down. I think I started too early before I built trust with them. Hard to explain it thoroughly.

Taylor: Do you have a lot of personal contact with the girls now? A good relationship outside of the court?

Assistant Coach Henry: Um, not much. Our other coaches do such a good job of that. Matt and I kind of keep to ourselves for the most part, we don’t see them too much outside of practice and games. The young ladies that I recruited personally sometimes we’ll interact on the court and make sure life is good, but other than that we try to give them their space and breathing room.

The assistant coaches begin to solidify the theory that Coach Matt’s emotional distance from the players may be a part of his entire philosophy, where he is able to utilize female coaches for areas he realizes are very real, but issues that he does not want to deal with. Perhaps he utilizes the female coaches for emotional support to keep himself at a distance on purpose, to

keep his high authority and respect from his players on the ‘business’ level participants keep describing.

Although gender dynamics was a subject that the participants did not spend a lot of time talking about during the interview process, there were still comments made within the interview process that closely relates to gender dynamics and the previous research. Coach Shellar talks below about how the females tend to lean on the female assistant coaches after a challenging practice and the players view the female assistant coaches as mothers away from home, and seek comfort from them rather than Coach Ingram.

Through the lens of gender, the findings correlate with previous literature of the current study’s literature review. For example, a study conducted by Owens and Steward (2011) found that male athletes tend to prefer a coach who makes all the decisions and a coach who shows behavior. Their results of female coaching preferences indicated more of a democratic leadership nature, and this allows the athlete to have influence on decisions based on their thoughts and feelings. This finding relates to Coach Shellar’s explanation that if she had a choice, she would run her team in a more democratic leadership manner. Spending time with players outside of practice, building relationships, and acting in a role of a mother figure away from home. Shellar’s statement also relates to research regarding the emotional work of females.

Conclusion

Several participants identify with the vision that the head coach utilizes for this team and trust in his model of leadership. Participants understand that the coach is an autocratic, strict, yet sometimes irrational coach but alongside his strictness there is a purpose behind why he uses this coaching style. Players interpret his philosophy as strict and rigid, but they do agree with the

style because of the respectable (i.e. on the starting line-up, a leading scorer, a top defender, or leading rebounder). Other participants perceive his autocratic philosophy as extremely tasking and mentally straining. Most who felt this way agreed that in the end it is all worth the struggle and negative comments because being a member of the team allows them to receive a “free” education. Since the head coach rarely has communication outside of the court with players, research suggests that he is purposefully sharing personal stories and experiences in effort to establish some form of a coach/player relationship. The reader should consider how he uses this method to connect with the players. Players have mentioned that they do not really speak outside of the court and they rarely go to his office. Interviews with participants suggest that this behavior is intentional; a behavior used for his strategic and systematic philosophy. Upon speaking with participants, it seems to be a characteristic of his personality to keep at a distance with communication and create coach/player relationship bonds. Keeping at a distance with players creates a path for them to work harder to gain his trust and empathy. This is an interesting parallel with my research question: as the players interpret their coach thus far as a very respectable leader and mentor for the team. A powerful persuasion tool he utilizes resides in pulling players off the court to sit the bench when they make too many mistakes, and voicing his opinion on the regular whether they are positive or negative. However, he may lack consideration of the emotional state his female players endure during these negative experiences, and without a strong coach-player relationship outside of the court, participants explain that these instances has often affected their well-being or performance.

Players who prefer the autocratic coaching style hold true for Kylie and Anderson, as they stated above during their interview that his leadership model influenced them to be better players, their passion for the game grew and they both are considering working towards

becoming professional athletics. For Becky and Ashley, they do not particularly agree with his coaching style, in fact, it has proven to be a burden on the both of them. Their reasoning for staying on the team was the simple fact that their degree was getting paid for, and this is just another phase in their life that will assist in future success in graduating and finding a job in their field. For participants Gibby and Charlie, they talked about has growing closer with her teammates after leaning on them during negative encounters with the coach, and realize this is the way he is and they simply have to accept it. Tracing back to the study conducted by Owens, although the study was conducted on male athletes rather than females, their findings portrayed that the studied athletes preferred the strict, autocratic type coach; this is a true finding for two out of the six players interviewed in the current study. Anderson and Kylie explain during the interviews that they preferred this autocratic type of coaching, and four did not agree with this type of coaching. The four who did not enjoy this type of coaching have contemplated quitting during their experience because of multiple negative coach-player encounters. Their sole reason for staying was their passion for the game, fulfilling a degree, and understanding that the coach has used this strategy and philosophy to create success in the past; and because of this continuing to stay with the program because they want to be a part of a championship program.

Despite these findings, players do portray evidence through interviews of understanding their coach, make meaning out of his coaching style, and interpret his autocratic philosophy as impersonal yet successful. In essence, these findings portray that personal coach-player relationship isn't so important to them, but winning and being a championship over powers coach-player relationship.

CHAPTER V:

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND LIMITATIONS

Summary

In a context as large as sports and coaching, there is ample research and data on female collegiate athletes' and coaching in general. However, there is a lack of academic publications that considers the issue from the standpoint of how female players interpret their head coaches' philosophies and practices. In short, there is an important gap in the scholarship, which has resulted in women's experiences being completely ignored. Despite the lack of data found, it does not confirm that all previous research on coaches has not been beneficial to my research. In fact, my current study was able to confirm the findings of several previous studies regarding the role of a coach and all of the various forms of coaching styles and leadership.

While the purpose of this research was to explore player interpretation of their head coach's coaching philosophy, a wide variety of previous research has aided to the significance of this study. For example, previous research by Turman (2001) found that athletes who learn and understand how to respond and make sense of coaching behaviors, rather than taking it personally, could lead to enhancing their confidence, coach-player relationship and overall well-being. Jowett, Yang, and Lorimer's (2012) research determined that the ways that a coach and their athlete interact, relate to one another, and communicate with each other can have a critically significant impact upon the success of the athlete. The coach-athlete relationship is related to the positive and negative behaviors that a coach exhibits in his style of facilitating practice and

displaying his philosophical views and style of coaching. This chapter will focus on the interpretation of the data collected for each theme in regards to the current research.

In theme one, “It Is All About Business If You Want To Be A Champion, players explain their interpretations of the head coaches philosophy. The authoritarian model of leadership explicitly defines the coaches teaching style and reasoning’s behind his philosophy. Specific terms utilized by participants during interviews that correlate with this model are terms like ‘a business like structure or environment’, (Anderson, Gibby) ‘step by step organized practice plan’, (Becky) ‘having complete control’(Kylie, Gibby, Coach Kelley) ‘changing players positions, (Charlie, Becky, Ashley) ‘demanding, critical, cynical and abrupt comments during practice’(Becky, Gibby). All of these terms were stated in interviews with participants multiple times. Becky specifically talked during her interview about the coach raising his voice, ‘belittling them in practice’, hurting their feelings and quote ‘pushing them to limits’ which at times became over bearing (Becky, Gibby, Charlie), and the question of whether they should continue being a part of the time was a serious one to consider at certain times of their career for Becky, Gibby, Charlie, and Ashley. Some players preferred this type of coaching because they realized after time that his demanding behavior lead them to be a better player and asset to the team (Anderson, Kylie).

The researcher applied the three models of leadership to compare certain behaviors the head coach Matt Ingram would exhibit that correlates with a vast amount of previous research. Amorose (2000) classified autocratic leadership as strong discipline, rigidity of rules, highly organized practice rules and an impersonal attitude towards subordinates. Previous literature regarding findings from Sage (1975), explained valuable characteristics that precisely identify with Coach Ingram’s autocratic behavior. Autocratic decision making characteristics are,

arbitrary, stringent, and inflexible types of behaviors. Faced with these various uncertainties, coaches strive to control as much as possible, which is a reason some autocratic leaders' function the way they do (Sage 1975). Given the provided examples from the coaches by his players in chapter four, these findings are significant because it shows that players are successfully interpreting and making sense of what style of leadership their coach is utilizing.

In theme two, "Leave it on the court" - Players Rationalizations of The Coaches' Behavior, participants undoubtedly indicated that they were strongly invested in the program to achieve athletic success. They prioritized the chance of winning a national championship over the way they were treated because they trusted the coaches' actions were rationalized because of his previous success of accomplishing 11 championships and becoming a "Hall of Famer" during the past 20 years. All participants shared this identical vision with the head coach who would repeat almost every day in practice "If you want to win a championship, guard her like this, perform this way, act this way, etc." (Field note, Johnson Center Arena, 2/10/17) The success of the coaches past seasons implemented drive and focus, influenced players like Charlie, because it has worked for so many years. The coach is clear on the forefront of his vision to create a team of champions. The participants felt the same and admitted in the interviews that during times when they felt like quitting or when he was too over-bearing emotionally, they persevered through the challenges because they believed those challenges are ones that champions must endure.

The participants all admitted that head coach Matt Ingram occasionally had a temper, mentioning incidents of him throwing his clip board during games, getting ejected by the referees for calls he does not agree with during game-time, and that he is an authoritarian leader; a head coach who is consistently in control. Despite being a highly respectable leader by the

players, participants stated that they questioned remaining on the team at some point during their experience, they rationalize Coach Ingram's irrational behaviors because of the fact that he has been so successful. To the participants, these facts alone justified any negative coach-player encounters they endured during their overall experience. Their thoughts were "this is just the way he is, even though I would sometimes feel belittled by the coaching staff, I learned not to take it to heart because this is how the program is ran. If we want to be champions, this is the type of coaching style we need to get used to" (Kylie). Therefore, players shared that vision with their coach and over time the participants of this study realized that they should not take things to heart, to "leave it on the court". That they will continue to perform under stressful circumstances to get through the season, even if that does mean changing to a whole new and uncomfortable position.

According to previous research, coach-player communication style is said to be important when it comes to players processing thoughts and interpreting the coach (Amorose, 2000). However, with this current study, although the players trusted the leadership of their coach, an interpersonal relationship and bond with the coach was not present in this case. In fact, when players were stressed out, more often than not they would lean on their teammates and their female assistant coaches for understanding. Perhaps this finding relies on the coach's overall philosophy as maintaining an 'alpha male', strict, autocratic status, rather than be of emotional support when players were feeling their lowest. Communication with players is clearly limited. Gibby, Kylie, Charlie, Becky, and Ashley all agreed that unless they are in trouble and are ordered to go to his office, one on one chats with the coach outside of practice and games never really occurred. Furthermore, assistant coach Henry and Kelley admit that he limits communication with the girls outside of practice, and more often than not, players usually spend

more time outside of practice confiding in female assistant coaches or their teammates, rather than Coach Ingram. As described in Chapter 4, this theme is relevant because it describes a characteristic of Coach Ingram's overall philosophy. Furthermore, the current studies findings portray altering results compared to previous literature mentioned in the literature review stating the significance of establishing of coach-player relationship could lead to a team's overall success. This was not the case with this current study.

Chapter four also depicts examples of the roles of the coaches in which relates to gender theory and dynamics. The players provide examples of how his autocratic coaching style was sometimes very overbearing, and emotionally it was hard for them to shrug off comments he would say during practice, and they would lean on their female coaches and teammates when they were feeling their lowest. This was an important dynamic to cover in this study because the players made meaning out of his style as tough and demanding, and that's how it needed to be 24/7. The consideration of his comments affecting their personal life was never really an important one to the male coaches, but as chapter four explains, it was very important to the female coaches. This leads to our last theme on gender dynamics, how male coach and female player communication has consistently hit barriers in the current study.

In the third theme, Interpretations of Emotional Work, Coach Henry talked in his interview about how the female assistant coaches can "do it better" than what he can when they the players on the team are upset. Being a male assistant coach, he admits that when he comes to emotions, he is not as effective with connecting to the players like the female assistant coaches are. According to Sherry and Zeller (2014) given the extent of such gender differences, it is important to specially examine the experiences of women's college basketball players as a unique group. Their social, demographic, and educational experiences may be significantly

different from male basketball players. Ultimately, the true gender dynamic in this study is that a male head coach is in charge of a female basketball program.

In essence, with the head coach of the program being male, and the players' female, gender dynamics play a role in the study in many ways. For example, now that the results have established that the players have an immense amount of respect for him, this gives the coach a sense of power, which he has utilized this power to persuade the girls during practice or games. Within the results we have also established that within this study, an interpersonal relationship is not particularly an important one when it comes to the success of a program overall. Between the male assistant coach, and the male head coach, they both do not portray the motivation to create interpersonal relationships with the girls, but rather, gain respect from them and motivate them to work hard on the court. Perhaps this is because men can set aside emotions, and focus on the technical aspects of basketball. However, given assistant Coach Shellar's response in the interview, she believes that when she is a head coach of a program, that interpersonal relationships are important to her as a coach. She thinks it is important to bond with players, spend time with them outside of practice, act as a tool of guidance or in her words a "momma bear", someone where players can come to her office and she is able to be a mother away from home for them.

Discussion

Reviewing the results of the data collected in this thesis, it does appear that players understand the coaches overall vision and philosophy for the team and interpret him as a tough, straight and narrow, yet successful coach. The players agreed that the program they associated themselves with at the division one level is 'strictly business.' Players interpret this autocratic philosophy to have strict and organized practices, to show up on time and ready to work hard.

They understood that sometimes the coach will yell and create an uncomfortable environment in order to push them to their full potential; that an interpersonal relationship or bond with the head coach is nearly non-existent, and that was their norm. They were on board with this philosophy not because they liked the philosophy, but they agreed the philosophy and coaching style is what was best for the program and their teams success, as the coach has proven time and time again in the years passed.

This study found that an autocratic coach with strict reinforcement and demanding practices allowed for a player to grow as a person. A business like structure for the program was a term that all participants used in the interviews. They knew that the head coach ran this program essentially like a business, and he has told them to look at the game of basketball like a business. They were expected to come in, work hard, dedicate themselves to the program, and the coach was hard on them. Perhaps this is his way of preparing them for the real world outside of college basketball. The coach wanted them to stay focused on a goal, for this instance, each year it is to win a national championship. Coach would say “If you’re trying to beat that team tomorrow, you better put your nose to the grind because it’s not going to be easy .You have to work hard, work together, and be determined, and you can do it”. (Field Note, Johnson Center Arena, 01/27/17) In the long term, players can make meaning out of his autocratic coaching as a prep to working hard and focusing on their passions following college in their professions. This experience for the players may have been the perfect “business like” environment to prepare them for their professional careers someday where they will have to work hard, be determined, and never give up on their goals. The idea of “be like a man” on the court. They even call each other “bro” referring to their teammates during the interviews. However, they are women and the female coaches “do gender” with them/for them. Because they aren’t allowed to “do gender” in

this same way on the court. The players make meaning out of his coaching by transferring his philosophy into the teachings of life, but instead of basketball context, it will better prep them for the context of being successful in whatever endeavors they decide later on. On the other hand, some participants like Becky and Kylie revealed his tough style of teaching took a negative toll on their well-being, their emotional state was affected severely, and the thought of quitting the team crossed their minds several times. According to four participants, the full ride scholarship was the sole reason they decided to stay on the team when times became rough between player and coach (Gibby, Kylie).

In reviewing this research through the lens of gender, findings portrayed the gendered ways a male coach is socially allowed to relate with players, and that with the male coaches' of the current study, interpersonal relationships and bonding with the players was not of importance to their philosophy, but motivating them through task oriented, disciplined practices was their key to success. The female assistant coach admitted that if she could do anything different, it would be to be closer with the players and to spend time with them outside of practice. Research portrays that because coach Shellar and Kelley are women, they have a better ability to connect with the girls on an emotional level. Coach Henry said it himself, he just does not have the emotional capacity to connect with the players on an emotional level, but rather he is there to help them with the technical moves, and he is happy to do that all day, but the emotions make him uncomfortable. Perhaps the coach also utilized two female assistant coaches that were a part of the program to be of emotional support, since he has never really been that type of person. The current research portrayed results of the male coaches believing that if they become too personal with their players, they may lose the strength of their authority. Between male coach and female

coach, at least with the current study, those are outlooks from two entirely different ends of the spectrum, which I believe speaks volume in of a male coach leading a female program.

Finally, the current study was able to capture how female athletes made meaning out of their interpretation of the head coach. For select participants, they made meaning out of this type of coaching by rationalizing coaches' behavior because they believe that is what it takes to be a champion, to win games. For the most part, they grew from this type of coaching style and utilized it as a building block to their life and internally inhibited life lessons they learned being a part of the team so they can use these towards their next life endeavor. The transference of the strict leadership during their collegiate experience will influence their personal lives in the future. Through this type of coaching, they learned the value of hard work, determination, perseverance, and how they can overcome high obstacles to achieve goals later on in life.

Study Limitations

This study was not without limitations. First, the sample size included only one Division One University. The findings from this study cannot be limited to every Division One Female Athletic Program in America that is coached by a male. Another limitation was a question that was not asked during the interview process: Did players have female coaches previously? Answers to this question could have been comparable to the difference of being coached by a man or a woman. It is also possible that participants were limited in sharing information with the researcher due to low rapport between researcher and participant. An additional limitation was the researcher not interviewing a quitter of the team during the current season (there were two that quit during pre-season). Interviews with these participants could have presented a dynamic and unfiltered view of the coaches' behaviors.

CHAPTER VI: IMPLICATIONS & REFLECTIONS

Implications

There are several recommendations for future research regarding female collegiate athletes' interpretations of their head coaches. The first recommendation would be to separate interviews from the environment that participants are familiar with. This current study interviewed most participants either in their locker room, in the seats of the gym that they are at every single day, and even on the court behind the scoreboard table after a practice; within close vicinity of their coaches. With the possibility of their coach walking around during the process of the interview, this could have hindered openness and may have limited sharing personal experiences from participants. During the interview with each assistant coach, all of their office doors were open. The privacy of conversation between researcher and participant conversation was little to none. The head coach was within a couple doors down from the assistant coach's office. If the researcher takes the participant out of their comfort zone, like, for example meet with them at another spot on campus. Perhaps the cafeteria, library, or the nearest local coffee shop, this could push participants in a safe space to talk intimately about experiences they have endured. However, this strategy helped to recruit participants who otherwise would not have wanted to be interviewed outside. It kept it transparent for players and coaches so they didn't worry about who was saying what.

Another suggestion researchers should consider would be to begin the study during the summer or fall semester, to start observing players and coaches early on to grasp the coaching

style and environment as a whole, rather than beginning at the start of their competition season (winter/spring semester) in effort to build rapport with participants. Many factors happen in the preparation prior to a season beginning. It is important that future researchers witness all stages of the basketball programs process (summer off season, fall pre-season, and winter/spring competition season). Researchers should also observe multiple times, so for example, at minimal, the fall semester twice, winter semester twice, ext. for a deeper understanding of the coaches philosophies and players reactions, interactions, and most importantly, player interpretation.

Furthermore, the researcher could try to switch up the demographics, yet still conduct the same study. For example, instead of studying a male head coach or a female basketball program, perhaps the researcher should study interpretations of a female head coach of a female athletic program. Or a male head coach of male athletic program. The last suggestion I would recommend is to replicate this study with a different age group of young females; maybe high school female athletes. With a different population size, age range, responsibilities and community, it would be interesting to see if results are comparable to the current study. Younger female athletes who experience altogether different circumstances may add to the value of building positive coach-player relationships and the importance of understanding and interpreting coaching strategies at a young age.

Implications for Research

Having done this work, we should understand the theory presented in many ways. First, we should know that all athletes are different, all have their own meaning making process and their interpretations may differ from one another but that the process of understanding your coach and why he coaches the way he does is important for player well-being. Sometimes the success of a coach is powerful enough for athletes to deal with coaching styles and philosophies

that are not always particularly enjoyable. Participants revealed that there are certain circumstances, like an over-reaction on the head coach ridiculing a player for not executing a play correctly, that takes a toll on their well-being, they become emotional, and lean on teammates and certain assistant coaches to help them deal with that tough, grueling type of coaching. Existing research showed that coach-player relationships could enhance a team's success. That a team with strong interpersonal relationships with their teammates and coaches could build a strong bond, influencing players to come together, work harder and success has a better chance to follow. While this may hold true to certain studies, it did not hold true for this current study.

Athletes involved with this study respected their coach, but a strong coach-player relationship bond was nearly non-existent with the head coach. Even though a strong bond and interpersonal relationship with the head coach may not have been present within the studied program, they were still pretty successful, they won games, and over the years, they won championships. Coach-player relationship was not important factor to winning and overall well-being, but understanding the coaching philosophy is something that every athlete must be on board to do. Because even if a player does not agree, they must understand, so they can interpret the vision their coach wants. A player who does not agree, could lead to conflict and altercations with the head coach. But a player who understands and interprets why their coach does what they do, why their coaches act the way they do, helps expands their mind and carry out the vision, even when coach-player relationship isn't a priority of the coaches. The next logical question to ask for a future study may be one encompassing questions similar to how female athletes interpret a democratic coaching philosophy or a laizze-fair leadership style. It would be interesting to see the differences in player interpretation and coach-player relationships that stem

from players with a coach that encompasses an entirely different coaching style, vision, and philosophy.

Reflection

There is quite a list of objectives I wish as the researcher, I could have changed or pursued differently with the current study. First and foremost, as a researcher, although I briefly talked to participants after practice during the observation process, it simply was not enough time to build a trustful bond and rapport with the players and coaches. I have learned that you need more time than a semester or a couple months to build relationships with participants.

Implications future researchers should consider while replicating this study is to take more time to build a personal relationship with participants. With a qualitative study dissecting interview transcripts as this current study has done, it is important for the researcher to make a strong effort to form relationships with participants. The more the participant trusts and understands the researcher and the research process, the better chance of openness and clarity regarding personal experiences should be shared by participants. The researcher should begin to build relationships with the players and coaches alongside of at least 12-16 months.

Perhaps if I had more time to build relationships, I could have had a better chance with building relationships with the coaching staff, in effort to understand their philosophy in all perspectives besides just observations and a couple interviews. Amongst numerous emails, phone calls, and pre-set interviews set up with the Matt Ingram's secretary. After three cancelled meetings, I was never able to track the head coach down. Perhaps the reason why I was never able to successfully obtain a one on one interview with the head coach was because we lacked an interpersonal relationship, and he could not trust me. I attempted sitting in his office and waiting, but, his meeting schedule was "too overwhelming" to sit down and speak with me. Given the

results of the study, it would make sense that the coach would not be interested in speaking with me for an interview given that he limits contact and communication even with his own players. It solidified the fact that he truly does prefer to keep everything “on the court”.

My Growth in Research

My life has changed personally from this research in many ways, but the few aspects that changed the most is my personal growth of knowledge in past research, personal patience and interpersonal communication.

As a researcher, my understanding and knowledge for past research related to coach-player relationships, gender dynamics, and feminist studies has expanded indefinitely. The journals and data I used during my research process has also added value to my personal life as I talk about these topics (that remain relevant in society today) with peers. Whenever friends and family asked how my thesis and research was coming along, the subjects of past research always came up. For example, with old college teammates and coaches it was interesting to talk to them about dynamics of coach-player relationships, all the different leadership philosophies and the historical background of where these values stemmed from. With family we shared conversation around the table about gender dynamics, feminist theory articles, title IX, etc.; how all of these subjects correlate with certain things happening in modern society today and what we see on the news. Reflecting back, I noticed that I completely immersed myself, my mind and my intellectual habits into this study. I believe immersing myself in the culture of my research and even past research relevant to my study is the best thing I could have done as a researcher. Without passion in the subject, completing a project of this length would seem impossible.

Personally, patience has never really been a part of my vocabulary. I am constantly moving, working towards my next objective, trying to accomplish the next task. I quickly learned that research is not a fast process. From the time and effort it takes in the literature review stage, reading journal articles relevant to this research, to trying to schedule one on one interviews with participants are all tedious, time consuming tasks. Amongst it all, it still remains one of the most rewarding experiences. The true test of patience for me was within the process of the methodology (Chapter 3) and results (Chapter 4). I realized that people are on their own time, especially ones that you ask a favor from. The interview process was over a period of 6 months. I gained a lot of patience and perseverance trying to get in touch with the players and coaches of the team. Trying to correlate our schedules to match up for an hour interview showed me that I had to be patient, yet persistent.

Lastly, communication is another tool of growth during this process. I learned as a person and a researcher the importance of good, prompt, proper communication with participants. The importance of trying to make players and coaches feel comfortable while interviewing with them was vital, and as some may say, 'made or break' some interviews. I learned that the tone of my voice had to be calm, positive, and confident. The questions on the interview guide started out as easy questions about themselves, but as the interview went on, questions become more uncomfortable, as the subject shifted to a more uncomfortable topic (interpreting the coach). People usually do not prefer to share intimate information about another person without having an intimate friendship with the person asking for information, so I definitely had to walk the line and help them feel comfortable by, expanding on their given answers, performing similar body language, speaking in the right tone, and doing my best to dig for information but in a respectful manner.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PLAYER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

FEMALE PLAYER PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Exploring Division I Female Collegiate Athletes' and their Interpretation of Coaching Philosophies and Practices

Interview Protocol

You have chosen to participate in a study that explores your interpretation of the head coach's philosophies and practices on your team. This interview will consist of a variety of questions relating to your experience in a Division 1 program. Your identity will be kept confidential in all aspects and this transcript will not be available to anyone but you or I. In attempt to keep your identity confidential, a pseudonym (fake name) will be given, and I will obscure any personally identifying information from the transcript. There are no benefits entailed by your participation in this interview process. Similarly, there are no risks resulting from your participation that are greater than you would experience in the course of daily life. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to discontinue at any time. The interview will last between fifteen and forty-five minutes and will be recorded with your permission. Upon completion of the interview, I will transcribe the interview for purpose of analyses. Transcripts of the interview will be kept for five years in my faculty advisor's campus office and on his password-protected computer.

Do you mind if I audio record you before we proceed?

Tell me about yourself – what sports did you play growing up? Childhood- high school?

1. What was your transition like from your high school team to college? What made you choose this program?
2. Tell me about a typical day in your shoes. How do you handle the demanding schedule as an athlete?
3. During my observation process last semester, I noticed on a few occasions coach coming down pretty hard on you, making you go back and repeat plays multiple times. Your reaction seemed to look very calm, and you stayed to yourself and continued with the play. What runs through your head during these occasions? Are you hard on yourself?
4. In my past interviews, we sort of established that coach runs a certain system for the program. How would you describe his system?
 - a. (Probing: What do you mean by that?)
5. How does his system influence you as a player?
6. What's your strongest asset to the team?
7. Have you established a specific role between you the head coach one on one? Do you know your role or purpose playing for him?

8. What kind of conversations do you have with coach? Do you have a lot of one on one contact?
9. Do most of your conversations happen on the court or off the court?
10. If you're feeling down or upset, who are the people you gravitate towards more for ease of mind?
11. How has your Coaches coaching behaviors and style of teaching influenced you as a player?
12. If you had a difference of opinion for a play, or a new play idea, could you express that?
13. Optional: Can you think of experiences that present the most anxiety for you? What makes you really nervous? Can you think of a time coach impacted these feelings?
14. Optional: What sort of out of sport context has coach taught you? For example, personal development, academic achievement, work ethic, leadership examples.
15. Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding your experience on this team?

APPENDIX B: COACHES INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR COACHES

Exploring Division I Female Collegiate Athletes' and their Interpretation of Coaching Philosophies and Practices: Interview Transcript

Taylor: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: My study explores experiences of a division one female athletes and their interpretations of their coaches' coaching philosophies. This interview will consist of a variety of questions relating to your experience in a division one program. In attempt to keep your identity confidential, a pseudonym (fake name) will be given, and I will obscure any personally identifying information from the transcript. There are no benefits entailed by your participation in this interview process. Similarly, there are no risks resulting from your participation that are greater than you would experience in the course of daily life. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to discontinue at any time. The interview will last between fifteen and forty-five minutes and will be recorded with your permission. Upon completion of the interview, I will transcribe the interview for purpose of analyses. Transcripts of the interview will be kept for five years in my faculty advisor's campus office and on his password-protected computer. Shall we proceed with the interview? May I audio record for the interview transcript purposes?

1. Did you play sports growing up? What types?
2. When did your passion for the game start developing? Did you know at a young age that you wanted to coach?
3. When did you start coaching?
4. Tell me a bit about the process in which you landed this career position with the program?
5. What's the most important thing for you as a coach?
6. How would you describe your overall system?
7. Your coaching philosophy?

8. Autocratic/democratic? Strict/laidback?
9. How do you think players make sense of that? Can you hypothesize what players may be thinking?
10. I noticed that sometimes during practice you would stop a play when a player wasn't where they were supposed to be, and start over. Sometimes this happened 2 or 3 times before they ran through the whole thing. Like, for example, Charlie as a freshman. I noticed her making multiple mistakes in a row, and you pulled her off to the side and asked what was going on, and for her to pull herself together. Or for another example when Gibby or Alex messed up, comments like "Come on, you're an upper classman. Set an example, you need to be there. In effort as me as the researcher, I am trying to break down your philosophy, your way of thinking, why you say and do things the way you do. Is one of your strategies aided in desensitizing players by putting them through a stressful practice? Maybe a more stressful practice than they may see in a game?
11. Do you have a lot of one on one contact with players?
12. Are there instances you take a more democratic approach?
13. I've heard through interviews that in certain circumstances you've let a senior give direction during game time in a huddle. Can you tell me more about this approach? When is it okay to loosen up the reigns and give them the opportunity to lead?
14. Does it matter they understand your whole philosophy? Or just the technical stuff; do what they're told?
15. Do you think you may limit outside personal contact to maintain the 'strict like' professional business structure?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share?