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Game Plans: A Study of Women in Coaching

by

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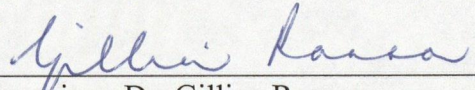
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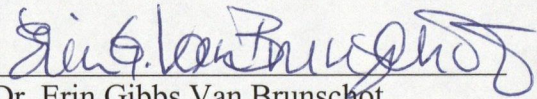
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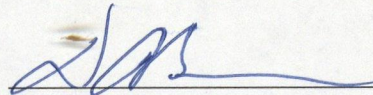
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Game Plans: A Study of Women in Coaching" submitted by Tina Moody in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of women coaches: it is based on 21 in-depth qualitative interviews with women who coach various sports at different levels of involvement. From their accounts, I examine the details of the work of coaching, and the philosophies of coaching they draw on to explain their approach to the job. This thesis also investigates the women's own understanding of gender, and the ways gender is implicated in their experiences on the job. The findings suggest that women resist traditional models of coaching at an individual level, while continuing to struggle with structural constraints.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Asked to name the first high profile woman coach that comes to mind, most people would probably have trouble answering. They would have even more trouble making a list -- and everyone's list would be short. There are not many women in coaching, and those who are there exist in a world that is resolutely male-dominated. The message is sent consistently that sport is really for boys and men, they are better at it, and they should coach it. Women who coach are confronted with these assumptions. Mariah Burton Nelson in her 1991 book *Are We Winning Yet?* cites several stories illustrating some of the challenges faced by women who coach in a male-dominated environment. For example, Mount Holyoke College athletic director Laurie Priest described how women coaches are not supported in the same way that men are:

I have men apply for jobs, and everybody and their mother calls me...
officials, athletic directors, colleagues -- everybody calls out of the
blue to say how great this guy is. When women apply, no one calls.
(Nelson 1991: 166)

Wanda Oates, a high school boy's basketball coach, who also lost a lawsuit for the right to coach high school football, suggested that men were threatened by the presence of women in men's sports.

The men are really having a difficult time losing to me in Basketball...If
I start whipping them in football, they might never recover.
(Nelson 1991: 174)

Vivian Stringer, the head women's basketball coach at the University of Iowa, commented that too many women are coaching in a supportive role.

Young women keep seeing women as assistants, always taking
orders, not being in charge. Then they assume that posture with
whatever else they may do.

(Nelson 1991: 169)

Other stories emerged from women in the Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching Online¹. In this forum, women are able to voice many key issues and challenges that they confront. One discussion covered the difficulties confronted by coaches who are also mothers. One woman commented that she was able to have a long coaching career because she did not have children:

In Canada, coaching is a great life, but it's a tough life if you've got a family. I've had the longevity because, one, I love the game, and two, I don't have children. I admire so much women coaches who have been able to balance both.

A former athletics coach described an experience that encapsulated one of the difficulties of combining coaching and motherhood. She said that she had brought her six-month-old-son in a baby carrier to a Toronto area track centre for a quick time trial of three of her athletes. She claimed that the facility manager, who saw her at the track daily, approached her and said that she was not allowed to have her baby there, and that in the interest of safety she would have to leave. This coach replied by saying she would be gone in 20 minutes, but the manager phoned security officials who told her that the baby had to leave. According to this coach she handed the baby to the manager and said she would be out in 20 minutes. As a result of this confrontation, she said that city representatives sent her a letter threatening to take action if she ever disobeyed the rules again. This coach said she was never allowed to coach with her baby again. She also said that after 10 years the rule still existed at this facility.

This thesis offers more stories of women in coaching. It involves interviews with 21 women coaches of various sports at different levels. It explores their perceptions of the work of coaching, their philosophy of coaching, and their views on how gender plays

¹ www.coach.ca/women/e/journal

out in their lives as coaches. The thesis is based on the assumption that coaching is a male-dominated occupation carried out in a masculinist “culture of sport.” To better understand the experiences of women in coaching, it is necessary first to examine the broader sporting culture and its links to gender.

Gender and sport

As Hall (1996) has noted, empirical research on gender and sport has been informed by changing theoretical perspectives. Initially, research was based on a categorical understanding of gender and it focused on quantifying and empirically studying differences in abilities and behaviors between male and female athletes. In other words, research documented “sex differences” in athletic participation, performance, and abilities and attempted to explain them in terms of biology or socialization. Hall identified three broad categories of this kind of research: femininity studies, sex role socialization studies, and androgyny studies.

According to Dewar (1993) femininity studies have attempted to show that female athletes remain psychologically feminine despite their participation in the “masculine” pursuit of sport. Sex role studies attempted to explain differences in women’s and men’s athletic involvement in terms of sex role socialization for girls and boys. The theory is that girls and women participate less in sport because they are taught that sporting involvement contradicts their femininity (e.g. see Greendorfer 1978). Androgyny studies attempted to develop measures of androgyny. These studies encouraged women to become androgynous and to display masculine and feminine behaviors in appropriate situations (e.g. see Duquin, 1978).

As the women's movement began to have a tangible impact the focus of research on women in sport changed. One outcome of this shift was the emergence of research that examined and documented inequalities in the distribution of resources (Hall 1996).

According to Dewar (1993) this research defined the problem for women in sport as inequality of opportunity due to the unequal allocation of resources. There are many examples of this research. Studies have compared women's and men's participation rates, leadership and administrative opportunities for men and women in sport, media coverage of women's sport, and the impact of Title IX² legislation on women's sport (e.g. see Fasting and Sisjord 1985; Acosta and Carpenter 1994; Theberge 1984). This kind of research did analyze structural barriers to equality for girls and women in sport but it failed to challenge hegemonic representations of gender (Dewar 1993).

A third theoretical shift changed the direction of research once again. The introduction and growth of a feminist critique shifted the focus to a relational analysis. As Marshall (2000) has noted, feminist sociology has focused on documenting gender difference, but an even greater concern is to understand how gender difference is constructed as social inequality.

One way to examine how gender differences create inequality and subordinate women is to examine how gender is constructed. The relational perspective "includes a critical examination of both femininity and masculinity as they develop in relation to one another within a system of structured social inequality" (Messner and Sabo 1990: 13). More specifically, this approach offers the perspective of multiple masculinities and

² In 1972, this U.S legislation declared that colleges and universities had to provide equal athletic opportunities for men and women. They had to equally allocate funds to their men and women's programs.

femininities, constructed in relation to the form of masculinity that is, in Connell's (1990) terms, hegemonic.

Sport is a powerful institution through which masculine hegemony is constructed and reconstructed. Bryson (1987) has offered four means through which masculine hegemony is perpetuated within sport. Firstly, definitions of sport continue to be associated entirely with definitions of masculinity. Secondly, women's sports are ignored. Thirdly, girls and women athletes are trivialized. Fourthly, men have control over women's sport.

Bryson's first claim, that masculine hegemony derives from masculine definitions of sport, suggests that if women want to participate, they have to do so on male terms or rules. For example, some sports are defined as more appropriate for girls and women (such as figure skating, synchronized swimming, and gymnastics) because they embody the so-called feminine characteristics of grace, beauty, and style. Other sports are defined as appropriate for men (such as football, and baseball) because they embody the masculine characteristics of aggression and strength.

Not only has sport been defined by men but it continues to define dominant notions of masculinity and femininity. As Dworkin and Messner comment, "Sport has proven to be one of the key institutional sites for the study of the social construction of gender" (Dworkin and Messner 1999: 341). Male sports construct gender in complex ways. Male athletes "serve as public symbols of exemplary masculinity, with whom all men can identify as men, as separate and superior to women" (Dworkin and Messner 1999: 343). In Connell's (1990) study of an Ironman athlete, exemplary masculinity consisted of the exclusion of homosexual desire, the subordination of women, the

incorporation of competitiveness and toughness, and the triumph over oneself and one's body.

Sport continues to define femininity in a traditional sense. Dworkin and Messner (1999) point out that the definition of a feminine body type and, specifically, limits on muscular stature is one example of the way femininity is constructed. Thus, female bodybuilders are penalized for being too muscular, and they are rewarded for painted fingernails, colored hair, and breast implants. While it appears as though female athletes are empowering themselves through weightlifting and challenging myths of femininity or female frailty, they are in fact complying with hegemonic masculinity, against which women's bodies are measured.

The second means by which, according to Bryson, masculine hegemony is reconstructed is through ignoring girls and women's sport. One example of this is the lack of public representations of women athletes in the media. Historically, female athletes have been underrepresented in the media (Daddario 1997; Dworkin and Messner 1999; Eastman and Billings 1999; Tuggle and Owen 1999). For example, Wilson's (1990) report on the 1989 study by that Amateur Athletic Foundation, cited in Nelson (1994), stated that 92 per cent of televised sports coverage in the U.S. was of men. Just five per cent of the coverage was of women and three per cent was on neutral topics. This underrepresentation reproduces masculine hegemony and it is closely related to Bryson's (1987) third assertion, that the trivialization of women athletes perpetuates masculine hegemony. Trivialization includes the persistent questioning of female athletes' sexuality and the sexualizing/control over their bodies. For example, the media continue to depict stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity through their coverage and this

portrayal serves to trivialize the accomplishments of women athletes and reproduce masculine hegemony (Daddario 1997; Dworkin and Messner 1999; Jones, Murrell et al. 1999; Tuggle and Owen 1999).

Regarding Bryson's last assertion, that masculine hegemony is reproduced by men's control over women's sport, there are many ways in which this control is practised. For example, male coaches' sexual harassment of female athletes is one form of control or power over women's athleticism (Nelson 1994; Krauchek and Ranson 1999). Krauchek and Ranson (1999) have asserted that sexual harassment is an institutional problem that is founded in the dynamics of power and control; it is a defence of male turf. While the degree of sexual harassment varies for individual athletes the result is similar; harassment perpetuates control and power over women athletes and masculine hegemony is reproduced.

Another form of control is the direct control men have over girls' and women's sports. For example, in the U.S before Title IX, most colleges and universities had two athletic departments, one headed by a man for the men's programs, and one headed by a woman for the women's programs. After Title IX, most institutions established combined athletic departments and appointed male athletic directors to head the new departments (Nelson 1991). According to Acosta (1994), the number of women's U.S intercollegiate programs that were administered by women declined from 90 per cent in 1972 to 17 per cent in 1992. The decline in numbers of female athletic administrators coincided with the decline in numbers of women coaches. Thus, men's control extended to include coaching. (Men's direct control over women's athletics will be discussed further in

chapter 5). Ultimately, this control has served to protect masculine hegemony in sport and it has had implications for the ways in which girls and women participate in sport.

Dworkin and Messner (1999) have suggested that as women's sports became controlled by men, they increasingly reflected the most valued characteristics of men's sports: hierarchy, competitiveness and aggression. These values have been widely criticized in men's sports by many scholars (see Meggyesy 1970; Scott 1971; Scott 1974; Eitzen 1989; Eitzen 1989; Donnelly 1993; Eitzen 1999). However, many feminist researchers have extended this criticism to include a criticism of the male model in girls' and women's sports (see Theberge 1981; Sabo 1985; Blinde 1989; Nelson 1991; Messner 1992; Mercer and Werthner 2001). (What this model consists of will be further discussed in Chapter 5.)

What the foregoing establishes is a theoretical framework built on the feminist critique of sport, combined with a relational approach to gender. This combination is a useful basis from which to explore the experiences of women in coaching.

The Canadian Context

It is also important to understand that women coaches are working in a particular national context which is also a *policy* context. The experiences of women coaches in Canada are shaped by policy decisions relating to equity and women's involvement in sport, and also by Canadian policy guidelines and directives on coaching practices. For example, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970 made two recommendations to increase participation rates for girls and women. However, by 1980 no substantive changes had occurred. As a result, the Women's Program within the Fitness and Amateur Sport organization was established in 1981 -- the Women's program

conducted research and implemented programs that benefited girls and women in sport. In 1986, Sport Canada published its *Policy On Women in Sport* and this policy challenged National Sports Organizations to include specific strategies that met the needs of women (Minister of Supply and Services 1992). Policies such as these encouraged the participation of women in sport, and in some cases explicitly encouraged women to coach.

But the experiences of women in coaching were also influenced by the implementation of policies that affected the entire Canadian sport system. For example, the Ben Johnson drug scandal following the 1988 Olympics produced numerous reports including the 1992 report of the Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, entitled *Sport: The Way Ahead*. One area on which the task force reported was the values and ethics of the sport experience and system in Canada, and it recommended which values should shape the future of sport in Canada. The report suggested that an athlete-centered approach was at the core of the sport system: "Athletes must be supported in a holistic way -- with care for the individual's growth and development, physical, moral, emotional and spiritual health" (Minister of Supply and Services 1992: 41). While the report asserted that the future sport system should endorse an athlete-centered approach, it also described how elements of this approach were already in place -- for example, in coaching education and through the creation of a coaching code of ethics³ which emphasized personal conduct, integrity, competence, athlete's interest, and the respect for the rules, officials, and other coaches.

³ A coaching code of ethics was developed almost 20 years after the beginnings of formal coaching education in Canada.

Women coaches

Most of the research on women coaches is done outside of the Canadian context. It is mainly U.S.-based, and quantitative in focus. This research has focused on broad comparisons between women and men in the general areas of employment opportunities and types, income, organizational support, job satisfaction, burnout, and job turnover (see for example, Kane 1991; Knoppers 1987; Knoppers 1989; Knoppers 1991; Knoppers 1993; Pastore 1993; Pastore 1994; Pastore 1996).

An important contribution to this thesis, however, is the work of Nancy Theberge, a Canadian sociologist who has made an extensive study of women coaches in Canada. Unlike much of the U.S.-based research, Theberge has used qualitative methodology and a relational approach to gender in exploring the experiences of women coaches in a male-dominated occupation. Theberge's first publication, in 1988, focused on how women coaches talked about establishing a career in what she termed a "man's world". She discussed coaching education, coaching organization, and coaching opportunities with the interviewees, and determined that they assessed the (at that time) newly developed National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) and the National Coaching Institute (NCI) favourably. She also found that the women described a supportive coaching community between colleagues in their sports. However, some women described a lack of acceptance or recognition from their sport association, university, or club.

Theberge found that the mobility of women coaches in Canada was constrained by the social organization of sport, including the small number of positions in national team programs. But overall, women had trouble entering the "higher circles" of coaching. Many women interviewed in Theberge's 1988 research believed that their career mobility

depended on their own coaching development. In other words, if they gained experience, knowledge, and “produced athletes” they would be able to advance their coaching careers. But she found that most women were not interested in moving to a higher coaching level because they were content with their current situations. Others indicated that they did not want a higher level position because they did not want to make the “commitment” required for elite sport.

Theberge’s second publication, in 1990, explored how women coaches talked about the place of power in coaching. She found that overall most coaches were uncomfortable with attributing power to themselves or their coaching position. Moreover, they rejected the conception of power as dominance and control. The women preferred to view their position as one of influence; they believed they had a tremendous amount of responsibility because of their position. Most enjoyed being able to influence their athletes and one way they did this was by inspiring a sense of independence in their athletes.

Theberge’s third publication, in 1993, examined the construction of gender in the work of women coaches. Specifically, she analyzed the significance of women’s token status, the ideology of masculine superiority, and gender marking and differentiation. The women she talked to provided examples of their token status and isolation. They described being interviewed by a selection committee made up of only men; individuals described being the lone woman at a coaching clinic, competition, training camp, board meeting, or conference. Also, several women mentioned the existence of the “old boys’ network” and how it made them feel excluded from the power structure.

She also found that many women supported an ideology of masculine superiority through their accounts of physical differences between men and women. For example, some mentioned that men's greater strength made them more qualified to coach. Also, many made comments that "conform to traditional conceptions of men as rational and women as affiliative and expressive" (Theberge 1993: 308). Because of this ideology of masculine superiority many believed that men were better able to adapt to coach women's sports, while women had more difficulty coaching men.

In her 1993 publication Theberge also examined how the work of coaching was influenced by gender. She noted:

All coaches experience performance pressures and at the most competitive levels of sport, these demands are often extreme. They are particularly acute for women, whose actions are scrutinized and closely evaluated.
(Theberge 1993: 303)

Theberge did not examine the work of coaching in detail. In fact, very little research exists on coaching as a job, with attention to topics like daily routines, work schedules, duties, and the way the work is organized. There is also a gap in the literature in terms of how gender is implicated in these details. Instead, the work is often described as applying to men or unilaterally to both men and women (e.g. see Sage 1987; Ramsey and Jin 1999; O'Connor and Macdonald 2000; Potrac, Brewer et al. 2000; Horwood 2001).

Theberge's research has made a valuable contribution by demonstrating how women coaches negotiate their entry into male sport territory, how they respond to a career in a male-dominated occupation. But her focus was limited to an examination of how women responded to their heightened visibility and scrutiny in this environment. Like Theberge, I explore the work of women coaches by asking them to describe it, and

using their voices. But unlike Theberge, I pay particular attention to the details of the work, in order to build up a picture of coaching as a *job* for women. But as well as looking at *what* they do, I also analyze their accounts of *how* they do the job, the philosophy that informs their approach. Finally, I explore their own ideas about gender and gender differences as they make their way in a “man’s world.”

The following chapter discusses the methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret the interview data obtained from the women in the study. Chapter 3 introduces the women in more detail, with information about individual backgrounds, and the perceived rewards – and costs – of coaching. Chapter 4 examines the work of coaching, and the extent to which the work is gendered. Chapter 5 explores sporting culture and the women’s philosophies of coaching. It also outlines how the women in the study perceived gender differences in sport. Chapter Six discusses the implications of these findings and suggests possible areas for future research in gender and sport.

Chapter Two: Methods

My focus in this research was on women who were coaching high performance⁴ athletes of all ages and/or were coaching full-time. I wanted to explore how women coaches described the job of coaching, how they perceived their experiences in a male-dominated occupation, how they activated their philosophies of sport and coaching, and how they perceived gender in their own sporting environment.

Sampling

The sample selection in this project was informed by a theoretical sampling logic. Theoretical sampling involves making decisions about putting together empirical material (in this instance the cases) during the process of collecting and interpreting data (Flick 1998). In theoretical sampling, the goal is not to generate a sample that is representative of the entire population as is the case in statistical analysis. The aim is to construct a sample that is theoretically meaningful. A sample is theoretically meaningful when it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test a theory or explanation (Mason 1996). Ultimately, the goal is to construct a sample that allows the researcher to make some theoretical generalizations from the research findings.

To construct a theoretically meaningful sample, I attempted to include women coaches who were diverse in that they had a broad range of experience and perspectives on coaching. I included women coaches from different levels including the university, college, club, and national levels of sport involvement; head and assistant women coaches; and coaches from many different sports. Women who coached both women and

⁴ By "high performance," I mean athletes on university or college college teams, and/or athletes who aspire to compete at, or who do compete at, a provincial or national level.

men (or boys and girls) were also sampled in an attempt to understand how the gender of athletes might influence the coaching environment.

In the initial stages of this research process I had attempted to select only those coaches who were actively coaching at the time of the interview. This was in an effort to capture and understand perceptions that were current and ongoing. However, during the process of collecting data it became apparent that many women had quit coaching, and many others considered quitting. Two interviewees had told me that they were planning to leave coaching. So when I was approached by two women who had left coaching but were still involved in sport and who were very interested in participating in the research, I thought it would be helpful to include them.

Recruiting the sample

Women coaches were selected from the same city in western Canada. Contact information was obtained from websites in the public domain. Three major points of access were utilized including provincial sport websites, national sport websites, and university/college athletic websites ⁵. The Provincial Sport Associations website ⁶ had links to over 50 provincial sport websites, including, for example, the Alberta Curling Federation, the Alberta Baton Twirling Association, Swim Alberta, Ringette Alberta, Water Ski Alberta, and Basketball Alberta. Similarly, the Sport Canada website ⁷ had links to the National Sports Organizations websites. I e-mailed organizations directly to ask for contact information for women in the city of study. Some sites had club or team contact information which allowed me to make some direct contacts. If contact

⁵ I can provide the addresses to these sites if necessary but I will not list them for fear of compromising anonymity.

⁶ www.cd.gov.ab.ca

⁷ www.pch.gc.ca/sportcanada

information was provided I e-mailed coaches directly (see Appendix A for a copy of e-mails). All participants were contacted by phone, after an initial e-mail contact.

These strategies generated most of my sample. Eight women were identified through their provincial sport associations and most were contacted directly at their clubs from the club contact information on their provincial sport sites. Two women were contacted through their national sports organizations. Names of eight women coaches were received from college(s)/university athletic websites, several were e-mailed directly from information on those sites, and a few work numbers were obtained and phoned. Two women were identified from a coaching profile in an online journal. The phone number of one these women was obtained from the phone book and the second woman's contact information was received from the first woman. Two women were solicited with the assistance of women I had already contacted.

The women

In total, I interviewed 22 elite women coaches. This research was based on 21 of those interviews as the tape recording of one interview was inaudible and thus was not included in the research. Two of the women I interviewed were retired from actively coaching but were still involved in the sporting community. One was a general manager of a diving club and the other was an employee of a National Sports Centre where she worked to provide personal and professional development for Canada's national level athletes. Two of the coaches I interviewed were about to leave coaching. As Table 1 shows, the women coaches ranged in age from 22 to 47.

Table 1
Age of Coaches

<i>Ages</i>	<i># of Coaches</i>
20-24	2
25-29	2
30-34	7
35-39	6
40-44	2
45-49	2
	N= 21

Years of coaching experience ranged from three to 31. The women worked at numerous elite levels including club, college, university, and national levels of competition (see Table 2).

Table 2: Level of Coaching

<i>Elite Level</i>	<i># of Coaches</i>
Club	10
College	5
University	3
National	3
	N=21

Ten women were head coaches, seven were assistant coaches, and two were associate or co-coaches. The women coached in 14 different sports -- seven team sports and seven individual sports. Seven of the sports were mixed team sports in which men and women or boys and girls trained together (such as track and field or diving). Seven sports were segregated sports in which only women trained together (such as volleyball). Three of the sports have traditionally been defined as female appropriate sports (synchronized swimming, ringette, and field hockey) and three of the sports have traditionally been defined as male appropriate sports in that they involved physical force and contact (soccer, hockey, and basketball).

Table 3: Sports Coached

<i>Sport</i>	<i># of Coaches</i>
Soccer	1
Track and Field (Athletics)	2
Speed Skating	2
Diving	2
Synchronized Swimming	1
Ringette	1
Volleyball	2
Hockey	1
Basketball	3
Tennis	2
Badminton	1
Freestyle Skiing	1
Cycling	1
Field Hockey	1
	N= 21

Of the 21 women interviewed, 11 received an income from coaching and two who were no longer coaching had received an income in the past. Six received a small honorarium, and two did not receive any income from coaching. Twelve coaches in this sample worked at other jobs. Nine of them worked full-time, two worked part-time, and

one was a student who also worked part-time. Of the 21 women in the study, only seven stated that coaching was their primary source of income. Eleven women had education degrees but only four were actively teaching in the public education system.

Data collection

Prior to contacting participants approval for this research was obtained from the Conjoint Faculties Ethics Review Board at the University of Calgary. This approval required me to address issues of confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent. These issues are outlined in greater detail in the consent form which was given to participants (see Appendix B).

In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The selection of interviews as the primary method of data collection was derived from the research perspective that informed this study. I incorporated an interpretive approach. Essentially, I was concerned with the meanings that participants attached to their experiences. As Messner notes: "It is necessary to construct an understanding of how and why participants themselves actively make choices and construct and define meaning and a sense of identity within the institutions that they find themselves" (Messner 1990: 98). In addition, my research perspective was feminist. "The feminist theoretical project has been to theorize gender and more specifically to understand the determinants of women's oppression" (Hall 1990:237). Thus, I am assuming that women as a group are disadvantaged in our society. For example, I recognize that the coaching/sporting world is male-dominated and this can be problematic for women in that environment. In particular, my assumption is that women coaches are confronted with challenges specific to their gender and that this may influence their stories.

Perspectives on interview data

This research was also informed by the debates between the positivist approach to interviewing and the social constructionist approach to interviewing. The positivist approach is to try to create a “pure” interview by standardizing the interview and by trying to make sure the data is untouched by the researcher. The goal is to come as close as possible to providing a “mirror reflection” of a reality that exists in the social world. This in turn assumes that there *is* a “real” social world and that it can be accessed (Miller and Glassner 1997). This traditional perspective is based on the assumption that the respondent is a passive rather than an active producer of knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). However, social constructionists argue that no knowledge about “reality” can be obtained in an interview because the interview itself is an interaction in which both the researcher and the participant construct versions of the social world. That is, a reality that is “out there” cannot exist within the interview because the interview constructs a “reality” that is specific to the time and place of the interview. Thus, social constructionists discount the possibility of learning about the social world (a reality “out there”) beyond the interview (Miller and Glassner 1997). Social constructionists view the interview as an active interaction between the respondents and the researcher and consider it is this interaction that produces the data.

Interviews virtually impose particular ways of understanding reality upon subjects’ responses. The point is that the interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within respondents. Both parties to the interview are necessarily and ineluctably active. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter.

(Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114)

This means that the participant “not only holds facts and details of experience, but, in the very process of offering them up for response constructively adds to, takes away from and transforms the facts and details” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 117). Within the active interview the interviewer influences the interview in numerous ways. “The active interviewer’s role is to incite respondents’ answers, virtually activating narrative production” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 123).

In sum, the positivist approach to interviewing asserts that when interviews are conducted in an unbiased manner, respondents will provide answers that reflect reality. Social constructionists (such as Holstein and Gubrium, 1997) suggest that interviews cannot provide knowledge about a reality existing beyond the interview, because throughout the interview process the researcher and respondent construct narrative versions of the social world that are specific to that interview.

A balance between both views is found in what Miller and Glasner (1997) call the *interactionist* approach to interviewing. The interactionist approach suggests that individuals do create meaningful social worlds outside the interview, and that with care and the achievement of good rapport, interviewers can get information about those worlds.

Research cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that positivists strive for, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. While the interview is itself a symbolic interaction, this does not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained.

(Miller and Glassner, 1997: 100)

Moreover, only in an interactive interview can “intersubjective depth” and “deep mutual understanding” be achieved and with these the researcher can achieve some knowledge of

social worlds (Miller and Glassner 1997). This perspective assumes that the narratives that emerge in interview contexts are actually situated in social worlds that exist outside of the interview. Researchers are able to learn about and produce authentic accounts of respondents' social worlds by studying stories that emerge in the interview. "When respondents talk back they provide insights into the narratives they use to describe the meanings of their social worlds and into the experiences of the worlds of which they are a part" (Miller and Glassner, 1997: 106). Therefore, analyzing narratives allows the researcher to better comprehend the social world of the participants.

This study incorporated the social constructionist perspective of interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium 1997) and the interactionist perspective (Miller and Glassner 1997). I recognize that the women's stories were constructions arising from our interactions in the interview. However, informed by the interactionist approach, I also assumed that what they said in some way reflected their lives in coaching, and that other women in coaching would recognize and relate to these accounts.

The location of the researcher

It is important to establish my own social location, standpoint, history, and interests because these affect the questions that are asked, as well as my observations, interpretations, and representations of data. As noted above, I was an active contributor to the interviews. Also, I incorporated a feminist perspective and an important requirement of feminist qualitative research is that research should be conducted as a reflexive practice (Mason 1996). Self-reflexivity involves recognizing that a researcher is not a neutral data collector; it also requires researchers to analyze their role in the process of data generation (Mason 1996).

I recognize that my history of involvement in elite athletics and coaching influenced this project. I have been involved in athletics throughout my life. I participated in basketball at the university level, and I have experienced many of the positive and negative aspects of sport involvement. For example, I recall having to switch to playing ringette at a young age because it was no longer socially acceptable for me to play hockey with the boys, and there were no girls' teams. I have had many positive and negative experiences with coaches. And I have also coached in many clinics and camps. Because of this involvement I have some understanding of the issues and challenges of sport. One way that this history influenced the project was through my willingness to disclose my own experiences in the course of the interviews. For example, in an interview with Monica⁸ I asked her how she would define a coach who abused his/her power. She replied that it involved intimidating players, berating players, and making an athlete question his or her talents. She also commented that these behaviours "bothered" her and that she had never done them. At this point, I offered an example my own athletic experience.

Tina: Yeah, when I played four years of basketball at university...our coach was kind of like that.

Monica: Really?

Tina: Yeah just when it came to, like, if we got a drink of water when he didn't say it was okay to get a drink of water, then that's a problem.

Monica: Oh my gosh!

Tina: Yeah, so...

Monica: Yeah, I mean there's other things to worry about in life...And I think sometimes the power coach takes [some] minute thing and blows [it] totally out of proportion.

Certainly the self-disclosure I engaged in changed the dynamics of the interview where I as the researcher became a participant. However, I was extremely aware and

⁸ All names and identifying details have been changed.

cautious of my participation. I felt that I was able to disclose in a manner that helped to create openness but I made sure that my disclosures were brief and that they had a specific point. For example, I told one participant a story of my own athletic experiences that could have been told in great length but I specifically recall shortening it so I would not monopolize the conversation but still made my point. Mainly, my participation was intended to put a participant at ease, and in many cases it allowed them to elaborate on a point they had just made. Personally, I was more comfortable engaging in interviews which had a degree of mutual idea sharing. Effectively this minimized the power imbalance that is often present in the interview process. However, I recognize that who I am and my involvement in the interview influenced the women's stories and that they may have not told those same stories to a different interviewer.

The interviews

Background preparation

Considerable preparation was done to determine the issues and themes of interest in this research and to create an interview guide. I interviewed an elite woman coach who also had a Ph.D. in Sociology. Her contributions of practical experience and academic knowledge on the issues of women coaches was extremely helpful. She clearly outlined what the "traditional" or "classical" culture of sport and philosophy of coaching were and she described exactly how and why she resisted the "classical" model of coaching by incorporating what she termed the "nurturing model." In addition, her academic understanding of gender comparisons was helpful for me to understand the comparisons that were being made by the women in this study.

After our interview, I observed her at work with her team. I saw her practising the “nurturing model” and I was able to better understand what this model consisted of. For example, I saw a male athlete give her a hug during a competition, and I saw her offer the encouraging words she had described as part of her philosophy.

I also did some preparation in the area of coaching education. Because of my own interest in coaching I signed up for, attended and completed the Level 1 component of the National Coaching Certification Program. This course gave me some understanding of how coaches were educated and what issues were emphasized. I understood from this seminar that coaching education was necessary for a career in coaching and this made it a relevant discussion in all subsequent interviews. This background preparation as well as a literature search helped me create an interview guide.

The interview guide

An open-ended interview format was selected. The interviews were conversational in nature and they addressed general themes. They were organized so new and relevant issues and information could emerge and be explored. However, an interview guide was developed and utilized to provide some structure (see Appendix C).

The interview themes were organized into two broad areas: the coaching job participants did at the time of the interview; and coaching in general. At the beginning of the interview I asked demographic questions covering such topics as age, number of years coaching, conditions of employment, income status, relationship status, and family status. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their experiences as athletes, how they became coaches, what their current coaching involved, their life outside of coaching, the coach’s role, why they coached, and the role of gender.

The interview questions were directed towards discovering many aspects of coaching. I wanted to know why these women began coaching. I asked questions about their daily routine and duties because there is not a lot of research that describes what the job of coaching consists of. Other questions were guided by my interest in exploring perceptions of gender differences in coaching. Research indicates that women coaches work in an environment where gender differences exist and in some cases suggests ways that women accommodate or resist these differences. I wanted to explore how these women responded to the male-dominated culture of sport and one area where this was explored was their perceptions of their own and others' philosophy of coaching. I wanted to determine if their thinking conformed to or resisted the masculine philosophy of coaching described in the literature. I also wanted to explore how the women balanced coaching with family and other responsibilities. This interest grew out of women's stories in the online journal (described in Chapter 1) on the difficulties of combining family and coaching (e.g. see Robertson, 2000).

After each interview was completed I prepared a research memo to describe the context of the interview and to record any observations or preliminary interpretations of the interviews. These memos assisted in the modification of the interview guide, which changed several times during the course of this study. Questions were added, deleted, or re-phrased as the interviewing progressed. For example, the question regarding what things the participants thought made a good coach was intended to discover elements of their coaching philosophy but the answers given were too broad; they did not uncover all elements of a particular coaching philosophy. More specific questions were included to explore the issue. I began asking how they motivated their athletes, how they handled

discipline, how much emphasis they placed on winning, and how they responded when their athletes were not working “hard” in practices or games.

The way the interview guide was used also changed over the course of data collection. I created a theme guide -- a one-page summary of the questions in the interview. The questions were summarized with keywords that at a glance reminded me of the substance of the questions (also in Appendix C). This guide was used very early on in the interview process as a tool to ensure that we were covering all of the general themes. As the study progressed and my confidence increased, I began to refer to the guide less frequently and I did not even formally write down all of the changes as I was able to remember the issues I wanted to discuss. Rather I focused on general themes and I made the interview less formal and more conversational. For example, the order of each interview was different. If a participant said something that related to a certain theme I would completely engage them in that discussion. My only goal was to ensure that all themes were discussed by the end of the interview.

Procedure

Duration of the interviews ranged from about 50 minutes to an hour and a half. Participants were asked to choose a location and time that was comfortable and convenient for them. Each interview was tape-recorded and later transcribed. Eleven women chose to be interviewed at their homes and 10 chose to be interviewed at their place of work. A few interviews were interrupted by phone calls, or visits from children or spouses. But any interruptions that occurred did not seem to have a large impact on the outcome of the interviews. No participants appeared uncomfortable with the setting or amount of privacy.

Data analysis and interpretation

To make data more meaningful coding or sorting is used. There are a variety of approaches to coding or organizing data. Generally, coding involves linking different segments of the data into categories that are similar; this assists in the organization, retrieval, and interpretation of data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). One way to code the data is cross-sectionally (Mason 1996) or by data reduction (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). The main goal of this variable-centered approach is to facilitate the retrieval of data slices that are categorized under the same codes. Essentially, data is reduced to similar categories for comparison across cases and this comparison occurs between the extracted themes or categories. Therefore, a researcher would characterize what each portion of the interview was about in terms of its general theme. At this point the researcher would compare these themes or categories across cases (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

Coding can also be accomplished by data complication (Coffey and Atkinson 1996) or by non-cross sectional coding (Mason 1996). This is “a practice guided by a search for the particular rather than the common or consistent, and the holistic rather than the cross-sectional” (Mason, 1996: 128). Essentially, coding in this manner involves a case-centered approach or a search of the interview data that still focuses on the particular details of the text while leaving these details in context. The idea of context sensitivity in data analysis is a principle of the case-centered approach and it is a principle of narrative analysis. Essentially, this process evolves from seeing the interview as filled with stories or narratives. Coffey and Atkinson have stated that narratives or stories are ways that social actors retell experiences. The analysis of narratives in interviews extends the “interpretive turn” in qualitative research because it enables researchers to “consider both

how social actors order and tell their experiences and why they remember and retell what they do. The structuring of experience can hence be analyzed alongside meanings and motives” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 57). Ultimately, a narrative analysis of interview data incorporates the assumption that the experiences of individuals can be found and analyzed in stories or narratives.

I began by reading the transcripts as cases and thinking about the women’s descriptions of their experiences in a holistic manner. I searched for circumstances that influenced these women. For example, I was paying attention to their age, their level of sport involvement, their coaching organization, and their sport of interest, among other issues. This allowed me to be aware of how these women were influenced by their situations; I was specifically paying attention to the context of their individual worlds and this created a greater understanding as I moved into a variable-centered analysis.

Using this variable-centered approach I extracted seven key themes which linked to the themes set up in the interview guide. In a sense, the coding activity I engaged in was similar to content analysis. I began by labeling sections of the interview to describe the content of that section. In other words, I had established some of the issues I wanted to discuss ahead of time and I knew what some of the components would be. For example, I had set up questions that specifically explored “philosophy of coaching.” I labeled areas that discussed how coaches instructed their athletes as *feedback*. And I labeled areas that discussed coaches’ rules and guidelines for their athletes on-court and off-court behavior as *discipline*. Again, I wanted to examine a coach’s philosophy and I knew that discipline, feedback, and importance of winning were issues that linked to a coach’s philosophy and so I asked about these issues. I also engaged in this process when

I identified the other six themes. These were: the culture of sport, how the women entered coaching; why they coached; coaching as a job; perceptions of gender differences in coaching; and the gender comparisons women coaches themselves made. I should note that while I had established some issues in the interview guide, I was very open to new issues emerging and on occasion this did occur. For example, several women introduced the issue of their relationship to male officials. Though I had not asked about this specifically, I was able to incorporate this material in my discussion.

I began this variable-centered analysis by concentrating on and reading the sections corresponding to specific themes. This enabled me to make comparisons within those themes. However, in subsequent analysis the women were separated according to level of involvement, and sport of involvement to determine how these framed the themes being analyzed. Throughout the data analysis I was very sensitive to context.

Issues of quality in qualitative research

Qualitative researchers disagree on how to determine the quality of qualitative research (Seale 1999). Traditional definitions of reliability and validity state that reliable data derive from reliable questions; that is, given a different time and place the same question would produce the same answer. Validity refers to the extent to which questions represent “truth” (Silverman 2000) or whether researchers are measuring what they claim to be measuring (Mason 1996).

Numerous researchers have suggested that traditional notions of reliability and validity do not directly apply to the assessment of the quality of qualitative research (e.g. see Silverman 1993; Mason 1996; Holstein and Gubrium 1997; Flick 1998; Seale 1999). Viewing the interview as a construction created by the interaction between respondents

and interviewers challenges the traditional notion of reliability (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). It is unreasonable to expect that answers given by a participant on one occasion will correspond with answers given on another occasion. Moreover, the positivist conception of validity only applies if one believes that reality exists “out there” and this reality would be contaminated by “incorrect” questions. The interactive and active viewpoints counter the traditional view of validity with the claim that respondents’ “realities” can be explored, there is not one “true” reality.

Determining the quality of research is still necessary even with the rejection of traditional criteria. But how should it be done? According to Seale (1999) researchers should not generate one uniform set of criteria for assessment of quality of qualitative research. Quality should follow certain guidelines that are situated in the research context but these guidelines do not necessarily apply to all research (Seale 1999).

Quality does matter in qualitative research, but the modernist headings of validity and reliability no longer seem adequate to encapsulate the range of issues that a concern for quality must raise. The constructivist critique of criteriology has led us to see that “quality” is a somewhat elusive phenomenon that cannot be prespecified by methodological rules, though their reconstitution as “guidelines,” to be followed with intelligence and knowledge of the particular research context, may assist us in moving towards good quality work.

(Seale, 1999: 471)

Moreover, Seale contends, social researchers should not be expected to align their research with a particular philosophical position. Rather, researchers should draw on the discourses of the philosophical debates that surround issues of quality in research.

A major threat to quality is in fact the idea that research must be carried out under the burden of fulfilling some philosophical or methodological scheme. Practising social researchers can learn to do good work from a variety of examples, done within different “moments,” without needing to resolve methodological disputes before beginning their work. At the same time, the quality of qualitative research

is enhanced if researchers engage with philosophical and methodological debate.
(Seale, 1999: 471-472)

Scholars writing in this vein do, however, have some suggestions for attending to issues of quality. They suggest that researchers use research memos, practise reflexivity, represent respondents fairly, and establish a level of trust between the researcher and participant. Thus, achieving good quality research will involve a degree of reflexivity or an examination of the researcher's involvement in the interview process. To monitor research decisions research memos may be used. Research memos involve recording and justifying the steps through which interpretations are made (Mason 1996). This enables the researcher to explain how interpretations were reached and it demonstrates how data were analyzed to formulate these interpretations.

The interactionist approach has suggested that "knowledge of social worlds emerges from the achievement of intersubjective depth and mutual understanding" (Miller and Glassner, 1997: 106). For these to be present there must be a level of trust between the researcher and participants. Trust is achieved through rapport building by showing genuine interest, assuring confidentiality, and withholding judgement. Essentially, a researcher needs to create an environment in which participants feel comfortable and competent in the interaction to describe their experiences (Miller and Glassner 1997). This process enhances the quality of interpretations.

Approaches to quality used in this project

After each interview I wrote a research memo which included initial impressions and interpretations of the interview. While these memos were not directly applicable to the analysis I later used, they did help provide a context for each participant and this

context sensitivity was something that I focused on creating. In this sense, research memos increased the quality of data analysis. In addition, I discussed my interpretations with my thesis supervisor as she had also read several of the interview transcripts. This approach was included because it has been recommended that data analysis be conducted in consultation with other researchers (Silverman 1993).

Another way to increase quality in qualitative research is to ensure that respondents are fairly represented. During the interview process this involved attempting to validate their statements and responses. I often offered a quick interpretation of what a respondent had said in order to determine if I understood what they meant and to allow them to elaborate and/or correct my statements. This was very effective as many women would respond with things like, “right,” “exactly,” or “absolutely.” I recall a few other women correcting my interpretation. The following examples illustrate the nature of these exchanges:

Julia: Basically, we work together as a team to sort of drive this ship forward.

Tina: So, it's sort of like this kind of team atmosphere.

Julia: Yeah!

Tina: Everyone has the same sort of goals, the same philosophies.

Julia: Yeah, exactly!

Tina: So, how did this job come to be after that experience?

Davilyn: Well...life always seems to work that, sometimes being in the right place at the right time.

Tina: Preparation meeting opportunity.

Davilyn: It's exactly that and...it's not very often when a prime job like [this] comes up.

To ensure that I was representing the participants fairly I used their own words whenever possible. This allowed me to illustrate that my interpretations were consistent with what the respondents had said. Lastly, I always tried to situate their statements in a larger picture so as to provide a context for their statements.

Following Miller and Glassner's (1997) advice I also tried to increase the quality of the data by establishing a good rapport with the respondents. I believe I accomplished this by showing my interest, and by building a level of trust. As a result, I have no reason to doubt the stories they told; I believe the participants were open with their opinions and feelings. An excellent example of this rapport was found in an interview where a participant discussed her personal life including her ex-husband, and children from the outset of the interview. It was not until about an hour into the interview that she chose to disclose her lesbian identity to me. I believe that before the interview she was unsure if she would discuss this component of her life and once she felt comfortable and trusting towards me, she was able to share this information. The participants and I had a positive interaction and thus I have no reason to believe that they deceived me in any way. I have promised to provide the participants in this study with a synopsis of the results because I, like many feminist researchers, feel it is important to share the research with the people who participated and made the research possible.

The following three chapters present and analyze the data yielded by the methods just discussed. Chapter 3 provides a more detailed introduction to the women coaches interviewed for the study. It establishes their different circumstances; it discusses how they entered coaching; and it explores some of the rewards and challenges they described.

Chapter 3: The Coaches

Introduction to the coaches

The 21 women coaches in this study were unique individuals. They differed in age, they also differed in their level of involvement and employment status, and their experiences in sport and coaching. Some of these differences could be used to account for the wide range of opinions they expressed.

The women ranged in age from 22 to 47 (See Table 1). Margot and Jennifer were retired from active coaching but both were still involved in sport. Monica and Rosie had decided to quit coaching. The women coached at different elite levels and they worked in different kinds of environments. For example, the women coached at the college, university, club, and national levels (See Table 2). Moreover, the athletes they coached varied from youth, to teenagers, to young adults, to mature adults.

Michelle, Davilyn, and Jessica coached at the university level and Kelly, Sarah, Rosie, Sunny, and Monica coached at the college level. They coached young student athletes (usually aged 18-25). The nine women who coached at the club level instructed children, teenagers, and adults and in some cases senior citizens. Therefore, club coaches were more likely to be involved with recreational as well as competitive athletes. Many club coaches likely had some national level experience, through junior or senior nationals. Some of these coaches had taken some of their athletes to national competitions. Phoebe and Julia were the two national level coaches in this study (Margot was a former national cycling coach). They coached mature national level athletes who represented Canada at the Olympic Games or other world events. The national coaches, university coaches, and some college coaches interacted strictly with competitive

athletes, while club level coaches associated with both recreational and competitive athletes.

Different sports were organized in different ways and this influenced the women coaching there. For example, only certain sports (such as volleyball and basketball) were found at the college and university level. Other sports (such as skiing and speed skating) were confined to a club-like system and some sports (such as track and field) were found in both. Thus, different sports had different cultures and organization. But differences also existed from one club to another; from one college to another, and from one university to another.

As noted in Chapter 2, the women coached in 14 different sports (see Table 3). Seven women coached individual sports (such as track and field) and seven women coached team sports (such as hockey). In addition, seven sports were integrated or mixed team sports (such as diving) in which boys and girls, or women and men trained together. Seven sports were segregated (such as volleyball); the women coached only girls or women who trained and competed together. Three of the sports (synchronized swimming, ringette, and field hockey) were defined as “female appropriate” sports because only women competed.⁹ Three of the sports (soccer, hockey, and basketball) had traditionally been defined as “male appropriate” because they involved physical force and contact.

Some structural or status differences existed between the women coaches. Ten women were head coaches. Seven women were assistant coaches and four of those seven worked with male head coaches. Cathy was an assistant coach who worked with numerous male and female coaches. Heather and Jessica were associate coaches with

⁹ Field Hockey is played by both women and men but it is historically a male sport. However, in the Canadian university athletic system, field hockey is played only by women.

female colleagues. As I also noted in Chapter 2, 13 coaches received an income from coaching (two women were no longer coaching), six received a small honorarium, and two received no income from coaching. Consequently, twelve women worked either full or part-time outside of coaching to earn an income. Nine of the 12 women maintained full-time employment, two worked part-time, and one was a nursing student who worked part-time. Only seven women stated that coaching was their primary source of income.

Here is a summary of all the women in this study:

Table 4 : Summary of the women as “cases”

<i>Case</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Position</i>
Susan	Skiing	Club	Head
Kelly	Hockey	College	Assistant
Heather	Track	Club	Associate
Carey	Ringette	Club	Assistant
Cathy	Speed Skating	Club	Assistant
Joanne	Badminton	Club	Assistant
Sarah	Soccer	College	Assistant
Colleen	Tennis	Club	Assistant
Rachel	Tennis	Club	Head
Michelle	Field Hockey	Univer.	Head
Erin	Track	Club	Head
Phoebe	Speed Skating	National	Head
Rosie	Volleyball	College	Head
Sunny	Volleyball	College	Head
Monica	Basketball	College	Assistant
Julia	Synch. Swim	National	Head
Davilyn	Basketball	Univers.	Head
Courtney	Diving	Club	Head
Jennifer	Diving	Club	Head
Jessica	Basketball	Univers.	Associate
Margot	Cycling	National	Head

Four pictures of coaching

Four women can be used to illustrate the uniqueness of the women in this study. Davilyn was a head coach of a university women's basketball team. Heather was an associate or co-coach of a track and field club. Julia was a national level synchronized swimming coach and Kelly was an assistant coach of a college women's hockey team.

Davilyn and Kelly coached young adults in an academic environment. Julia coached young to mature adults and Heather coached primarily teenagers. Thus, the ages of the athletes coached by these four women varied. Davilyn, Julia, and Kelly coached all-girls or all-women team sports, while Heather coached individual male and female track athletes. There were many differences between coaching a team and coaching individuals; and there were many differences between coaching all-female teams and coaching male and female athletes.

Julia coached synchronized swimming, considered "female appropriate" because of its association with the "feminine" characteristics of beauty, style, and grace. Thus, Julia's perceptions were framed by this all-female environment as her sport was not a threat to masculine hegemony in sport. Davilyn and Kelly coached in sports traditionally defined as "male appropriate" because these sports emphasized the masculine traits of force, aggression, contact, and in some instances violence. These women were more likely to encounter resistance to their presence in "manly sports" (Nelson 1994).

Structural differences existed between these four women. Davilyn was a head coach and Kelly was an assistant coach working with a male head coach. Heather was a co-coach and Julia had acted as a head and assistant coach at the national level. For the women in this study there was a difference between the role of an assistant coach and the

role of a head coach. Usually, the head coach retained all of the decision-making power. This trend was described more often by women who coached with male head coaches, such as Kelly. Women working with women were more likely to resist this tradition, as Heather, Julia, and Davilyn did.

Davilyn was employed with a full-time salary by a university, and Julia was a full-time employee of Synchro Canada ¹⁰. Kelly received a small honorarium for her assistant coach duties. She also had full-time employment in an administrative position at the college where she coached. Heather received no income from her not-for-profit track and field club. She was a full-time teacher at a high school. Head coaches at university, college, or national level were more likely to be receiving a full-time income, as Davilyn and Julia were. Assistant coaches, like Kelly, were more likely to be receiving a small honorarium. Thus, these differences influenced their lives as Kelly and Heather both had full-time employment outside of coaching.

Heather, Julia, and Kelly were married and Davilyn was single. Heather and Julia had young children. Coaches with families encountered many difficulties coordinating a family and coaching life, but this difficulty was not faced by every woman in this study. The differences among these four suggest the ways in which different social contexts and personal circumstances shaped the experiences of *all* women in this study.

Coaching education

To understand the demands made on the women in the study it is important to begin by examining the training each was required to undergo. To coach at an elite level in Canada, coaches must be involved in the National Coaching Certification Program or NCCP. This program was launched in the early 1970s and it was designed to train and

further educate coaches in Canada.¹¹ The NCCP operates as a partnership; development is handled by the national sports federations and the Coaching Association of Canada. The program is implemented by the provincial/territorial governments and by provincial sport federations.

The National Coaching Certification Program is a five-level education program for coaches of all levels in over 60 sports. Levels 1-3 are a training program of approximately 100 hours, designed to certify coaches as competent leaders of school, community, and club sports programs. Levels 1-3 cover the three components of coaching: theory, technical, and practical. A coach receives the theoretical component by signing up for and completing classes on coaching theory (for example, the level 1 requirement is 14 hours). To receive the technical and practical components, coaches must contact the provincial sport organization for their sport of interest (for example, Basketball Alberta for a basketball coach). To complete the technical component a coach must show knowledge of sport-specific skills, rules of play, equipment, and skill development. The practical component consists of completing the required number of hours actively coaching (for example, the Level 3 requirement is 100 hours) and it provides coaches with feedback on their ability to apply coaching knowledge through self, peer, or examiner evaluation.

Levels 4 and 5 are administered by the National Coaching Institute (NCI) in various regional cities (for example, NCI-Calgary, NCI-Victoria). These levels represent the highest level of professional training for coaches. They prepare coaches for leadership roles in national and international sport. They consist of an applied study program of 20

¹⁰ Synchro Canada is the National Sports Organization (NSO) for the sport of synchronized swimming.

¹¹ Only a limited number of countries in the world offer a similar type of certification program.

tasks, 12 of which are completed for Level 4 and the remaining eight for Level 5. The tasks explore the following areas: planning; athlete development, including physical, psychological, technical, and tactical components; environmental factors; biomechanics; performance analysis; and leadership. Coaching certification is often a required part of coaching. A Level 3 certification is often required to coach at the university and provincial levels. In addition, completing all five levels is usually a requirement for coaching on Canadian national sports teams.

This was the process in which most women coaches in this study had participated. Many of the coaches were highly certified and some were continuing to participate in the NCCP. There were different levels of certification among the women. Susan, a freestyle skiing coach, had a Level 2 certified theory, and a Level 3 moguls technical and practical. Heather, a club level track coach, described her certification and its significance for her future in coaching:

I really wanted to get my Level 3 theory, and technical, and practical. So, I got all three of those in sprints last year, paid for it all out of my own pocket and...so now I can do provincial team and I can go on the Canada Games team.

Joanne, a club level badminton coach, was doing her Level 4 as a way to keep coaching “more fresh.” She said, “I think the biggest thing for me is that as long as I keep doing different things with it like right now I’m doing the NCI, the National Coaching Institute, and I’ll be graduating in May.”

Many women had completed all of the available NCCP certification. Phoebe, a speed skating coach, described how her employers expected her to take her “levels”:

They sort of said I should take the NCI...I had nothing because I just finished my [athletic] career...so I had to get my Level 1, 2, and 3...after I moved here, from June to August, by September I started the NCI, so that’s Level 4, I did that for two years.

Clearly, the certification process was a necessary component for a career in coaching and it involved significant time and work. Davilyn, a university basketball coach, described what the certification process consisted of:

In 1989, I enrolled in the national coaching institute and basically I spent a year learning the science of coaching so to speak...I did my Level 4...and part of that program is, I got to be an apprentice coach with [her mentor coach's] team.

Coaches who completed the NCI were eligible to be involved in Canada's national programs and Davilyn's experiences best exemplified how this process worked. She started working with the Canadian national team in 1992, as an apprentice coach for two years and then as assistant coach for two years, at which point she attended the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The clearest example of the significance of the certification process within the sporting world was provided by the experiences of Cathy, a speed skating coach. Cathy relocated from Fredericton, New Brunswick in order to participate in the NCI because she "needed a new challenge and something different." Cathy moved away from her husband and her 19- and 14-year old sons in order to further her coaching education. The significance of the certification process was realized in her life as it led to a full-time coaching job. Her whole family relocated because of Cathy's new full-time coaching job, an opportunity she had previously not found.

Getting started in coaching

There were many similarities in how these 21 women became coaches. All were athletes at one time or another. Most were elite athletes and most coached in the sports in which they had participated. Many were involved in numerous sports throughout their youth and they continued this trend by coaching in different sports. Only one woman

coached in a sport in which she did not participate. Kelly, an assistant hockey coach at the college level, did not grow up with access to hockey but she participated in figure skating, which she had also coached. She began coaching hockey early in her coaching career. The rest of the women in this study coached in sports in which they had participated and competed.

Most women were introduced to coaching while they participated as athletes. For example, within a club, young athletes were often involved in coaching and instructing younger athletes. Joanne, a badminton coach, described her experience:

I did a lot of coaching in Ontario...when I was growing up, I had a female coach who, who I guess you would say pushed me into that direction quite a bit, like she used me as an assistant a lot from...the age of 11 or 12 and then it just kind of kept growing.

Julia, a synchronized swimming coach, said:

I thought I would like to coach and started coaching and helping the younger ones in the club...when I was 12, 13 you know [I] was helping these nine-year-olds and it was just sort of a big sister program that we had in the club...and then it just sort of snowballed from there.

This notion of younger athletes volunteering as coaches existed in many sports. Courtney, a club diving coach, commented:

I was an athlete and by default I became an instructor because our club needed instructors. So, they trained young athletes to coach and at that time you didn't really do a sport without coaching, you were part of the whole structure of putting back into the sport by coaching.

In addition, many women were introduced to coaching by working at summer sporting camps. For example, Davilyn outlined how her athletic involvement always "led" her to coach summer basketball camps in the off-season. It motivated her to start her own camps. This early involvement caused Davilyn and many other women to pursue coaching opportunities.

The women described various reasons why they initially began coaching and some of the same reasons explained why they continued to coach. Two women entered coaching because of their own personal injury. Susan, a freestyle ski coach, injured her knee while competing. After an extensive rehabilitation she continued to compete (although in a limited capacity) and at this time she began coaching.

I kind of did that whole year as half coaching, when I was home and half competing when I was away. I realized in that year when I was coaching and competing that coaching was still, it was still satisfying my desire to ski all the time and I found that I really enjoyed coaching, I enjoyed helping the athletes, so that's kind of how I got into coaching.

Erin, a club level track coach, was also propelled into coaching through injury. She was seriously injured in a car accident and it promptly ended her athletic career.

I came to be a coach because I was injured, I had a back injury in a car accident and so I had to stop doing what I was doing [combined events thrower] or I was going to be paralyzed...I wanted to keep throwing but of course I had to make the choice. I couldn't lift and you can't throw without lifting...and so [the head coach]...got pregnant that year and then ...I took over her team a little bit like to help her out as an assistant coach kind of thing...and [I] started from there.

Most women recalled how their experiences with their own coaches pushed them into coaching. Monica, a college basketball coach, described how she had "a lot" of mentors at the junior high level and in particular "awesome phys-ed teachers" who encouraged her to coach. Julia, a synchronized swimming coach, described how her coach's philosophy influenced her decision to become a coach:

I had a great coach in Edmonton and she was the one that really I guess helped instill this passion I have for the sport. She encouraged me to be responsible for my own training and responsible for selecting my own music, for my own performances, and sort of at that young age, really said, you take charge of this and this is your responsibility and then I just took it...I'd volunteer to do things and just over time said you know I'd really like to coach.

A few women described their experiences with ineffective or “bad” coaches.

Heather, a club level track coach, explained how this type of experience influenced her to become a coach:

I guess maybe the experiences I’ve experienced as an athlete in the national scene and I’ve seen what some of those coaches have done and/or said and ...maybe that’s why in the back of my mind I want to be a coach as well, to make it a better place for athletes where it could be a better place for them because I’ve seen and experienced not good stuff.

Three women coaches stated that they initially began coaching because it was a way for them to earn some income while they were young and still involved in athletics.

Colleen, a club level tennis coach, described her experience:

I was an athlete and competed when I was younger and tennis kind of offers a good summer job opportunity when you’re in University and that’s where I started...When University was out I’d teach full-time May through August and I did that all through school.

Many women described how they enjoyed teaching and noted that coaching fulfilled this desire to teach. This was further evident as 11 of these women coaches had education degrees. Cathy summed up the teaching-coaching connection by stating:

I knew from the time I was in grade seven that I was going to be a teacher, that’s what I wanted to do, I wanted to be a teacher....so it was just almost a natural thing to move into the coaching area and become a teacher within that sport and I’ve always felt myself a teacher. Even though I’ve never taught in public school I certainly have honed my teaching skills through my skating.

Margot, a cycling coach, who incidentally was not trained as a teacher, discussed the feelings associated with teaching:

I can even think back when I was a young child and I was able to ride a bike and [I remember] teaching a young boy on the street...how to ride a bike and...when I reflect back about helping others and the feeling of coaching, that was one of the first indicators for me because I remember the sense of satisfaction that I got from helping this other younger person ...to ride a bike because I could see the exhilaration for this person, that he had accomplished so much.

Numerous women described how coaching was a way for them to stay involved in sport; they fulfilled their love of sport through coaching instead of through participating or competing. For example, Davilyn commented:

I couldn't have imagined not having basketball in my life, it had just been such a part of me and I think that it just became a natural progression from all of my summer camp coaching that I just kept finding and wanting and looking for opportunities to continue coaching.

Heather, a club level track coach, repeated this sentiment but suggested that for her coaching was also a way to satisfy her desire for competing.

I just can't imagine being away from sport...I just can't imagine my life without it...not a day goes by that I still don't dream about it, I wish I still could do it but I guess this is a way I can still contribute to it and still be there.

Jessica, a basketball coach, found that she wanted to stay involved in sport after trying unsuccessfully to remove it from her life.

I became a student at the University of New Brunswick and I went into my first year and went with the thought that I didn't want to do anything in sport because sport had been such a big part of my life. So, I was thinking that I would, you know, do Arts with a degree and interest of becoming involved in law, and didn't like it, just didn't like it, and [I] realized at a very young age that you need to be in an environment where you enjoy what you're doing every single day...so I became involved [in coaching].

Most women suggested that they had an intense passion for athletics and coaching and this passion kept them coaching. Davilyn, a university basketball coach, remarked:

Every day I wake up, I can't wait to get to work, I can't imagine myself doing anything else...It fulfills everything for me, being on the court at four o'clock with the players is the best part of my day.

A few women explained that their passion conquered the lack of money in coaching.

Cathy, a speed skating coach, described that she put her "heart and soul" into coaching and that the money she earned through coaching was a bonus.

I don't even consider it a job, this is something I'm able to do, it's something I love to do and I'm making money at it, at the same time. I mean this is a bonus, how many people get to do that, not that many I don't think.

Sunny, a college volleyball coach, explained that she "would never lose" her passion for sport and she believed that she coached for the enjoyment and not the money.

I wouldn't do this if I didn't love volleyball, I wouldn't do this if I didn't love athletics and no matter whether you're getting paid, ten dollars an hour or a ridiculous amount of money, I'm not in it for the money, obviously, I'm in it for the enjoyment and if I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't be in it.

Julia, a synchronized swimming coach, expanded this point by suggesting that overall her happiness in life was more important than money.

In the long run you may as well be happy...that's how I looked at it, you may as well enjoy what you're doing and you're not really in it for the money. I'd say that was probably true for 80 percent of my coaching life.

Rewards from coaching

Many women found coaching rewarding because it was challenging for them.

Jessica, a university basketball coach, asserted that the "daily" and "yearly" challenges of coaching kept her coaching and that she was rewarded by these challenges. Courtney, a club level diving coach, said:

What I get out of it is the fact that every day is different, every single day I come to work...is different. Every day is a challenge, every day I have a problem to solve and I feel very good at problem solving on the spot.

Davilyn, a university basketball coach, remarked:

The thing that is so great about coaching is every week you have a new problem to solve and you might solve it on Friday but it doesn't mean that same solution is going to work on Saturday. So you might have to come up with something new again on Saturday. Coaching challenges every aspect of my personality, it challenges my patience, my competitiveness, my creativity, my intelligence or lack thereof, it challenges me emotionally.

As Joanne said, coaching was not a “negative” challenge. She explained: “It’s not that you’re usually fighting against something, it’s just more that you’re working towards something.”

Most women coaches asserted that coaching was rewarding because of the relationships created between them and their athletes. In particular, many women were rewarded by helping their athletes. As Courtney said: “There is a certain amount of reward I get from simply showing up on the pool deck and knowing that I’m going to be helping them.” Margot, a former cycling coach, said:

For me the satisfaction [came from]...the exhilaration and euphoria... those athletes have when they achieve what maybe they didn’t realize was possible...And [to] know that you...were part of helping bring the best out of them...[is] the biggest satisfaction.

Jessica, a university basketball coach, commented that “the best part is seeing [an] athlete reach their pinnacle” and knowing that “you’ve had a big part in them being the best that they possibly can.”

Like Michelle, a university field hockey coach, many women felt they were in a position “to make a difference in someone else’s life” and this was “huge” and ultimately rewarding. Carey, a ringette coach, commented:

Their lives are hard, you remember what it was like when you were 16, 17, 18...not knowing what to do...like struggling to do things, just being somebody that’s there for them that they know like actually cares about who they are and what they’re going through.

Michelle noted how there was an “amazing” bond created between coaches and athletes.

Davilyn, a university basketball coach, described the importance of this bond:

Probably the greatest reward is, here’s an example, on July 16,th [a former player] is getting married and...I’m going to be sitting in the front row and I’m going to be bawling my face off and that kid’s going to be in my life for the rest of my life and my five years with her as an athlete were wonderful but

I think the best part with her is still coming because now we get to be friends.

The women in this study understood that they were in a position to help their athletes and they valued a personal relationship with their athletes. Both of these were their greatest rewards.

The downside of coaching

The women quoted above painted a picture of coaching that was extremely favourable and positive. But other research suggests another side of the story for women coaches. For example, women coaches in U.S two-year colleges reported significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than men coaches. There were also gender differences in job satisfaction between men and women coaches; women were more likely to be unsatisfied with their jobs (Pastore and Judd 1993). According to Knoppers (1990), coaches who had a significant amount of power were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs -- and women coaches generally had less power. Thus, sport and gender intersected to influence levels of job satisfaction. Knoppers (1991) found that women were significantly more likely to exit coaching than men. Lack of opportunity was the best predictor for the high turnover rates among women coaches. Current research indicates that women coaches leave because of burnout, low salaries, a lack of opportunity for mobility and growth, a lack of power and status, and a lack of job satisfaction.

This downside was also apparent in the stories of the women in this study. Two had left coaching, two were about to leave, while others considered leaving. Jennifer and Margot were retired from active coaching and both women had left coaching because of the demands of their children and family life. (Their experiences will be discussed further

in Chapter 4). Rosie, a college volleyball coach, and Monica, a college basketball coach, were about to quit coaching. Rosie was already teaching and coaching at a high school and she did not want a full-time career in coaching on top of that. She explained her decision to leave college-level coaching:

Just evaluating my life and the amount of stress that coaching two teams puts on my life...I've decided that it's not worth it for me to do that anymore ...I sort of began to make this decision around Christmas time when I was at the peak of being stressed and just fatigued from the season...I think maybe because of the profession I'm in too, I teach all day and then I teach at volleyball practice with my high school kids and then I teach with my [college] kids, so I just found that there was not a lot left of me to give to my family.

Monica was about to leave coaching because of her fatigue and lack of personal time. Like many women coaches she had quit and returned to coaching in the past and she believed that she would continue to be involved in sport in the future either through coaching or refereeing. She said:

I get tired at nights especially when it's 30 below out and you come home from work at 5:00 or 5:30 and you have to go out and be at practice at 7:30 ...and you're...like I'm quitting, I can't do this anymore, that's about the only time I think about quitting, but I definitely need a break, time off whether it's a year or two I don't know but I'll get back into it somehow.

Courtney, the diving coach, mentioned that she had quit coaching in the past and she was likely to leave again. She stated that she would leave coaching when she did not "have the energy to do two jobs anymore" and because a coaching job would "never pay what I need to exist on."

Women who had full-time employment in addition to a coaching position also thought about quitting coaching. When Michelle, a university field hockey coach and teacher, was asked what made her consider quitting, she responded that the lack of time for herself caused her to feel burnt out. Susan, a skiing coach and part-time waitress, was

torn over retiring from coaching. Coaching was causing her to feel burnt out, specifically because she realized that she could not “survive on” her coaching income without outside employment. She said: “A job is a job, do I really need this in my life? I don’t want this extra aggravation.” Susan was one woman who was undecided but seriously considering leaving coaching.

Many women who worked as full-time coaches still considered leaving coaching because of the all-consuming nature of the work. Phoebe, a national level speed skating coach, stated that she thought about quitting “every day” and she believed that “most coaches did think about quitting” because “if you’re putting that much into it, it’s not easy.” Jessica, a university basketball coach, claimed that “there’s a time when you have to leave because you become mentally fatigued.” She had not reached that point yet. Colleen, a full-time tennis coach, believed that she would leave coaching some day because it was such a demanding job.

It’s a pretty physically gruelling profession because you’re standing all day, you’re playing and it’s almost like...a construction worker probably feels better at the end of the day, so in that respect, I don’t think I want to be coaching until I’m like 45, 50. I just think your body is going to break down.

Clearly, paradoxes existed for the women coaches in this study. They loved athletics and coaching but this passion was challenged by the demanding nature of the job of coaching. The work of coaching is time-consuming, it takes place on evenings and weekends, and it involves a lot of traveling. It consists of much more than simply instructing athletes. And it is poorly paid. This working environment creates fatigue and job turnover and it challenges the passion of coaches. In order to understand this paradox it is necessary to look in detail at the work of coaching. The next chapter outlines this work, as it was described by the women in this study.

Chapter Four: The Job of Coaching

Coaching is work. Ramsey (1999) has described coaching at an elite level to be a pressure driven occupation where success is more often than not determined on the win-loss record. This pressure is compounded by the many demands of the job. Sage (1987) found that practices and competitions are scheduled in the evenings and on weekends and they last for hours. If the game is out of town a coach spends time traveling there and back. Coaches also schedule competitions for their athletes or team, arrange for buses, planes, or hotels, store and repair equipment, meet with coaching staffs, or athletic managers, study game films of previous events and upcoming opponents, fund raise, and plan practices. O'Connor (2000) found that teacher/coaches in Australia took on considerable extra coaching in non-school settings, in addition to the coaching of school teams. This suggests that many coaches volunteered or were paid to coach athletes or teams outside their primary coaching responsibilities. The role of a coach is extensive. As Potrac (2000) notes, coaches require "the technical knowledge of their sport, the pedagogical skills of a teacher, the counseling wisdom of a psychologist, the training expertise of a physiologist, and the administrative leadership of a business executive" (Potrac 2000: 187).

Horwood (2001) posits that in Canada, there are minimal opportunities for full-time coaching positions and most coaches are volunteers who receive little or no remuneration. For example, in a club system volunteers do most of the coaching (though on occasion head club coaches are paid). According to Horwood only professional coaches and semi-professional coaches (such as university coaches) receive full-time pay. Very few coaches are able to subsist on the salaries they receive for coaching. Therefore,

many have other employment. For example, in the school system, coaches sometimes have a teaching load as another source of income. Lack of income produces many difficulties for coaches in the sporting world and it causes many coaches to quit coaching (Horwood 2001).

Coaches who also worked as teachers encountered role-conflict. Sage (1987) found that teacher/coaches faced time demands, they had difficulty combining their work responsibilities with family life, and they often prioritized coaching over teaching because they could not do both jobs well. O'Connor (2000) has described similar demands of coaching work but she concluded that in Australia, teacher/coaches enjoyed teaching and coaching equally. But they did not enjoy general administration responsibilities. This literature suggests that coaches with teaching jobs encountered considerable difficulties. But these difficulties are similar to those facing anyone juggling two jobs -- and this was the situation of most women in the study.

The challenges and difficulties of coaching identified in the literature link directly to the experiences of many of these women. For several, coaching was a full-time career, and others wanted it to be a career. Yet many found themselves in volunteer positions with full-time hours. Some worked in environments with considerable support; others had to cope with widely diverse tasks and few resources. Some had considerable autonomy in deciding how to do their job; others had to deal with directions and philosophies imposed from above. Yet there were many common themes that cut across differences in sport organization and culture, as the following section goes on to discuss.

The work of coaching

The women in the study often had duties that were not directly related to coaching or dealing with athletes. These duties consisted of administration, fundraising, dealing with other coaches, and dealing with committees or boards. In addition, depending on the age of the athletes they coached, they either had to deal with parents of younger athletes, or spouses in the case of older athletes. For several, part of their job involved recruiting new athletes. Many women were often involved in more than one coaching job. All of the coaches in this study had coached without pay and coached more than one team at a time at some point in their coaching career. The work involved long hours on evenings and weekends for practices, competitions, and travel, and there was no true daily routine. The work was all-consuming in that it was on their minds even when they were not coaching.

“Extra jobs”

The job of coaching involved numerous administrative and fundraising duties. These duties or “extra jobs” varied from situation to situation. Cathy described her experience with the speed skating club that she started: “We were everything, we were the fundraisers, we were the coaches, we were the administrators, we were whatever needed to be done.” Even coaches who had more administrative support were still occupied by extra responsibilities. Davilyn, a head university basketball coach, recalled:

During the season it tends to be, where every day, you never feel like you have enough hours in the day to get everything done that needs to get done and even though I am a full-time coach it’s amazing how much time is spent on things other than planning your practice and being on court at four o’clock every day.

What kinds of extra duties occupied the time of coaches? Many head coaches managed an entire club or organization, including numerous athletes in different programs, and a team of coaches. Susan, a skiing coach, provided a good example:

I run the program, I manage the program, I make a lot of decisions, I communicate. Basically, I've got 40-plus athletes in the club and another 15 in the younger program so I'm overseeing two programs, I'm managing the coaches, making sure the coaches' schedules work.

Cathy, the speed skating coach, had a similar experience in that she did more managing than actually coaching.

I usually go out into the oval and I get a handle on what's happening with the short track program, go on the long track ice, talk to all of the coaches, see how they are doing and sometimes I'll stay on and help coach with some of the coaches...I don't do as much coaching per se as I was doing before. I have to rely on the people that I have coaching, I have 18 coaches working for me right now. I have to rely on them.

In addition, these coaches communicated and interacted with athletic boards and these boards varied depending on the level of sport involvement. Club coaches interacted with a board of directors who were sometimes composed of volunteer parents (usually for public clubs) or hired personnel (usually for private clubs). These boards were responsible for assisting in the administration and managing of the sporting organization. College and university coaches interacted with the athletic staff in their institution and this staff was responsible for the administration of athletics; however, many responsibilities still belonged to the coaches. For example, Michelle, a field hockey coach, said:

The amount of behind-the-scenes work that goes on from meetings and all that kind of stuff, it just kind of takes away, it's almost nice if you have a total administrative staff that would just say, okay, show up at this field, do your thing, coach, and then we'll take care of everything else. The university is pretty good, like there is someone involved who organizes all the travel. And when we hosted the Canada West [championships] there is someone there

to facilitate the fields, but we still had to organize the coaches' rooms ourselves with the food and all those kinds of things.

Administration was a big component of coaching and this included everything

from paper work to phone calls. For example, Sunny, a head college volleyball coach, described her various extra jobs:

Basically the administration part of it is...setting up like exhibition tournaments and things like that. This past year we went to Vancouver and Quebec so arranging flights, and hotel rooms, and fundraising, budgets, things like that.

Phoebe described similar types of duties, noting also that communication was a big part of coaching:

A lot of working on equipment, a lot of planning and just planning trips, planning programs, and planning with other coaches; and dealing with the National Sport Centre, the Oval, Speed Skating Canada, the Canadian Olympic Association, like anybody that needs to know anything. Keeping people in the loop, just making sure everyone knows what everyone is supposed to know.

Many women coaches noted how fundraising occupied a considerable amount of their working time. Erin, a club level coach, remarked:

The budget is the leading issue to us here in track and field; we work casinos and work bingos and stuff, we do fundraisers, we have a track meet and I'm involved in that.

Coaches of all levels were involved in raising money for the athletic programs in which they coached. Jessica, a university basketball coach, stated that fundraising was a necessity because of a lack of funding.

The budget for the women's basketball program is exclusively the league, we're not funded for scholarships, we're not funded for recruiting, we're not funded for exhibition play.

Jessica was in charge of fundraising for the women's team. She organized numerous events, like a silent auction, casino, gala, spring leagues, summer camps, coaching clinics, and an adopt-an-athlete program -- all, as part of her responsibilities as a coach.

Many of the coaches discussed having to interact with parents of their athletes. This interaction was usually described by women who worked at the club level because they were more likely to coach young athletes. For older athletes the coaches had to consider and interact with other parts of an athlete's family, like spouses. Julia, a national level synchronized swimming coach, and former club coach, described this dichotomy:

There was someone that was married on our Olympic team and you know you got to consider their life outside the pool, but then you know at the younger levels you have to include the parent as [part of] the package.

Many women discussed the difficulties of interacting with the parents of their athletes. Rachel, a tennis coach, mentioned that some parents were "high maintenance." And as Julia commented:

As a head coach of a club for 15 years, I mean obviously at times that's one of your biggest challenges...At that level you see the child more than their parents...The parent has to really know what's going on...They have to be totally on side with what you are doing and there is always a time when a parent is either more motivated than their child or less motivated than their child. And I guess that's the real challenge, is to try and get everyone included in the vision, equally motivated because...I guess it's the parent that's too involved and wants it more than their child wants it...that can be a real problem.

This notion of parents being too involved in the athletic life of their children was repeated by numerous coaches.

Another kind of "extra job" came in the form of volunteering. All coaches in this study had volunteered for extra work over and above their primary coaching commitment. For example, many coaches were involved in provincial sport programs. Joanne, a badminton coach, coached the Alberta team for the Canada Winter Games. Erin was the head coach of the Alberta track and field team for three years. In addition, many women employed as teachers were expected, or volunteered, to coach at their respective schools. Erin said: "Because I'm a first year teacher I've been coaching every sport at the

school...so volleyball, and basketball.” Michelle, a university field hockey coach, coached the field hockey team at her high school and Rosie (who was one of the two women about to leave coaching) had “two seasons” because she coached both her high school and college volleyball teams. Thus, the majority were involved in numerous coaching jobs and in many instances these jobs overlapped. Their daily routine involved long hours because they coached on evenings and weekends and many had other employment.

Work schedules

Courtney, a diving coach, described her work week as 55 hours in length. Her routine was to work at her office job from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. She ate lunch at her desk and this enabled her to leave early and go directly to the pool. Courtney coached every weekday until 8 or 8:30 p.m. and for two and a half hours on Saturdays. When she arrived home she would “crash” from exhaustion. This was a typical long day for many women coaches who had full-time employment. Erin, a track and field coach, stated:

It’s crazy. Like some days I wake up, work all day, and then at 3:00 have basketball practice or a game and then come to track practice and then come home and deal with the administration stuff for track.

Coaching work was structured so that it took place during evenings and weekends. Even women employed as full-time coaches had difficult or nonstandard schedules. Colleen, a full-time tennis coach, described her unique work schedule:

In the past I’d work like 9:00 to 1:00, go home for three hours and come back and work 4:00 to 9:00 which you make more money but you don’t have a life...Also a lot of the events we run on Friday nights and Saturday night all weekend so you don’t necessarily have a life a lot of the time...none of these bankers’ hours.

The only coach with more regular hours was Rachel, the other tennis coach. She arranged her schedule so that it was more traditional in terms of a daily routine.

Because I've coached for so many years and then seniority comes with that and being the head pro, I don't have to work evenings, I don't choose to work evenings, that would just send me over [the edge]...So, I won't teach evenings and I won't teach weekends unless somebody really really wants a lesson and I'll make an exception...It wouldn't be out of the ordinary but I pretty much have a 9 to 6 day.

Rachel had the ability to establish her own working schedule. However, the structure of coaching as involving nonstandard hours remained because Rachel had the opportunity to work evenings and weekends, even though she chose not to. This choice was perhaps easier for her because of the private club environment in which she worked, and because other coaches worked for her.

Coaching schedules were unconventional in another sense, too. Coaches' routines depended on different variables, such as, what day of the week it was (practice or competition), or what time of the athletic season it was (beginning, middle, end, or off season). Some aspects of the athletic environment were structured (games/tournaments were scheduled in advance) but the daily routine fluctuated within that structure.

All of the coaches discussed how travel was a component of coaching. The amount and type of travel depended on the environment and the type of sport they coached in. For example, club, college and university coaches tended to travel within Canada and for shorter periods of time (usually for weekends). Monica, a college level basketball coach, offered a typical example of the travel schedule:

I guess for league games, we had five weekends I guess that we were on the road, so sometimes it was two or three in a row and then we'd have two or three at home.

Women who coached national level athletes traveled to international destinations and for longer periods of time. Phoebe, a speed skating coach, said:

We went to Europe for about three weeks in the fall, then we came back here for about three weeks. Then we just went to Milwaukee for five days, came here for ten days, went to Europe for four weeks, came back here for two weeks, went to Salt Lake for a week. Now I am here and in the summer we will go for like two weeks, maybe ten days in May, ten days in July, ten days in September, and then [in] November it starts all over again.

The coaches described how the work of coaching was all-consuming because they did not get a real break from the work. Susan declared that the only time she got a break was when she worked at her part-time waitressing job. Sarah, an assistant soccer coach, commented: "It's pretty much a 24-hour job. You're continually looking for players or continually thinking of things to improve your team." Carey, a ringette coach, described how coaching consumed other parts of her day:

That's the thing, if I'm in class, I'm not in class for class, I'm in class and I'm like writing stuff out for ringette all the time, I honestly can't concentrate.

Other coaches stated that coaching was all-consuming because it consisted of so many components. Phoebe expanded:

It covers everything. Sometimes you are going over very personal information like people's blood work with physiologists...the information you're given is more information than boyfriends, girlfriends, parents sometimes, and doctors and so you take home a ton of stuff.

Julia, a synchronized swimming coach, commented:

It's an all-encompassing thing, you know. Sometimes you wish...you could just park it for a couple days...but it's hard to do that I think because there is so much involved in it and there is always something on the go.

The organization of the work: employment status

There were many different ways that these women were employed and these differences had an impact on how the work of coaching was carried out. Some were

contracted to coach, others were full-time salaried coaches for a college, university, or club; while others coached part-time. Payment ranged from a full-time salary to no income at all. Excluding the two retired coaches, 11 women received an income from coaching, six received an honorarium, and two received no income.

Even among club-level coaches, there were many differences in employment status and income. For example, Susan was on an eight-month contract with a freestyle skiing club but she was considered self-employed. According to her there were not many salaried positions for coaches in skiing. She said that all other coaches were being paid by the hour, or they were volunteering. Susan suggested that the only reason she was receiving a salary was because she had a “very big club with a lot of revenue;” most clubs were smaller and could not afford a salaried coach. Heather was a club-level coach, who was not receiving any income from the club that she had helped to create. Apparently, it was rare for a head coach of this club to receive a full-time salary. However, two tennis coaches and one badminton coach were employed full-time by a private club. The differences between a private and public club were explained by Joanne, a badminton coach:

The public clubs run out of a high school or something by a person who has just taken it upon themselves to organize the club so it's a bit different that way...It's more maybe self-employed [for coaches] whereas...just because of the logistics for some reason [in a] private club, you're hired by a club.

Within a university environment, the head coaches were more likely to be employed on a full-time basis. Many coaches stated that being employed in a university environment was ideal for a coach. Heather, one of the track coaches, said, “I think maybe university coaches do okay, but other than that I don't think you can coach in a track club and make huge money.” The head coaches of college teams were not as likely

to be employed full-time and they were more likely to be receiving an honorarium, like Sunny, the college volleyball coach. She believed that the dual role of teaching and coaching was the ideal position for a coach because “you can’t live on the salary that you get as a [college] coach.”

None of the assistant college and university coaches were full-time employees of their institutions. All received a small honorarium instead of a salary. These women implied that the money they received was compensation for their expenses, and the amount given was determined by the head coach. As Michelle, a head coach, commented: “I’d say that money is always the bottom line because the allotment of money that I get for coaching, the more people I bring on, the less I get.”

There were a few exceptions to this broad pattern of employment organization. For example, Rosie, a volleyball coach, described how the college she coached for was finally creating a full-time head coaching position but she did not accept it because she could not see giving up her teaching job for a “decrease in pay and stability.” Michelle, the field hockey coach, described how her position used to be a joint position. The university and the provincial sport association jointly paid her salary (in exchange for Michelle running all of the provincial programs). The provincial organization pulled its funding and the university did not increase its funding. Thus, within the university environment field hockey was the exception as there was not a full-time salaried coach.

Most of these coaches mentioned money as a source of difficulty in coaching. Some, like Cathy, were frustrated.

It did get to the point in the early nineties that I really wasn’t making enough money and we were going in the hole financially in the family and we just sort of had to make some adjustments and that was a bit of a frustrating part of my life in speed skating.

Courtney, the diving coach, echoed Cathy's concerns:

To run a club, to be the head coach, to you know train athletes, it's really not a great salary, it's not a great salary, especially when you look at that maybe a secretary can get paid 30 to 35 [thousand dollars/year] to be a secretary...so it's an unrecognized skill.

Even women who had achieved a full-time salaried coaching job still talked about the existence of financial difficulties. Joanne said:

I'm not getting paid as much as I could have been in...other instances ...My supervisor went to management and asked for a three percent raise for me and management said well actually we think she deserves five. So, I know that they know how hard I work, I know that they realize I do but I mean five percent on a little bit, is a little bit.

As a result of these financial difficulties 12 women maintained either full or part-time employment outside of coaching. Nine of the 12 worked full-time and coached. For example, Sunny, the college volleyball coach, worked full-time at a phone company; Courtney worked as a secretary at a wireless company. Susan, a skiing coach, worked part-time during the skiing season and full-time during the off-season. She described her difficulties:

I like this job but the downfall is I've got four months off, I either have to have a really good employer that will either hire me for four months or kind of do what I'm doing, do some contract coaching in the summer but it's for summer camps, so it's like two weeks but having a waitressing job is really flexible.

Eleven women had education degrees and several had taught in the public education system. Four of these 11 women were teaching full-time within the city school system and a few of them could not see giving up their teaching employment for coaching.

However, some women chose to pursue a full-time salaried coaching position over other employment opportunities despite the financial and time constraints of a career in coaching. Julia, a synchronized swimming coach, described how she made this choice:

For the first two years I coached [and] I worked full-time. So, I was working about 16 hours a day for two years and that was, I mean you just had to make a choice because you can't keep up that kind of pace, so I really chose coaching.

Julia chose coaching even though "financially it would have been better the other way around." For these women a career in coaching was perceived as a deliberate choice over other full-time employment opportunities. However, many other coaches in other environments and in different sports felt constrained by a lack of opportunity and did not necessarily see coaching as a choice for them. Carey, a ringette coach, said:

Would I be interested in coaching? Absolutely, like as a career job... When I think about what I love to do, what I'm passionate about, what I want to talk about all the time, what I read books about, it's always coaching but my opportunities are so limited for the simple fact that I'm in a sport, my knowledge is in a sport where...there aren't paid coaching positions right now.

Thus, Carey believed that coaching was not a choice for her because of her sport of interest. While Erin, a track and field coach, expressed a similar sentiment, she was still trying to find her way to a full-time coaching job. And she was willing to enter a new sport and new environment to accomplish this goal; she had tentatively been offered an opportunity to bring her knowledge and skills to the Canadian women's bobsledding team.

I'll keep dreaming of coaching full-time and if that means like this is my destiny about doing bobsledding and track then fine, fantastic, I can't believe how easy bobsledding is to get into...I mean for that door to open for me, where track, man I just scraped on that door for so long to be noticed and you know it's like, oh, you're doing something, oh that's nice, keep working. Slam, you know what I mean? And bobsledding is like, come on in, show us what you know.

Several women, like Erin, were still searching for a way to coach full-time but this was challenged by the environments and the sports in which they coached.

The question of balance

Given the fact that the work of coaching was all-consuming for these women, how did they go about finding balance in their life? For Erin and Carey, achieving balance seemed not to be a problem. Both described how idleness or time off made them “bored.” Carey, the ringette coach, said: “I like being busy...I don’t enjoy my life unless I’ve got something, if I have a night off, I’m honestly bored with myself, which is crazy.”

But many women believed that coaching did not allow for a balanced life.

Phoebe, a speed skating coach, said:

There isn’t balance...the interesting thing is that, there isn’t balance for a lot of the athletes at an elite level and there isn’t balance for a lot of the coaches at that level, so I think you find that you hammer most of the time and you just try to get some time away and sort of rejuvenate.

Davilyn, the university basketball coach, remarked that “the life of a coach is so narrow, it is so unbalanced.” Many coaches contended that it was extremely difficult to find balance in coaching and this was particularly true for the women who maintained employment besides coaching. Michelle, a university field hockey coach and a full-time teacher, recalled:

I have a dog, house, work, family, relationship, [and] it’s pretty tough... because you have to rank things, so you think okay, your relationship is number one, your job is number two, and then field hockey would come in third...if you focus too much on one area, I think you lose out as a person and as a result do I give 150% to [university] coaching? No, you can’t.

Sunny, a college level volleyball coach, echoed Michelle’s frustrations:

It is tough, I mean you have to...balance everything, you’re juggling job, work family, relationships, it’s mind boggling and you honestly don’t think sometimes that you have enough time in the day to deal with every single aspect of your life.

Many women, like Monica and Kelly, believed that balance or social time occurred in the off-season and this was their time to rejuvenate and create a balanced life. Several women consciously worked at doing so. Susan mentioned how she used to go skiing one day a week and she tried to ensure that she had two evenings a week to spend with her boyfriend. Jessica, a university basketball coach, commented: "I just make sure I leave my work and I'm not so consumed by it at all times...I just value other components of my life to make sure that I'm balanced." She described why this balance was so important:

I realized at a very young age that there is more to life than just basketball and so I have completely committed and taught myself to have avenues outside [that are] relaxing...I don't want to just be Jessica the basketball coach and so to give you an example, in Fredericton...I was part of a bridge club and these people had no idea who I was....and that was very important, extremely important to me.

The broader context: women coaches and women's work

Clearly, coaching is a demanding job. Overall, it is not well-paid, it requires many volunteers, it involves all sorts of extra duties outside of instructing athletes, and it requires an extraordinary amount of time. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that many of these demands and difficulties do not also challenge *men* who coach. But there are also many ways in which *women* in coaching, as in many other occupations, are particularly disadvantaged. As Theberge (1988) noted, there were limits on the ability of both men and women coaches to create a coaching career. However, women coaches faced barriers that further limited their mobility. That is, mechanisms existed to exclude women from the higher ranks of coaching. In Canada, at the elite levels of sport, women coaches were "strangers who lack acceptance or integration into the system" (Theberge,

1988: 125). As Cathy said: "I still think there's a bit of a bias toward letting women move into the higher ranks."

There are three main areas of disadvantage generic to much of the work women do, that seem to affect women coaches also. One of the characteristics of women's work is sex segregation. Reskin (1997) stated that sex segregation in the workplace refers to women's and men's concentration in different occupations, industries, jobs, and levels in workplace hierarchies. Segregation places women in positions without opportunities for advancement, and it lowers women's chances of promotion. Blum (1997) has asserted that in spite of major anti-discrimination legislation for women in the workplace, the majority of employed women remain in low-paid, highly gender segregated work. While coaching has undergone some level of desegregation, men coaches still have opportunities that women do not.

For example, men can pursue a professional and extremely well-paid coaching career within the many male professional sports leagues (such as the National Hockey League, National Football League, and Major League Baseball) while women do not in practice have these avenues of promotion available to them. Knoppers et al (1990) determined that women coaches experience different types of coaching employment because they are disenfranchised and are tokens. In the U.S interscholastic system of sport men have more opportunities than women to coach revenue-producing sports (basketball and football), and thus they have more opportunities to be in positions of power (Knoppers, Meyer et al. 1990). Kane (1991) suggested that women are excluded from coaching male athletes, and when women do coach men they serve as tokens. Women are tokens because they are kept from coaching powerful or prestigious men's

sports (team sports) and they are routinely positioned in “lesser” sports where they possess little power.

A second characteristic of women’s work where women are disadvantaged is income. England (1997) stated that in the U.S (as in most nations) women earn substantially less than men. According to Statistics Canada, in 1998, on average women earned 64.4 cents to every dollar that men made (for all-workers) or 72.2 cents to the dollar for full-year, full-time workers.¹² There have not been drastic changes in the ratio of earnings despite movements and lawsuits for pay-equity and comparable worth (England 1997). Monetary discrepancies based on gender exist in coaching. For example, Knoppers and colleagues (1989) found that the impact of experience, and win/loss record had a greater influence on the salary of women than men. The gender of the coach and the gender of the team had an impact on salary. Thus, coaching men had a positive impact on salary compared to coaching women. The women in the study described the financial difficulties of coaching and their accounts are congruent with literature that states that women coaches receive less income than their male counterparts (Knoppers, Meyer et al. 1989). Davilyn, a university basketball coach, commented:

I bet if you went across this country and asked what the women’s coach makes [financially] compared to the men’s coach there is still some major discrepancies.

A third characteristic of women’s work where women are disadvantaged is working conditions. Women in the workforce often experience different working conditions from their male colleagues (Blum 1997; England 1997; Reskin 1997; Reskin 2000). Knoppers (1990) concluded that women coaches experience different feedback

¹² Information from Statistics Canada website. www.statcan.ca

from management than men. For example, even under similar conditions of sport (revenue-generating), access to an important person with power (athletic director) was determined by the gender of the coach. That is, women coaches had less contact with their employer (athletic director). Several researchers maintained that when women were hired as coaches they were less likely to feel supported by their sporting organizations; this often produced higher turnover rates, less job satisfaction, and more burnout for women (Knoppers, Meyer et al. 1990; Pastore and Judd 1993; Pastore, Inglis et al. 1996).

Theberge (1988) found that many women coaches felt there was a lack of acceptance and recognition for their work in coaching. The women in this study were also working very hard for very little financial reward. They were putting in a tremendous amount of time and energy out of a sense of altruism, duty, and passion with very little expectation of reward, or recognition. According to England (1997) the types of skills common in women's jobs may have lower returns than the types of skills common in men's jobs. Supportive and nurturing skills in either household or paid employment may be devalued and institutionalized into wage systems. These skills carry a low rate of reward and since these skills are more common in women's occupations, this devaluation specifically affects women. Women are more often in jobs involving nurturing social skills and these jobs have lower financial returns than other occupations. This devaluation comes about because of the structure and organization of work (England 1997). This was true for the women coaches in the study, as the work they described was in many instances supportive and nurturing.

Women in non-traditional occupations

In many ways the work of the women in this study was women's work -- segregated, poorly paid, and carried out under conditions less favourable than those experienced by men. Yet at the same time, these women were also doing "men's work." As coaches, they were encroaching on male occupational turf. Studies of women in other non-traditional occupations suggest that this may entail finding new ways to do this "men's work."

For example, Zimmer (1997) found that women working as prison guards in men's prisons had out of choice and necessity created new ways of doing an old job. For example, women guards integrated certain aspects of the traditional female gender role into a traditional male occupational role to create new ways to perform the job. Not all women guards performed the job in a similar manner, but overall they did use strategies that differed from men prison guards. Zimmer stated that this pattern of creating new ways to do a men's job was typical of women in other traditionally male occupations. She found that in traditionally male-dominated occupations like policing, prison security, [and I would argue, even coaching], occupational standards created by men are used to evaluate women and in many instances women fail to meet those standards. When women do perform like men they are still not evaluated positively (Zimmer 1997). This literature connects to the experiences of women in this study because coaching is a male-dominated occupation and sport is a male-dominated environment.

Messner (1990) claims that definitions of sport continue to be associated entirely with definitions of masculinity. For example, men's sport has always been seen as more legitimate, or more "real." "The institution of sport, in its dominant forms, was

constituted from the very beginning as an exclusive arena of male experience and male relations” (Messner and Sabo 1990: v). Theberge (1993) has suggested that sport continues to reinforce the ideology of natural gender difference and the inferiority of women. In addition, women’s athletics are consistently contrasted with “real” sport, or men’s athletics. As a result, girls’ and women’s sport are constructed and reconstructed as inferior (e.g. see Hall 1996; Theberge 1997). Similarly, men are viewed as better coaches because of women’s inferiority in sport. The women coaches in this study also described experiences of obstacles and opposition in sport. And they perceived this opposition was due to their gender. Like other women in non-traditional occupations, they were a numerical minority; they faced the “old boys’ club,” and they often had to prove their ability because they were women. Particular problems also confronted women with children.

Facing a male-dominated environment

Many in this study recognized that women coaches were a minority. Erin, a track and field coach, commented: “The people who have the jobs right now are all men and they’re going to hold onto [them] until they’re dead.” Jessica, a university basketball coach, described being in a minority when she attended a coaching clinic in Boston:

In the 1980s...there weren’t even a handful of women in a room, huge, huge conference room of three plus hundred more coaches listening to NCAA coaches, NBA coaches, and there were only a handful of women. I was blown away because I’m like...oh my goodness. Where is everyone?

Jessica believed that the current situation was more gender-balanced because of recent opportunities for women in coaching. However, Cathy described how gender equity was still lacking in her sport:

There seems to be more opportunities for men in speed skating, even now and when I started...I mean I remember my first coaching clinic I took back in '75, there were 14 men and me, but you know what when I was at the NCI in '97...there were 10 guys and me, I was the only full-time woman in the NCI.

Davilyn, the basketball coach, described how the entire sporting environment was still male-dominated:

The sporting world is still very much a man's environment, it is still male dominated in every way shape or form, I bet you in our whole country, there may be three female athletic directors. Sport is very much male dominated, athletic directors are male, officials are still male, when you walk into a gym and you look at the people that are working there, you know the event managers, the scorers' table, it's a male-dominated environment.

There were a few exceptions according to the sport that these women coached.

Field hockey and synchronized swimming are traditional female sports in which primarily girls and women participate. Michelle, the field hockey coach, contended that at the elite level across Canada the sport consisted of "predominantly women." In addition, Julia, the synchronized swimming coach, asserted that "ninety-nine point five percent of the people in the sport are female." Thus, there were situations where women numerically dominated in sport. However, in other sports created for girls and women, such as ringette, women did not dominate. Carey recalled that when her team attended Nationals, her coaching staff was the only all-female coaching staff. Most of the other ringette teams were coached by men.

Most women recognized that coaching was a male-dominated career and several believed that women coaches were a threat in this male-dominated environment. Joanne, the badminton coach, recalled that there had previously been no full-time woman coach at her club. She noted that a lot of young girls wanted to play badminton because of her presence and because they were able to "bond a bit more." Joanne told of how a 67-year-

old woman asked her for a private lesson. Joanne was surprised that she had asked her because she had known the other men coaches for 35 years and she had only known Joanne for two years. Joanne believed that this situation was maybe influenced by her gender. Heather, a club level track coach, declared that both male and female athletes benefited from a woman coach:

Coaching is a man's world, it's a man's world out there...and I truly believe and that's another reason why I coach is because...men and girls need female coaches.

Heather added that her presence, a woman in a male-dominated environment, was threatening to her male counterparts. "I think they're afraid; I think they're threatened, these men coaches of these other clubs are threatened at what we could become." Many women coaches asserted that coaching was male-dominated and that their presence as women was important even if it was threatening.

Coaching in a low-status sport

The type of employment undertaken by a university coach in this study depended on the type of sport coached or more specifically the gender of the team and the gender of the coach. Michelle, who coached field hockey, was on a two-month contract with a university. Michelle said: "No one's going to do that job for the amount of money the university pays as a full-time coach...for under ten thousand dollars, it's just not worth it." However, Michelle continued to coach in spite of her status. She suggested that her status came from her sport's position as non-revenue generating. Michelle said:

I think...ice hockey, and football, and basketball, and volleyball, those bigger sports are seen as revenue-producing sports, where people would pay to go to watch football and those things.

According to Knoppers (1990), coaches of revenue-producing sports are more likely to be in positions of power earning full-time salaries, than are coaches in other sports. For example, Davilyn, the university basketball coach, was coaching in a sport that was more visible and potentially *more* likely to generate revenue, than was Michelle. Michelle was coaching field hockey -- not a prominent or visible sport, and not a sport likely to bring in much money. This may have been one reason for her part-time status. But this raises another issue. Knoppers (1989) found that coaching *men* had a more positive impact on the salary of a coach. Based on this, comparisons can be made between Michelle's all-women field hockey program and the all-men football program at her university. The dominance of football was clear. Jessica, coaching another sport in the same university, observed:

The athletic department has a full-time football coach and a full-time assistant, but they don't have anything else for anybody else in any other sport or any other program.

In other words, the men's football team was allotted a budget that included salaries for two coaches, while the women's field hockey team did not have a full-time salaried coach. The subordinate employment position of Michelle compared to the football coaches can further be explained by the place of football in sport. Nelson (1994) declared that football is the ultimate "manly sport," it is seen as one of the only "real sports." Football is the essence of masculinity in sport because it incorporates sport's most important values of strength, violence, and aggression. Furthermore, "male support of football and lack of support of women's sport is responsible for much of the disparity between male and female college opportunities" [Nelson, 1994: 123 #992] Thus, the full-time position of the football head and *assistant* coaches in Michelle's university sent a

very clear message that football was more important than all other university sports -- including Michelle's all-women field hockey team.

Dealing with the "old boys' club"

Many women described how the sporting world resisted the intrusion of women in subtle but meaningful ways. Margot, the former cycling coach, stated that the "old boys' network" was "huge" and it "still existed" even though "they pretend it doesn't." Jessica, a university basketball coach, described how this network manifested itself. "You sure do get the 'old boys' club' and you sure do get guys that are...not necessarily respectful and say some things that...are unnecessary." The "old boys' club" exists to exclude women. This exclusion can consist of male coaches going to a bar for a drink without their female colleagues, or men using these "old boys' club" connections in sport to obtain information and/or jobs. Margot said: "They share information when they go for their beers." These women recognized that the sporting environment was male-dominated and that this domination was transmitted in subtle ways. Jennifer, the former diving coach, commented:

There's still certainly the opportunity for the men coaches to all get together and go for a drink...at the bar and stuff...I'm not going to go to some sleazy bar and hang out...that's just not my style...Certainly there is a network that as a female coach you're not part of.

Despite this recognition, Jennifer did not feel disadvantaged. "I never felt any disadvantage...or [that] there was any sort of discrimination whatsoever." While most women recognized the gender differences that existed in their coaching environment, a few did not feel that these differences worked against them.

Another way the "old boys' club" revealed itself was through the resistance to female officials and through women coaches' strained relationship with male officials.

For example, basketball is a male domain and while women coaches have entered this arena, women referees are only beginning to enter the sport of basketball. Davilyn said, "Within the last year...we've tried to break up the 'old boys' club' as far as the referees go and that's been going on for like 30 years and we're making steps."

Monica, the college basketball coach, said, "Male referees do not have the same respect for female coaches that they have for male coaches." Monica described an example of this lack of respect. During one game she said she "politely" asked a male official to "please call it both ways" and the referee told the male head coach to tell Monica to "sit down and shut up" or he was "going to give her a T."¹³ Davilyn, the university basketball coach, stated:

There is still a power struggle for me with male officials, they don't like the fact that I am powerful and vocal and if they make a mistake I'm going to tell them, they are still afraid to be embarrassed by me or made to look bad by me.

Evidently, many male referees were threatened by women coaches who challenged them in their "own" environment. The lack of women officials and the power struggle between men officials and women coaches is another way that women's entry into sport is resisted.

Proving their ability

Sport is considered a natural masculine pursuit. Men are defined as "better" athletes than women and consequently, as Michelle stated, "there's a tendency for society to think that men are better coaches." As a result of this assertion, many women in this study believed that they had to demonstrate their ability as coaches. Margot, a cycling

¹³ A T in basketball is a technical foul, given for harsh violations; such as berating another player.

coach, remarked, "If you don't prove yourself as a woman, the door isn't open for you."

Colleen, the assistant tennis coach, described the difference:

I think there's a bit of a male bias sometimes, that maybe a woman has to prove herself more just because... Maybe it's more of a guy's world and a girl maybe has to put forth a little more what their accomplishments are and what her certification is.

Carey noted that at the beginning of every ringette season her interview with the selection committee was an hour and a half. She claimed that every male coach's interview was "maybe 15 minutes, maybe 20 minutes." She felt that she was being "grilled" by the selection committee because she was a young woman and therefore, she continued to have to prove herself. "Honestly, I feel like I've proven myself, I don't know what more I would have to do to prove myself but that's exactly what it is like, every year."

This effort to prove their ability as coaches intensified for those women involved with coaching boys or men. Most women who coached male athletes were club level coaches; however, several women discussed previous experiences with all-male teams. Cathy, one of the speed skating coaches, described how a group of 12- and 13- year old boys at a power skating clinic felt that she did not "have the capability of coaching at that level... and their idea was, well, what can this woman teach me?" Heather, the associate track coach, described similar experiences. "I had two boys quit because I was a female and they felt that I didn't know what I was doing, not even giving me a chance." Sarah described her past experiences with coaching an all-male soccer team. She and the other female coach received a lot of "disrespect" from opponents and other coaches. She said they were not respected "because [they] were women coaching boys." Kelly, a women's hockey coach, described her previous experiences with coaching boys:

When you coach boys and especially as a woman coming in, you're doing

a lot of defending, you're defending yourself, and you're doing a lot of proving. You sit down at that first meeting with everybody, okay, these are my credentials, this is what I want to achieve with the team. These are my philosophies and if you deviate from that, they're all over you...Even if I went down to the very basic level of hockey, down to the novices, I would still have to defend myself.

A few women implied that in order to be accepted as coaches, they would have to utilize male definitions and male models of coaching. Cathy, who had run the power skating clinic, over-worked her teenage male hockey players to "show them" what she "could teach them."

Several women discussed how their elite ability and success as athletes provided them with some acceptance as coaches. Rosie, a volleyball coach and former national team player, believed that when she helped coach a men's team, there was no "lack of respect...because [she] was a female." And her respect came from her elite ability as an athlete. "I think maybe if I hadn't played, but I could go into practice and play with them and...the coaching part of it...it was never a problem." Susan, the skiing coach, said:

I think I have respect because I was a national team athlete as opposed to just being a younger athlete woman coach...so I think I have some respect.

Phoebe, the national speed skating coach, felt that her abilities as an elite athlete provided her with limited respect compared to her male colleagues:

I have exceeded all my co-workers, I have reached a higher level in sport than any of them, than the males, but I know that that helps, it's a bonus for me, because if I hadn't, I don't think I would be respected, whereas the men didn't reach as high a level, but they're just automatically [respected].

Many women believed that women in coaching had to possess certain personality traits. Jessica, one of the basketball coaches, believed that "confidence" was a pre-requisite for women in coaching. Jennifer, the former diving coach, said:

You don't have your mamby pamby preschool teachers...in sport...you

tend to have a different kind of woman in sport, [one] who is probably a little bit more take charge, who may not be the stereotypical female.

Cathy, the other speed skating coach, stated: "If you are a strong female coach, [men] can relate to you." In order for women to work in a male-dominated coaching environment they must be "strong" and "confident."

Motherhood and coaching

Women working in male-dominated occupations face particular problems if they have children. The responsibilities they are expected to assume as mothers tend to be higher than the expectations traditionally placed on men who are fathers. So work in male-dominated occupations tends to be structured around the assumption that workers will have no significant outside responsibilities (Blair-Loy 2001; Hays 1996). These male-oriented expectations confronted the mothers in this study also.

Kelly (1997) stated that women did not have "great" options for integrating the roles of mother and career woman. Women have been expected to fit into the male model of work, which forces them to buy into male models of childcare, or seek alternative work hours and work forms. This pressure to accept the male model or chose the "mommy track" increases in non-traditional female occupations. Thus, when women do have children they face considerable challenges in the working world. Most women in this study recognized how the job of coaching was different for them as mothers compared to fathers who coached. Seven women in this study had children. The women with children discussed how their families made an impact on their coaching and how their coaching affected their families.

Many mothers described the sacrifices they made for their families. A few women described how they coached on a part-time basis because of their children. Rachel, the

tennis coach, said; "It was mostly part-time and it was after school so I could arrange for a sitter...so whatever I made and paid for babysitting, I wasn't really tracking if it was worth it." Cathy, the speed skating coach, who relocated for coaching education and a new job, described how she sacrificed advancing her coaching career because of her family and how this sacrifice might not have occurred if she was a male coach:

I might have been able to make a decision to move to this field a lot earlier... if I had a supportive wife at home looking after the kids. I mean I couldn't have left my son any younger than that...as a mother I couldn't [have], even with a supportive partner. But if I had been the husband in the family I think maybe if I had a supportive mother and wife at home then maybe I could [have] made the jump a little sooner.

Many women described feelings of guilt over their extensive commitment to sport and coaching. Julia, the swimming coach, described these feelings: "Sometimes you think to yourself, boy, you know, I'm helping everyone else's kids." Heather said:

I suffer big feelings of guilt...don't ever think that I don't feel guilty, extremely guilty going away this weekend...Especially when I work all day, the mother who works all day already and is not there for them at lunch time and then goes away on weekends too.

A few of these women recognized that the source of these guilty feelings were from social expectations of mothers. Cathy said:

We've had many more obstacles to overcome and biases from people, like...you can't leave your family, you can't leave your kids at home and do this...How could you do that?...People would sort of say those kind of things.

Heather described encountering these attitudes and she detailed how she reconciled motherhood and coaching:

A friend of mine said to me, how can you take that time away from your children to coach other people's kids...and then I asked her, well, does your husband coach? And she said, yeah, lacrosse or baseball and I said, well, what's the difference if I do it?

Mothers also encountered difficulties when it came to childcare. For example, many women brought their children to work with them. Julia explained the challenges this posed:

When I was in Edmonton and these two...were born, I was coaching five days a week starting at five-thirty in the morning, so...getting a new-born out the door and feeding them and getting them organized and being at the pool at five-thirty in the morning, five days a week...it's a bit challenging.

Heather described the resistance she encountered when she brought her children to work; a worker at the track who was unaware that she was coaching tried to "kick her off" because her children were there. Heather asserted that many individuals in the sporting environment questioned the commitment of mothers, like herself, because they would try to balance coaching and motherhood.

They even think that...we're not totally focused, we still have that kid, or even with our kids there at the track, that we're not totally committed ...I think that's how we appear to be you know, you can't be serious about it or committed to it if you're going to have your children running around there.

Most women maintained that coaching with a family was only possible with a supportive partner. Many believed that coaching worked better in a relationship in which both of the members understood elite sport. Jennifer, the former diving coach, said:

I think the few that do balance coaching with their married life are probably either married to other coaches or people who were high performance athletes, or people who have a strong understanding of sport.

Julia, the swimming coach, said she was "lucky" because her husband "was a high performance swimmer" and therefore, "he understands high performance sport." The women who felt that their partners understood their coaching careers also felt they received some actual support. For example, they had an equal division of household

labor. Cathy stated that the support from her husband was essential to her coaching and she described the form of his support:

We decided that he was home at four-fifteen every day, he would cook dinner, he would stay home and do the home work and stuff like that while I was out.

Julia said that her husband was a “real Mr. Mom” when she was away traveling.

When I’m gone [he’s] a hundred percent and then when I’m home I’m a hundred percent so that he gets a break...so he gears up when I’m getting ready to leave.

Julia believed that this division worked in her marriage because it “pretty much worked out to a fifty-fifty” split and this arrangement was “great” for her children because they witnessed equality. However, a few women felt unsupported and this translated into more difficulties. Heather, the associate track and field coach, described a less supportive home environment. She remarked that her husband did not understand her passion for sport or coaching because he did not know her when she was an elite athlete. She said that her husband did not understand why she coached when she was not being remunerated.

Heather said that before she traveled she made sure things around her house were “pretty lickity split” so that “nothing [was]...left undone.”

I have a housecleaner come in and that’s basically saved my marriage too because when would I have time to clean house in all of this...So I...pay my little money and that saves a lot of arguments and a lot of resentment...Most of the women are the ones that look after the kids...they do the housecleaning, take their kids to soccer, and here and there, and I try to do that too.

Several women believed that coaching was not a profession that allowed for families. Julia observed that there was no “professional organization [in coaching] that allows for benefits...it really doesn’t allow for any kind of maternity leave...there is nothing in it that makes it easy for women.” Women like Julia recognized how coaching

was difficult for women with families, yet they believed that they “just had to make it work” or they “just had to adjust” and with the right amount of organizing and planning they made a coaching career. She remarked that a career in coaching “takes a lot of work...and a lot of creative thinking and planning.” For example, she organized a vacation four or five months in advance because otherwise it “doesn’t happen.” Julia believed that other women “can’t see that or it’s really hard for them to do that and so they get out of coaching.”

Two women left coaching because of their families. Margot, the former national team cycling coach, was a single mother who left coaching because of her son. Jennifer, the former diving coach, exited “because in [her] estimation you can’t be a mom and coach, the two don’t go together.” Jennifer commented that she “wanted to have a family,” so she gave up coaching to have that “life.” She believed that the sacrifices she made were new and different ones but ones that she embraced. The difference between Julia and Jennifer was that Julia recognized her constraints but managed to “make it work” by taking her children to the pool, whereas Jennifer disliked this option. “What do I do? Drag my kids along with me? Not bloody likely.”

Many younger women in coaching questioned their future in coaching because of their desire to one day have a family. Susan, the skiing coach, said that she “definitely couldn’t do this job” with a young family. She believed that when she decided to have children she would likely exit coaching because she had seen women try to balance motherhood and coaching and in her opinion “it did not work”. Phoebe, the national speed skating coach, contended that she could not coach at an elite level and have a family because of all the traveling. “Unless I had a boss that was willing to pay another

person to do all of the traveling and that's really unusual...it just doesn't exist." Phoebe said that if she had a family she would still "love to coach" but only "two days a week...with kids." Sunny, the volleyball coach, claimed that "something would have to give" because "parenthood is a huge job." Many women, like Susan, Phoebe, and Sunny, doubted whether they could balance motherhood and coaching, and their solution was to decrease their involvement, or to leave coaching entirely.

Several women explained that fathers could stay involved in coaching because of the traditional roles and expectations of a mother and a father. Jennifer, a former diving coach, said:

I think men are able to stay in coaching for a number of reasons, I mean men don't leave their careers when they have children to begin with...My husband's career didn't change at all when we had our children, my career changed substantially. Those are decisions we made within our family. Men don't have the children...I know there are situations in families where men do change their careers and the women do continue in their careers, those situations in our society are very very few and far between...I think that men who are coaches, for the most part the women to whom they're married know they are coaches when they get in and they're ready for it.

Davilyn, the university basketball coach, did not have children but she believed that once women coaches had children their options were limited because sport was "not a female friendly environment."

The bottom line is that most women have families and children and the minute that you have that, when are you going to put the time in to become a CIAU referee, when are you going to go back to school to get your masters and doctorate in administration to be an athletic director and who is crazy enough to want to be a coach and work six days a week and travel every other weekend while trying to raise a family. I don't know how we get past those issues...Until women start becoming the breadwinners and the males start becoming the homemakers and I don't see that any time soon, that to me is what holds us back in sport is when it comes time to raise a family you cannot be involved seriously in elite sport...The only people that can make that work is if you have a husband that isn't normal...somebody that's willing to stay home with the kids and from what I've seen that's not very common.

Many women, like Jennifer and Davilyn, believed that there were no real alternatives for mothers who coached, so mothers quit coaching.

The difficulties confronted by women in male-dominated occupations linked to the experiences of many women in this study. Many recognized they were a minority, they coped with the “old boys’ club”, they had to prove their ability as coaches through their athletic and coaching accomplishments. Those with children faced additional challenges. In all of this, they were in the situation of having to come to terms with male definitions and male models of coaching and sport. As Theberge (1993) has noted, women coaches respond to their male-dominated environment by either trying to fit into the dominant culture or by demonstrating their ability as coaches. Zimmer (1997) has suggested that women working in male-dominated occupations find new ways to “do their job.” That also applied to the women in this study, many of whom developed a style of coaching that differed substantially from the male model. Their approach is discussed in the next chapter, which examines the broader issue of philosophies of coaching.

Chapter 5: Women as Coaches

As well as representing a minority in a male-dominated world, women coaches work in a sporting culture that is also resolutely male-dominated. In other words, the definitions of sport, the values of sport, and the philosophy of coaching have been created and defined by men. This assertion is widely upheld in the literature on sport (Theberge 1981; Sabo 1985; Blinde 1989; Humberstone 1990; Kidd 1990; Messner 1992; Donnelly 1993; Nelson 1994; Eitzen 1999; Mercer and Werthner 2001). Though the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s led to an increased participation rate for girls and women in sport, the notion of sport as an exclusively masculine pursuit has remained (Messner 1988).

Male values and philosophies of sport were not always dominant in women's sport. For example, the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women ¹⁴ (AIAW) in the U.S provided a different model, offering an educational philosophy where "participants were to be students first and athletes second" (Boutilier, 1994: 106). But an underlying assumption of Title IX ¹⁵ in the U.S was that equality for women in sport could best be guaranteed by incorporating the male model of athletics as the norm (Hult 1980; Blinde 1987, Boutilier, 1994 #1086). After a two-year campaign, the male-run National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) gained control over all women's collegiate athletics in the U.S (Grant 1984; Boutilier and SanGiovanni 1994). Following the takeover, there was no longer an organization that would speak in a different voice for

¹⁴ AIAW was founded in 1971 by female physical educators to act as the governing agency for women's intercollegiate athletics.

¹⁵ Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act was passed in 1972 and it declared that any educational institution receiving federal funding could not deny access to sports on the basis of sex or race.

different values, for women in sport (Blinde 1989; Boutilier and SanGiovanni 1994). In most instances male definitions, models and values of sport were incorporated into women's athletics.

This practice continued with the influx of male coaches into women's sports. At all levels of sport involvement (high school, college/university, and national) women coaches are a minority in Canada and the United States. This was not always the case. Knoppers (1987) concluded that in 1970, women coached about 90 per cent of the women's intercollegiate teams in the U.S. As female athletic participation increased the number of women coaches declined. For example, Stangl (1991) stated that after Title IX, women comprised only about 47 per cent of head coaching positions in the U.S. Pastore (1996), citing the 1994-1995 Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) directory, found that women coaches comprised 40.6 per cent of the coaches who coached female athletes in Canadian universities.

Masculinist Models of Sport and Coaching

As Hall (1996) points out, increases in female participation challenged the conception of sport as exclusively masculine but failed to transform the inherent culture of masculine hegemony in sport. To maintain the status quo male superiority is reconstructed in another dimension and this dimension is leadership, administration, and coaching. The fact that women coaches are a minority suggests that the control and power over women's sport is retained by men.

Sport has been described as "a mirror reflection of society which indoctrinates the young with dominant values" (Meggyesy 1970: 28). Theberge (1982) suggests these values include militarism, authoritarianism, racism, and sexism. More specifically, the

dominant culture in sport supports a variety of common and readily identified practices. For example, in most situations coaches are ranked hierarchically with assistant coaches answerable to an all-powerful head coach. Traditionally, there is not a real community between coaches in various sports in that knowledge is protected, and coaches are fiercely competitive with one another (Theberge 1981; Knoppers, Schuiteman et al. 1986; Birrell and Richter 1987; Blinde 1989). This competition produces many behaviors such as the unethical recruiting of other coaches' players.

Another "common practice" is the overemphasis on winning. Eitzen (1999) contends that the essence of sport is competition with a goal of winning. But in sport, the dominant culture supports a "winning-at-all-costs" attitude, or as football legend Vince Lombardi said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" (Nelson 1991: 187). This pressure to win has caused some coaches and athletes to do whatever it takes to win because in sport second place is unacceptable and all rewards go to winners. Essentially, the end justifies the means (Eitzen 1999). And the means may be the use of steroids, trying to injure a competitor, illegally altering a player's transcripts so that he or she can play, forcing a player to play injured, making illegal substitutions, or violating rules (Fait and Billing 1974; Knoppers, Schuiteman et al. 1986; Birrell and Richter 1987; Nelson 1991; Sabo 1992; Eitzen 1999).

Elitism also characterizes the dominant sporting culture. Birrell (1987) asserts that the "best" players are privileged and even worshipped while average players are disenfranchised from sport. Exclusivity also exists in the dominant sporting culture. For example, heterosexism is privileged and homophobia is prevalent in men's and women's sport. Raising questions about the sexuality of female athletes challenges the intrusion of

girls and women in the male domain of athletics (Lenskyj 1986; Griffin and Genasci 1990; Cahn 1994; Kolnes 1995; Griffin 1998).

Nelson (1991) termed the dominant philosophy of coaching the “military model.” In addition to the hierarchy among coaches noted earlier, this model supports a hierarchical, authoritarian relationship between coaches and *athletes* (Scott 1971; Scott 1974; William 1974; Birrell and Richter 1987; Donnelly 1993; Kane 1995; Eitzen 1999; Mercer and Werthner 2001). Authoritarianism can consist of a misuse of power, control, and ownership. Many coaches control their athletes’ athletic and personal lives. For example, athletes have been told how to dress, when and how to cut their hair, and when they should be in bed (Eitzen 1989). This authoritarian philosophy and the pursuit of winning produces such coaching behaviors as the extensive use of negative feedback. Many coaches are guilty of behaviors that brutalize and demean their athletes through verbal and physical punishment (yelling, insulting, and boot camp techniques) (Birrell and Richter 1987; Blinde 1989; Eitzen 1989; Eitzen 1999).

When women enter into this male-dominated environment, how do they respond to these definitions and values? Do they appropriate them as their own or do they find ways to resist those definitions? As previously noted, Theberge (1993) has concluded that women coaches generally respond in two ways towards their coaching experiences or work environment. The first response is to try to fit into the dominant culture; they believe that to be a coach in a male-dominated sporting world, they need to become “one of the boys.” The second response is to work extremely hard to demonstrate ability. Women coaches believe if they demonstrate a high level of competency they will be accepted as coaches (Theberge 1993). This strategy de-emphasizes gender and

emphasizes attributes that women coaches perceive as acceptable and non-threatening within the sporting world, such as competency, skill, and winning. Thus, like many women in sport, women coaches do not necessarily perceive themselves as victims of masculine hegemony, and they try to negotiate their own place in the sporting culture (see Hall 1990; Knoppers 1992; Theberge 1993; Hall 1996; Hall 1999; Krauchek and Ranson 1999). As Theberge (1988) commented:

Women [coaches]...do not view themselves as victims of a male sport establishment that actively discriminates against them. To be sure, many are aware of male dominance in sport and of their own minority status as women. But few have developed a feminist consciousness of their condition and see a need for structural change in this regard. Rather, the majority believe that they must work hard to get ahead and if they do so and—importantly—positions become available, they will be justly rewarded.

Women in sport recognize that the sporting world is emphatically masculine yet they are willing to accept the masculine rules of the game because it is necessary for their participation in that world (Theberge 1993; Hall 1996; Krauchek and Ranson 1999).

Women Coaches and Coaching Culture

Like all women in sport, the women coaches in this study had to come to terms with practices and behaviors produced by a masculinist sporting culture. Their accounts reflected their struggles to negotiate their own terms for participation in coaching. I begin this section by presenting their views on some of the key characteristics of the male coaching model noted earlier.

The Hierarchy of Coaches

One such characteristic of male coaching culture is the presence of a hierarchy of coaches, with the head coach as all-powerful. A few women in their talk seemed to support this hierarchy in coaching. Sunny, a college level volleyball coach, said:

I think that a head coach suits me more, I am fairly aggressive in what I want to say...and when you're...the assistant coach you still have to go under what the head coach [thinks], their philosophies and stuff like that, not that that's bad. I just ...like my own direction a little bit better and it's easier for me to be a head coach rather than an assistant.

Sunny accepted the traditional omnipotent and omniscient role of the head coach.

Other assistant coaches who worked for men head coaches were ambivalent about whether there was a genuine need for a hierarchy amongst coaches -- but these women were usually working within a traditional hierarchy. For example, Kelly, an assistant hockey coach, said:

He makes the decisions because he's the head coach but there's times I think where he probably could've used our input in some of the decisions but he was there, it needed to be done, he made it, which I think is his job as a head coach.

Most other women discussed its existence but rejected the need for a hierarchy in coaching. Rachel, a tennis coach, discussed how she reconciled her position as the head professional at her club:

I believe we're all working together, you know, I can hire and fire but no one's working for me, I can make decisions and maybe I have more decision-making power than somebody who's working with me but...I'm not a real pecking order person.

Those women working and coaching alongside female counterparts dismissed the need for and eliminated a hierarchy. Indeed, two of these women were working as associate or co-coaches with female colleagues; there was no identification of head and assistant coach. Such practices are uncommon; both women were aware that their arrangements happened only through their own efforts. Jessica, a university associate basketball coach, commented: "It had to be completely us otherwise it wouldn't have happened." A second example was provided by the experiences of Heather, a co-coach of

a track club. Heather and her female counterpart started a new track club and specifically designed it without a hierarchy. Essentially, they shared the job of coaching.

We share it because she's got small children and I've got small children and I can't be away four or five times a week plus gone on weekends and that's what's really nice is that she...can go to a meet one weekend and I can go to a meet [the next], we totally do all our planning together...it works really well.

Heather noted the challenges from coaching colleagues who did not believe that co-coaching could effectively work:

We've actually had a few males say that, yeah, you're doing this now but ultimately...well, it's inevitable that you will split apart and you will want your own groups and I said why? I said if Melanie was to go to the Olympics tomorrow and take [one of our athletes] I would be happy for her. I would think that would be great and wonderful, I would totally support her. Why would I be jealous of her?...Why do we inevitably have to split?

Other women recognized the need for new coaching models in sport. Julia, the synchronized swimming coach, commented that co-coaching worked and was beneficial for athletes. She went on to say that for a co-coaching model to be accepted in sport, the coaching community would have to "shift the perception" away from the belief that it did not work. Her belief that associate coaching was effective was confirmed by the fact that those women who were working and coaching under a non-traditional model were having positive experiences.

Lack of Community between Coaches

The male model, as previously noted, supports a lack of community between coaches. Many women coaches in this study described a traditional environment with competition and dislike between coaches, while others described an environment that rejected these components of the dominant culture; these differences were often

associated with the sport of interest. However, most women wished that something different existed.

Both track and field coaches and tennis coaches described a coaching community that was not supportive. Heather, the associate track coach, described how when athletes go to “big” competitions (such as national championships), other coaches often question that athlete’s training program:

[They] are totally cutting down your program that you’ve done...When they should be giving you positive reinforcement at such a big event, you know and facilitating as opposed to knocking you.

Both tennis coaches described a similar coaching community. Colleen described how unethical recruiting helped to create a negative environment within tennis:

Your kids [are] being actively recruited by other clubs and actively coached ...Sort of well why don’t you come and train over here, we’ve got a better program, you know, I can make you a champion in six months...I just think it creates bad feelings...there are six clubs in [the city] and there is always something going on where this club won’t talk to that club because the coaches don’t get along.

Rachel, also a tennis coach, described her alternative to the negative coaching culture.

Having the coaches get together, talking, swapping ideas, we’re doing more inter-club you know with the kids where one club will host the kids...but there is just such a feeling of stealing as if I even own them in the first place...so I don’t know, just some sort of co-operative feel.

Several women described coaching communities that were or were beginning to be supportive. For example, Joanne, a badminton coach, described a coaching conference that brought together coaches from across Canada to discuss their sport and different coaching practices. Phoebe, the national speed skating coach, commented:

We have a very kind of team approach to coaching here, where my athletes feel comfortable going to some other coaches...Other coaches have a lot to offer and maybe what my weaknesses are, are the strengths of somebody else.

The women who had a supportive coaching community were aware of being the exception. For example, though perceiving her own environment as generally supportive Joanne described the lack of community between coaches as “very typical” and as “a big problem in sport itself.”

Exclusivity: Homophobia in Sport

Sport is one of many institutions that privileges and rewards heterosexuality while stigmatizing and punishing homosexuality (Kidd 1990; Lenskyj 1991; Cahn 1994; Kolnes 1995; Griffin 1998; Pronger 1999). The climate for lesbian athletes and coaches is complicated by the intersection between heterosexism, homophobia and sexism. Griffin (1998) posits that one of the most effective means of controlling women in sport is to challenge or question the femininity and heterosexuality of women athletes. In the sporting world, the “lesbian label” has been and is consistently used to limit the sport experience of women and it is used to make women feel defensive about their athleticism. Although lesbians are often the direct targets of accusations, anti-lesbian bias affects the experience of all women in sport. The “lesbian label” serves to discourage female bonding in sport, and it maintains the imbalance of opportunity and power for women involved in athletics. Essentially, the “lesbian label” reinforces masculine hegemony within the sporting world. This understanding is widely represented in the literature on lesbians in sport (see for example Lenskyj 1991; Cahn 1994; Kolnes 1995; Griffin 1998; Lenskyj 1999).

An example of heterosexism and homophobia in sport was found in the experiences of one of the coaches in the study who was the only woman to identify herself as lesbian. She told of being discriminated against because of her lesbian identity.

This coach stepped into a vacancy created with the firing of her male predecessor. The male coach's response was to write letters to the national and provincial sporting organizations. The letters "outed" this coach to the public. She said that the letters were in response to the firing and they were a "malicious attempt...to take her down." These letters were a direct use of the "lesbian label."

Even though the people in this coach's immediate working environment knew that she was gay, and her children knew, the impact for her was profound. "It messed me up, just, oh, it was the hardest thing, one of the hardest things." She wondered: "What do I have to do now? How do I have to be, and why does that have to be different than how I was before because before I wasn't outed you know, now I am." The reprisal had serious effects:

That affected my work, that affected my recruiting of players, it affected everything, it was like...I'm not going to go phone somebody and say I really think my program's for you when I was so fearful to hear, well, I hear you're a flaming [lesbian], like that was all this stuff I was creating in my head.

This coach said she had not experienced any other forms of prejudice or discrimination after being "outed." The response from her provincial organization was, she believed, non-discriminatory.

I have a good reputation...First of all, it was a non-issue. I mean the letters were sent to [the provincial organization], they finally said well what did you do?...I did nothing, it was just a hurtful letter.

The response from the people within her work world was also non-discriminatory.

I have not had one person...not anybody go, I like you any less or I'm freaked out, and if there are, they're quiet about it...so really professionally other than those letters...I haven't been impacted by that at all.

However, this coach had a right to be concerned. Attempts to “out” lesbians activate what Griffin (1998) calls the myth of the “lesbian boogeywoman.” This coach summed up the myth. “Our society still has a fear and a myth that gay people prey on younger people of the same sex.” She added:

I remember years ago when I was doing therapy of my own going, what would really be a bad scenario? Well, if the mothers of female players found out I was gay, I mean they’d think I would now be hitting on their kid and... that was a fear of mine.

This perception is one of the most enduring, pervasive and destructive components of the lesbian stereotype in sport.

Philosophies of Coaching

The male-dominated sporting culture produces, as noted earlier, a style of coaching that is distinctive. But the extent to which this style is appropriated depends on a wide variety of cultural and local influences. For example, Julia, a national synchronized swimming coach, said she believed that other countries and other cultures had a “different” approach to coaching and sport.

I’ll give you an example...at the Olympic Games I just sat and observed [Russia’s] head coach, coaching their team. The team trained for two hours, this was just one little coaching session, but [they] trained for two hours on one little section of the routine, the athletes never said a word, not one word in two hours...never came to the edge [of the pool], never said a word, and just repetition over and over by the hundreds and hundreds...The Russians...they’re definitely not athlete-centered, it’s win-at-all-costs and this is what it takes...It’s really not...ethical coaching, it’s really a dictatorship.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Canadian sport system, as suggested in the 1992 Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, does on many ideological and practical levels support an athlete-centered approach to sport and coaching. For example, Reeves (1999) described how coaching education and specifically NCI-Calgary supported a philosophy

of coaching that was athlete-centered. In Canada, coaching education places a prominent focus on the needs of the athlete. But there is a sense in which this philosophy runs counter to many of the practices described earlier. The extent to which the athlete is *really* the focus has a great deal to do with individual coaching styles, and coaches' willingness to resist the "common practices." A few of the women in this study indicated that they at times utilized some of the methods of coaching characterized earlier in the "male model." But they were ambivalent about accepting these male definitions; they used these techniques of coaching on a limited basis.

For example, some coaches supported the idea that athletes should keep their personal lives separate from their athletic lives. Rosie and Carey implied that athletes who allowed their outside life to infiltrate their athletic life were lacking the "mental ability" or "mental skills" to "leave it behind or move forward." Basically, a few women realized that there were "other things" in the lives of their athletes but they implied that athletes were weak if they allowed those "other things" to affect their athletic performances. Rosie commented:

Take care of the things that you can take care of at the time. If I'm in the gym I can't worry about that test that I wrote this morning or that I have to write tomorrow. I have to be here for this hour and a half and I know that if I'm concentrating on this then this will get better. When I leave here then I need to focus 100 per cent on studying for that test or whatever the case may be. If...I have a relationship trouble I can't fix it while I'm in the gym and worrying about it isn't going to make it better, so take care of the things that you can control at the time and I think that's a philosophy of mine that I try and instill with them.

Many women coaches believed that the traditional methods of providing coaching feedback "had their place" or "it depended on the person." Several women were

conflicted over how to provide feedback to their athletes because they themselves had often been coached in a traditional method. As Rosie commented:

I think I've tried to be different than the way that I was coached...the...old school of volleyball is very demeaning. I'm going to make you feel like crap, humiliate you, and hope that you will build from that, you don't want to feel that way, so you'll be better...And I do some of that. I don't think I have ever been to the extent that had been done to me. I don't like people to leave the gym feeling like they're terrible people, I don't ever try to attack a person...I guess I try to be a little more humane than the things that happened to me and your instinct is to do what you have gone through, [to do] what has made you successful...And so you know, you do a little bit of that but I think I have a kinder heart than some of the coaches who coached me.

Rosie and Carey agreed to some extent with the use of negative reinforcement as a coaching method, but even they believed that its use depended on the person. These women described their coaching techniques as providing consequences. Rosie incorporated physical consequences (such as running lines) because she believed that "they've made the choice, they have chosen to run and get better with their fitness [rather] than choosing to get better at their volleyball skills." Rosie commented:

There comes a certain time in the season when I can't be telling you that anymore, that should have been learned two months ago...if that's happening then you need to shake the boat a little, you need to rattle them.

Carey expressed similar feelings.

I know there's been a controversy over using physical punishment for when they do something wrong...I know it's been said that...if somebody does something wrong, you don't make them do pushups because then you're showing them that's negative consequences, blah, blah, blah, I disagree with that, there are certain things where you either do this or there's five push ups behind it and it's that simple.

Thus, Rosie and Carey utilized some traditional methods of coaching because they believed that "it usually works." Most of the women, including Rosie and Carey, believed it was their job to find a balance between positive and negative feedback,

between positive and negative reinforcement. Rosie said: "Coaching is a very fine line...you're constantly going back and forth over the line...very rarely do you ever go straight down the middle." Carey said: "You need to know when to snap, when to kick a water bottle [and] when to tell them they are doing a really great job." Finding this balance was termed by Davilyn the "art of coaching" because this balance was not always easily created.

I think it's part of the art of coaching, you have to know when to push and then you have to know when to pull and what most coaches do is push all the time, and the push is, get on the line, that's not good enough, bad pass. What are you thinking? Go home, run, and sometimes the pull is, hey that wasn't good enough but we're getting there, it was better than the last time...Knowing what do they need, so for me there are times in practices when I absolutely lose it and it's like I've had enough and I'm not going to pull anymore.

According to Davilyn, the "art of coaching" involved responding in different ways so that athletes did not know what to expect from the coach. Davilyn believed that good coaches were able to be creative and artistic in their coaching styles, so that they did not always respond with the negative feedback. Part of the "art of coaching" involved recognizing that the type of feedback depended on the person because motivation was individualized. Phoebe, a speed skating coach, said: "Some people want you to be very blunt with them and tell them like it is and other people need it sugar coated." Carey noted that coaches need to "know which kids thrive off of what things." Therefore, most women felt that the type of feedback they provided depended on who they were providing it to.

The Holistic Approach

In a male-dominated sporting culture, carving out new ways of coaching is difficult. Many of the women, at different times, drew on a repertoire of practices that

coincided with the male model. But many also described a philosophy of coaching that resisted traditional practices and techniques. Overall, most coaches endorsed a *holistic* approach to coaching and they recognized that this approach was not the norm in the sporting culture. The holistic or athlete-centered approach to coaching had many components. The basic philosophy was that the needs of the athlete should be paramount. Coaches understood the “larger picture” of an athlete’s experience; they recognized that they were teaching more than athletics, and they recognized the importance of an athlete’s outside life. Furthermore, they understood that performance, and discipline, were essentially the responsibility of the athlete. Positive feedback was used as a coaching technique; and winning was a goal but it was not the only goal.

The “Larger Picture” of Sport Experience

Most women in the study acted on a philosophy that made positive experiences, instead of achievement or winning, a priority. They created an environment where their athletes enjoyed the experience of participating in sport because for them enjoying sport was fundamental to participating. Erin said:

You can do little bits and pieces [of hard work] here and there but they have to have a huge range and it has to be fun, it has to be fun, I don’t think other people agree with that so much but that’s my philosophy and it’s worked for me and lots of my athletes.

Kelly, a college hockey coach, asserted that creating a positive experience was necessary to ensure that athletes continued to participate in sport. She believed this was especially important for young girls because “in general they drop out at 16.”

Making sure it’s positive for them, that it is a good experience...For the most part if it’s a positive good experience most of them will come back and that’s especially important [for] younger girls.

In addition, the women who coached younger athletes (at the club level) believed that part of the experience of athletics was to participate in several sports. Erin, one of the track coaches, mentioned that her philosophy was to “increase the awareness of track and field” by introducing it to many athletes who were involved in other sports. She said:

We’re trying to get so many kids involved, if you could star in track, you could do anything as an athlete because we teach you everything -- your muscular strength, or aerobic or whatever. [We] get lots of kids training with us and then going to other sports...which is totally okay [that] they... go on to other sports...it’s pretty good.

Joanne, a badminton coach, agreed and noted that her approach was different from that of her two (male) coaching colleagues:

That’s actually probably one philosophy that I do have different than the other guys I work with, is that, kids if they’ve got high school sports that’s good...it’s social, it’s fun, I mean they’re still doing physical activity.

Several women, like Erin and Susan, incorporated this component of the holistic approach. This notion of facilitating numerous athletic experiences conflicted with the idea that for athletes to achieve the ultimate goals of sport, like going to the Olympics or professional careers, they must dedicate themselves entirely to one sport.

Even coaches of older athletes, at elite levels, recognized the importance of focusing on the larger experience of athletics. Michelle, a field hockey coach, suggested that there was “so much more to being a university athlete than just playing” and she tried to “teach the whole picture rather than just a small part of it.” This attitude extended to her coaching decisions because she understood that one game, or one practice was part of a larger picture. This was exemplified by her story about an athlete’s father coming to watch her compete.

I’ve known her for four years now and she’s like ‘oh my dad is here and he’s never come out to watch’ and she’s been playing university

for three years, and high school for three years, so in six years, this is the first time. So, you think, okay, this is an important moment...maybe the kid can start because really, you know, their dad is there.

Michelle understood that allowing this particular athlete to “start” in the game because her father was there to watch was more important than the outcome of that particular game.

This recognition and emphasis on the larger picture was reiterated by Margot, a cycling coach. She realized that one particular training session was a part of a larger experience; it was not all that important if an athlete struggled in one practice. She described an experience that exemplified her philosophy:

One day we went out for some specific training up a mountain, an escarpment in Hamilton, and we rode as a warm-up for probably 40 minutes and...she was a bit grumpy...I said well, let's just try it. As soon as she went up the hill I knew it wasn't the day to do that type of interval so we just rode. I said, we're not doing this today, we'll just go for a ride to loosen up your legs...we'll come back another day. Two days later [we went out] and she did eight-minute intervals in the zone and everything.

Margot was able to place this particular training session in a larger picture, she knew that what could not be accomplished that day would be achieved another day. Without a recognition of a larger picture, Margot would not have been able to respond in the way she did.

Coaching the Whole Athlete

A component of the holistic or athlete-centered approach that most coaches in this study endorsed was a recognition and affirmation of their athletes' lives outside of athletics. As Margot said, “As a coach my philosophy was to care about the athletes as a whole person.” Thus, these women recognized that their athletes' lives could not be

fragmented; athletic pursuits were affected by other parts of their lives. Phoebe, a national speed skating coach, described it in this way:

There [are] so many aspects to a person's life. You're an athlete, you're a student, you're a brother, you're a sister, and that's a big part of people competing well, is that if all those aspects of their lives are going well and if one isn't, then maybe it's going to affect their performance and I try to take care of the whole person.

Several coaches mentored their athletes through personal tragedies or relationship difficulties. For example, Julia and Sunny coached athletes through a death or deaths in their families. Numerous other women coached athletes through relationship break-ups. Most believed that it was important to focus on the entire person instead of just the athlete. Many women coaches resisted the traditional and dominant idea in sport that athletes should leave their life outside of the athletic arena. Phoebe said: "I have a lot of people say, check your personal life at the door but that doesn't really work...people are not just machines."

Reducing the Hierarchy between Coaches and Athletes

The male-dominated sporting culture reinforces a hierarchy between coaches and athletes and traditionally coaches use this power discrepancy to control their athletes (Blinde 1989; Humberstone 1990; Sabo 1992; Birrell and Richter 1994; Nelson 1994; Kane 1995). According to Heather, "coaches have a tendency to get very greedy and possessive of their athletes" and this sense of ownership creates an environment in which athletes are "controlled." Kelly, the assistant hockey coach, said that coaches control athletes by incorporating a "my way or the high way, do it this way or get off the ice" attitude. Courtney, a club level diving coach, described what for her constituted abuse of the coach's position:

Abuse of power is where you control an athlete, you emotionally control an athlete to the point where they feel bad if they perform poorly because they disappointed you, not because they disappointed themselves but they disappoint you, that's an abuse of power.

Most women recognized the coaching role as powerful and they firmly refused to abuse this power. They chose to empower their athletes, rather than retain power for themselves. For example, Courtney commented:

My influence on them is very very large, so I have a responsibility as a coach to not abuse that power, it's a huge power... When you're a coach, you're a mentor and if somebody looks up to you, then what you say... and what your actions are influence that person. So, it's powerful because you can either have a positive or negative influence, you can either choose to [discreetly] direct their lives and encourage positive thinking and positive relations and educational growth.

Davilyn, the basketball coach, described her responsibility towards her athletes:

It's one of the things that I take very seriously, as I understand [that] I carry a lot of power in what I do, and how I act, [and] what I say... I better be using that power wisely because when you have power like that it can be very destructive especially with young people... My players... look up to me and they respect me and they care what I think and they want me to like them and... I have the power to either increase self-esteem or decrease self-esteem simply by how I respond and react with them. So, my position, I think it is very powerful and I think... it carries a tremendous amount of responsibility and I think we forget that sometimes as coaches.

These women created empowerment by seeing the athletic experience as a way to shape and create individuals. Michelle commented: "I'd say preparing these people to become better members of society would be the best thing," Kelly reiterated by suggesting, "We're trying to teach them to be adults as well." Davilyn characterized how she incorporated this philosophy:

So much of this is cliché, but we really look at the holistic approach. We believe that it is our job to build people through the game of basketball and that's our focus... and from the day these student-athletes enter our program as rookies to the day they graduate, we try to teach them what it means to be a winner. Obviously [it means] more than just on the court. When they

graduate we want people knocking down their doors to employ them because they've learned about teamwork, and unselfishness, and commitment, and time management, and self-discipline, and I mean all of those great qualities... Our basic philosophy here is that at the end of your five years here you're not going to be a basketball player, you're not going to make your living being a basketball player. So, if you're here five years and the only thing that we've taught you to be good at is basketball, then you might have had a nice five years here but it's not very helpful for the rest of your life.

Further evidence for these coaches' rejection of power and control in coaching was provided in their accounts of wanting to give their athletes a sense of responsibility over their athletic experiences. For example, Sunny said she felt that her role was to facilitate a person's athletic performance. "You can't let them be robots of yours." According to Rachel the goal should be to create an environment where "the player can take more ownership of what they want to do and not do," and to "get them to come up with their own answers." Phoebe, the national speed skating coach, described why this philosophy was particularly important for older or more mature athletes:

You tend to be more of a consultant to some of [the mature athletes] which ultimately is the best. Because there is going to come a time where there is not going to be someone there to tell you what to do and the more responsibility they take in their careers, the better. So, I really encourage that but then...you feel like you're more managing things than really coaching which is OK. Ultimately, I do not want a 25-year-old coming up and asking me how he [or she] should warm up for something.

Jennifer, a diving coach, described how when her athletes were standing on the diving board about to perform, she believed that all of her work was done. Julia, the synchronized swimming coach, described why facilitating an athlete's sense of ownership was so important:

You really have to internalize things for yourself and you have to own things before you really make it a part of your own life...It's so important for a coach to just sort of point things out, but not...say, do this, do this... you sort of get athletes to come to that conclusion themselves and to take ownership. They have to have ownership for their own values and goals

and everything on the team....because at the end of the day, at the Olympic Games, they're out there, it's them. I mean you really have no control over what they do, they're in control and they always should be...that's really the best gift a coach can give is...the responsibility and taking charge of [their] own performance and their own life and you just sort of act as a guide and...help them along the way.'

These coaches also spoke of allowing their athletes to develop team rules and discipline. The women who coached older or more mature athletes provided certain expectations and consequences for their athletes' behaviors but they included their athletes in the process of developing those rules. Coaches of younger athletes established certain rules and expectations in advance but they made sure that their athletes were aware of the rules. Kelly, the college hockey coach, described how age affected the way discipline should be established. She said that for younger athletes it was "easier to get them more instilled to your rules" and for older athletes she had to "talk to them about it [and] give them responsibility."

Monica, a college basketball coach, took her players for a retreat where they assisted in developing the team rules. Sarah, a college soccer coach, believed that "you pretty much have to trust them and say, you guys are adults." However, many women maintained that they still needed to provide expectations and consequences for their athletes' behaviors. For example, Jessica, the associate basketball coach, said:

I tell them what the expectations are, I tell them what it is and how I am and these are some of the things that are good for me and these are the things that don't work for me.

Most women started by giving their athletes trust but they expected integrity in their athletes' behavior; they expected them to present a positive image in the community, and they expected them to achieve their potential in other areas of their life, like their school work. Davilyn, the university basketball coach, described her expectations:

We trust you until you prove me otherwise. We are going to trust you, we are going to give you some guidelines, here's the things that we believe are important, here's what our goal is as a team and...we expect you to do things to help us achieve our goals. We tell them that as a general rule...don't go out and do anything you would be embarrassed about me finding out, don't embarrass our program.

This practice of giving athletes a certain amount of ownership over rules and discipline was effective because as Monica said, "they're responsible, they set them, and they know the consequences." Similarly, Kelly argued:

It's something you have to develop with your team and your team rules, this is what I want to bring to the table and this has got to come from you guys because you're the ones that are going to follow it. And if it doesn't come from them, why are we making it a team rule...like why bother, they're not going to buy into it and that's at any level, any age.

The assertion that athletes should be involved in developing discipline goes against the traditional omniscient and omnipotent role of a coach. These women resisted the power hierarchy between coaches and athletes.

Positive Feedback

The hegemonic sporting culture reinforces a philosophy of coaching that incorporates negative feedback through the use of yelling, insulting, threatening, and physically punishing athletes (e.g. see Kane 1995). Most women rejected these traditional male models of coaching and instead they utilized athlete-centered techniques of positive feedback. Margot, a cycling coach, described her approach:

There's other ways to...coach...there's ways to give positive reinforcement ...to empower people and to bring the best out of them rather than through different techniques.

According to Rachel, one tennis coach, being positive involved using very affirming language, to encourage a movement or behavior. Jessica, a university basketball coach, described how she used language to be positive:

I don't reinforce the mistake...you tell them what it is they need to do... instead of saying, you missed too many blockouts, say, let's make contact on the blockout, make sure you get a body on them...those types of things.

Several coaches explained their opposition to negative feedback. Kelly, the hockey coach, asserted that physical consequences for athletic mistakes or unacceptable behavior, like being late, was ineffective.

We're not into...physical punishment...It's not in my nature because I love sport, why am I going to discipline you with...a physical activity and then you're going to start to hate it, like that's the reverse of what we want you to get out of it.

In addition, Davilyn, a university basketball coach, said that yelling at players was ineffective because it "becomes like a nagging mother" who is only effective in the first minutes of the nagging.

It loses its effectiveness, they stop listening, they stop responding, especially when you have players that have been playing for three or four years and they've seen the tirade, imagine how old that gets, they're not going to respond ...they just go and shake their heads and go, oh, fuck, here she goes again.

Colleen, a tennis coach, stated that negative coaching produced self-doubt in athletes.

If it's just to reinforce something that's negative, it's not ever going to get anywhere, I just think you have to bring out what's positive and encourage what's good and...if kids don't feel there are any limits they're going to go for it...if I'm always being told I'm not good at this and I can't do that... they're going to doubt themselves. When you doubt yourself, you don't always fill your potential.

Winning the "Right" Way

Traditionally many coaches have gone to extraordinary lengths in order to win. Jessica stated that coaches who will "win at all costs" do not care about their athletes as people and want to win for their own gratification. All of the women coaches in this

study rejected the “win at all costs” attitude. They believed that there was a right and a wrong way to win.

Most coaches believed that winning was an appropriate goal and the ultimate goal of sport but that winning was not the only goal of athletics. The women who coached at clubs dealt with a wide range of athletes, from young to old, and recreational to elite. Club coaches supported competition in sport but they also recognized and emphasized the importance of recreation in sport. Rachel, the tennis coach, noted that the leagues in her club were non-competitive and social; if members wanted competition they could enter tournaments. Cathy, a speed skating coach, explained how she balanced a recreational with a competitive philosophy:

I try to set up programs that will accommodate each level of skater for what they want. If they're a recreational skater, we have recreational programs, if they're a skater aspiring to be an elite athlete, then I want a program in place so that they can do that and reach their goals.

Many other women also de-emphasized winning. Monica, a college basketball coach, stated that “medals aren't [everything]” and that winning “is nice but it's not important.” Kelly noted that her sport was in the developmental stages because it was the first year that women's hockey was recognized at the college level; this influenced her attitude towards winning.

I don't care how many wins we are, I don't care if we're first but I always think because I'm dealing with a developmental sport, I want them to stay and play no matter what happens, I want them all to play next year somewhere, I want them to love the game so that they all come back to play.

Several women who coached exclusively elite level athletes contended that winning was the ultimate goal of sporting participation but that winning was not the only goal. They

aspired to win but not at the expense of other goals. This perspective was summed up by Davilyn:

I think winning is the ultimate goal but I think it's not the only goal...I think anybody that's doing what I'm doing and putting the time in...with the commitment that is expected...and the sacrifices...in my opinion, at the elite level, you're here to win but if you're here to win at all costs, it's wrong, if you're here to win as your only goal, it will be empty...but if I told you that winning wasn't important...the day I don't care about winning anymore, or that first place isn't important to me, then that's the day that I that I don't think I should be running this program.

Many believed that some goals of sport were to try, and to have a good work ethic. Rachel said: "Just show me you're trying, you don't have to win matches, you don't have to be a star, but show me you're trying." Sarah, a college level soccer coach, said a team should evaluate a season on the effort they put forward and not entirely on wins and losses. Other coaches noted that additional goals in sport were to compete and perform with quality. Michelle, the university field hockey coach, remarked: "It's always nice to win...but to have players play their best is probably the most satisfying." Jessica commented:

Success doesn't necessarily have to be attributed solely on whether you win your conference or you win a medal at Nationals, success is associated with the quality product that you put on the basketball court.

The women in this study coached with the ideas and philosophies that correlated to research on women managers and women's ways of leading. Helgesen (1997) described how women executives resisted a hierarchy in the workforce and instead favoured alternative approaches of seeing their organization as a circle or a web. Court (1997) found that women educational administrators described a holistic approach to managing. This approach consisted of affiliation by building relationships, sharing

decision making, and creating a sense of group belonging. It was exactly these perceptions and philosophies that emerged from the women coaches in this study.

Perceptions of Gender Difference

Proponents of the holistic approach focus on the personal and athletic well-being of an athlete; they deal with the private life of an athlete in terms of family, romantic relationships, and academics. This approach reduces the hierarchy between athletes and coaches; it involves providing positive feedback and empowering athletes. And it distinguishes between a “right” and a wrong way to win. Most women in this study felt that they endorsed the holistic approach to coaching, and that their male coaching colleagues did not. Coakley (1990) raises one possible explanation for this perceived difference. He notes that research on male coaches suggests that most male coaches wished to exercise a positive influence on their athletes. However, their behaviour usually emphasized the development of physical skills and overlooked the general social psychological growth of athletes (Coakley 1990). But why might this be so?

Gender Differences in Coaches and Athletes

Many in this study believed that overall women coaches were more attuned to the emotional state of their athletes. Courtney, a club diving coach, compared herself to one male colleague by suggesting that she “was more feminine in her approach” because she had a “gentler side” to coaching a particular athlete who was in trouble with the law.

Rachel, the head tennis pro, commented:

I think [women are] more in touch with emotions and what [is] really going on for the kid and male coaches tend to be more...task oriented, this is what you're doing, don't really care if you're crying or if you're upset...let's push through and let's get this done.

Several women also perceived similar overall differences between male and female athletes. Monica suggested that if a girl or woman looked at a teammate the “wrong way” she would take it personally. Cathy, a speed skating coach, agreed with Monica when she claimed:

Girls [are] a little more temperamental...when they have a problem with another teammate...they tend to do all these mind games [and] backstabbing ...where the guys they just don't do that. They just say...I'm just going to beat you on the ice...there's a different interaction I think between guys and girls.

Kelly, a college women's hockey coach, suggested that boys and men are more serious about sport.

Girls take way more to the game, all this extra shit, than guys do. Guys for some reason when they walk in that door that's it, it's all outside and the only thing is hockey...Our attention span is so much shorter than guys...Guys will sit there and listen to their coach rant and rave for 15 minutes before a game, we maybe get two minutes out of them...and it's that way in every sport.

Sunny, the college volleyball coach, said that men and women and girls and boys participated differently in sport. She spoke of witnessing a guy “pack” or hit a volleyball in the face of another male teammate. His nose started to bleed and he said, “Is that all you got?” while continuing to play. Sunny contended that “women just don't have that attitude” because they “really take things personally” and they would instead respond by asking “Oh, my God, are you OK?” Sarah, the soccer coach, observed that men swear at each other and tell each other what to do. She said men and women respond differently to these behaviours.

I'm either going to listen to that guy or I'm going to ignore him, right? And after a game guys are pretty much done with it...it's on the field and it's pretty much OK, we're best friends again. But girls it's more...if you swear at a girl on the field, she's going to take that personally...I think girls like to carry grudges a little bit.

Coaching Girls and Boys Differently

As a result many felt that men and women, and boys and girls, had to be coached differently. Sunny implied that you had to “tone [the competitiveness] down a little bit when it comes to the women” because they were different and might “take things personally.” Rosie, a college level volleyball coach, observed that coaches could be more “abrupt” with male athletes. Carey, the ringette coach, described her own approach to girls and boys:

Girls you have to be sensitive with, like I’ve coached boys in hockey, just power skating stuff and it’s like you just tell them what to do and they do it. Girls want to know why first, so they need an explanation and then they need you to be very sensitive to how they’re feeling about the explanation that you just gave them. Which is fine...you just have to tailor how you act towards that.

Erin, one of the track coaches, remarked:

Dealing with women is harder...they have more issues, but the boys...could come and do the work. It’s like XYZ, this is what I need to get done...I can give a girl specific attention but that’s not going to be enough. It has to be like coddling...let’s go for coffee and talk and what’s going on, whereas my boys usually are...very XYZ and...this is what I need, okay, here we go.

As a result of this assertion that gender differences existed, several women believed that men coaches did not understand female athletes. Carey, the ringette coach, claimed that men did not recognize that “girls need to be cared for, they really do...and I’m not saying all of them but I haven’t really met a guy that has been able to understand.” Carey noted that men did not realize the importance of focusing on the “little things” for girls because “catty little things get to” girls and “it can totally blow up.” Susan, a skiing coach, declared that men coaches were unable to relate to women in the same way that women could:

Girls tend to open up to girls because a lot of times the problems they are afraid

to say to a guy -- now there are some good guy coaches out there...but it's just women seem to relate to women easier...I think it's just a woman to woman relationship and being able to give a hug to a girl when she is feeling down.

Three of the women who coached integrated sports contended that these integrated environments benefited from women and men on the coaching staff. Courtney, a club level diving coach, said:

In general my observations growing up and my observations of 18 years of coaching, women are far more emotional than men, men just get pissed off now in a female-oriented sport. Like hockey, having a female coach might be different, I can't answer that question but in a combination sport, in a dual gender sport, where there is boys and girls, men and women, there is a definite asset to having a balance I think.

Rachel, the tennis pro, hired a male assistant to join her all-female staff because "it's good to have male and female...I have a feeling [that] I need some male energy."

Rachel's rationale was that a 16- or 17-year-old boy in her club who wanted to play "good tennis" would want to choose a male coach. Essentially, the differences between men and women coaches were balanced by an integrated coaching staff and this was perceived to be an asset for their athletes. Jennifer, a former diving coach, commented that integrated sports had an advantage because "it's more real...life is boys and girls, life is men and women." Moreover, Jennifer felt that integrated sports alleviated some of the problems created by the nature of boys and girls or women and men.

Girls sometimes as a group behave in a really horrifying manner. Throw a few boys into the mix, they don't behave that way. Boys can absolutely get out of control by themselves. Throw a few girls in the mix, it's not such a bad thing...I think teams where you've only got women or where you've only got men, a team of girls can really be difficult, they can get really mean to each other...Similarly, if you've got strictly boys you can get a whole bunch of nonsense that you really don't need, when you've got a balance of boys and girls I think it does sort of help to keep everything in check

Accounting for the Differences

Many women who perceived differences between male and female athletes and coaches implied that these differences were innate. Colleen, the assistant tennis coach, suggested that gender differences existed because men and women were “wired differently.” Kelly, the hockey coach, argued that male/female differences in sport mirrored “life in general.” Monica, a college basketball coach, contended that gender differences in sport might be “in the genes.” Rachel, the club tennis coach, said:

It’s kind of the difference between men and women...the more you study men and women...men are from Mars and women are from Venus, I believe there’s a lot of truth in that book. Men are wired differently than women.

Several women did not speak in absolute terms; they described exceptions to the “rules.” Rachel toned down her remarks, “I think that everybody’s got...styles, I don’t know, maybe it’s not a gender thing.” Julia, the synchronized swimming coach, commented that “women coaches may be a bit more sensitive to the outside needs of the athlete but I think that [men and women] are really quite similar in their approach.” Colleen asserted that overall men and women approached coaching differently -- though there were exceptions.

I think female coaches are maybe a little bit more attuned to what’s going on in a kid’s head...whereas, guys will be maybe more processed, more technical...I wouldn’t say all guys but there’s maybe just a little bit more they don’t deal with the outside environment...Some guys are better psychologically with kids than others but I think...female coaches are a little bit more attuned into having the kids feel better about themselves. And that’s not across the board, there certainly are guys that do that too but I think guys are more here’s the drill, this is what we’re going to do...end of story.

Jennifer, the former diving coach, declared:

Typically, and we all know there are no typical coaches but women coaches typically I think are more nurturing, that doesn’t necessarily mean didly squat because there are a lot of men who are very good nurturers and there are a lot

of women who aren't.

A few women suggested that traits and emotions existed on a continuum for athletes and coaches. Joanne, a badminton coach, observed that "even with female coaches you get a lot of differences." Monica said:

I've had both lousy male coaches and lousy female coaches and excellent male coaches and excellent female [coaches]...I've had a lot in my time of playing a variety of sports and hanging out with other coaches and you can tell right away when coaches are good and bad...It's personality...your whole coaching philosophy comes from the type of person that you are, there's absolutely no way you can be a very nice, decent, honest person and then turn into a miserable coach, I don't think that's possible.

Phoebe, a speed skating coach, commented:

One of my best friends is a coach in the U.S and I think he is just as sensitive as any female and he is just as understanding and I know a lot of women that aren't [understanding], that don't want to hear it, too bad...I think it's the same for athletes, I have a lot of guys that are more sensitive than some of the women, it's hard to say.

This chapter has discussed the women's philosophy of sport and coaching. And it has discussed their perception that their philosophy of coaching was different from men. The women in the study were remarkably consistent in the way they talked about how they did their job. Though there were a few exceptions most quite successfully resisted and negotiated the male model of sport and coaching. Furthermore, what is interesting is that with some differences in perception, the women quite consistently attributed their approach to their gender. These findings make it important to look again at the role of gender in the work of coaching. I undertake this reassessment in the next chapter, as well as provide a review of the study as a whole, and some suggestions for future research.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis has focused on two main aspects of coaching, as described to me by the women in the study. I have explored coaching as a job, by looking at the details of the work and the way it is organized in different settings. And I have also examined the women's accounts of how they coached; in other words I examined what philosophies informed their approach to coaching. In both these dimensions, I have been interested in their own ideas about gender and gender differences in the sporting world. This research operated on two assumptions that are supported by the literature, namely, that coaching is a male-dominated occupation and that sport is masculinist in culture. Given these assumptions, and the focus of this thesis, one important aim was to determine the extent to which gender was implicated in the work and philosophies of these women.

Collective Stories

Most women described an intense passion for sport and coaching -- they could not imagine their lives without it. They were rewarded through coaching and I would suggest that for many this carried them through the demands and difficulties of the job. Despite many variations in their circumstances, however, their descriptions of the job were consistent. Most women described it as difficult and demanding in terms of the many duties that were required of them, including fundraising, extra coaching, and the non-standard hours that come with the territory. This was the nature of the work for most of the women, and the variations that occurred were due to the different ways that the work was organized. For example, women who had full-time employment and a coaching job for which they received little or no pay faced different demands, often heightened ones, because of their situation. Overall, though, the job of coaching was described in

remarkably similar terms in that it was difficult and demanding no matter where or how they did it.

There were also striking similarities in their accounts of their approach to coaching. Most women incorporated a holistic or athlete-centered approach. As noted earlier, they focused on reducing the hierarchy between themselves and their athletes, they believed that there was more to sport than the actual physical performance, and they attended to all of the components of an athlete's life and not just the physical skills. They tried to provide positive feedback to their athletes, and they believed that winning was important but not the only goal of sporting participation. One possible explanation for their approach to coaching is that they were reiterating what they had been taught through their coaching education and from their involvement in the Canadian sport system, which, as noted in earlier chapters, formally supports an athlete-centered model. Given this, it could be that men coaches in Canada would espouse the same philosophies as the women described here because they too participated in similar coaching education and were involved in the same sport system. But what is interesting is that the women in this study linked the holistic philosophy quite explicitly to gender. This was evident in their comparisons between men and women coaches; most believed that they were coaching differently from their male colleagues. Several reduced this difference to biological differences while others recognized that either gender could display certain characteristics that were generally associated with men or women. What is important is that most attributed their own coaching philosophy to their being women.

Gender and Coaching

These findings build on the work of Theberge, described in Chapter 1, and are worth revisiting here. Many of the women coaches to whom Theberge talked described the difficulties of working in a male-dominated occupation. Many felt their work was unrecognized and under-appreciated by their employers. Theberge concluded that aspects of coaching work are gendered. The women in this study described coaching in terms similar to those described by Theberge. As work, it displayed many characteristics of classic “women’s work.” Firstly, the work was segregated in that many of the women were coaching girls and women, and if they were coaching boys it was often in an integrated sport. And within this integrated environment some level of segregation still occurred. For example, the women who coached at the club level usually only coached boys and girls at a recreational level. High performance male athletes within these clubs were usually coached by men; even Rachel, the head tennis pro, had hired a male coach under the assumption that a teenage boy who wanted to play “good tennis” would want to choose a male coach.

Many of the women described a working environment with little opportunity for advancement. Erin, cited in Chapter 5, suggested that men had all of the good jobs in track and field and that they would hold on to them until they were “dead.” Secondly, low pay is a characteristic of women’s work and most in this study described the difficulties of a lack of income in coaching; many compensated by having other full-time careers. Thirdly, many women were working in difficult conditions, they were taking on duties above and beyond coaching. They were “giving 110 per cent” to coaching, often at the expense of other parts of their lives, including family, work, and personal relationships.

Many were unable to create balance in their lives because of the demanding nature of the work. As a result, Monica and Rosie were leaving coaching, and several others, like Michelle and Susan, were contemplating leaving coaching.

But while coaching according to these women appears to consist of elements that have traditionally defined women's work, there is another dimension that is influencing women in coaching -- the fact that coaching is a traditional male occupation. Given this recognition, there are many ways that gender was problematic for the women in this study because they were encroaching on what was male turf. Many described the different ways that they encountered opposition. Like the women described in Theberge's 1988 publication, many described experiences of being the lone woman at various sporting endeavors. Several described encountering the "old boys' club," many described a double-standard when it came to coaching ability in that they believed that as women they had to prove themselves, whereas men did not. A few described how difficult it was for them to combine coaching and motherhood. Theberge examined many of these very same issues and suggested that they are created by the assumption that sport is for men, and that because they are better at it, they should coach it. This assumption produces opposition to women in leadership positions in sport. In short, women coaches are disadvantaged by the dimensions of the job that make it "women's work" and also because they work in a male-dominated occupation, in which men may oppose their integration and success. I am not suggesting that men may not also face low pay, or poor working conditions. But I agree with Theberge that it is likely that these circumstances confront women more often and to a greater extent. Theberge's comments, cited in Chapter 3, bear repeating here:

The limitation on positions is, of course, a contingency affecting the careers of both men and women coaches. Women coaches, however, face barriers that further limit their mobility. These barriers lie in the variety of mechanisms that function effectively to exclude them from the higher circles of coaching...many women coaches are still strangers who lack acceptance or integration into the system.

(Theberge 1988: 125)

Determining how gender is implicated in how coaches coach, how they instruct and relate to their athletes, is more difficult. I have established that the dominant models of sport and coaching were created by men. As previously noted, the male-dominated culture of sport consists of many negative coaching practices and behaviours such as a misuse of power and control, a belief that the athlete is a machine, a use of negative feedback, and an overemphasis on winning. According to the women in this study, most of their male colleagues utilized the dominant model. Yet as I commented in Chapter 5, coaching education in Canada places an emphasis on an athlete-centered or holistic approach. Whether or not the women's perceptions of men in coaching are accurate is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine. However, I would suggest that philosophies of coaching probably range along a continuum with the dominant model described here as one extreme. To determine what men coaches' philosophies are, we would have to ask them. Yet the pressure for men to comply with elements of a dominant model may be more intense than it is for women because this model was created by and for them. Men have always encountered considerable pressure to conform to the beliefs and practices that constitute masculinity. In many ways, this pressure does not resonate with women in the same way that it does for men.

Resistance and Accommodation

Theberge links her findings to Kanter's 1977 book, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, which introduced the notion of women as "tokens" in male-dominated work environments. As previously noted, Theberge found the coaches in her study attempted to fit into the dominant culture, to become "one of the boys," and they also responded by attempting to demonstrate their ability. Both of these techniques were an effort to become, as Theberge said, "invisible" as women, in a sense less threatening. She concluded that most women (in her study) recognized their token status and the pressures to demonstrate their abilities, but that most accepted this condition as something they had to deal with. As a result they did not actively challenge it. She stated that two factors accounted for their responses. First, the marginal status of women coaches impeded their efforts to challenge their position and work conditions, and this included the devaluation of their qualifications and abilities. Second, they incorporated the idea that effort, performance, and ability are justly rewarded. This accounted for their need to demonstrate their ability because they believed that their own individual achievements would ultimately win out.

Many women in my study recognized their minority or marginalized status, and the pressure for them to prove their ability as coaches. But I would argue that these women have made some progress in terms of challenges to their position and working conditions. For example, a few had actively created co-coaching arrangements in the face of opposition and criticism, and for them it was an attempt to alter their position, to challenge the idea that hierarchies between head and assistant coaches can be the only successful model, and to create better working conditions. This was the case for Heather,

who created a shared associate coaching arrangement as a way to balance coaching, a full-time teaching career, and motherhood. Also, several women recognized that even if they proved their abilities as coaches this did not guarantee entry into the higher circles of coaching. Cathy's comments about speed skating, described in Chapter 4, are a good example. Thus, while a few women made comments that suggested an attempt to fit into the dominant culture, and acceptance based on their individual successes as athletes and coaches, their overall understanding of and responses towards the male-dominated occupation of coaching appeared deeper and more thoughtful than was the case in Theberge's study.

That said, it is also fair to say that, like the women interviewed by Theberge, the women in this study did not offer much resistance to the structure or organization of the work that created the problems they described. Most women did not have a strong feminist consciousness -- they did not actively challenge the ways that coaching was structured to disadvantage them. The resistance they did manage, either consciously or unconsciously, was on an individual level -- in the ways they chose to work with their athletes. The holistic philosophy of coaching that so many described differed sharply from the dominant model described in the literature. But its practice was not likely to challenge the dominant institutions of the sporting world.

This research also builds on Theberge's findings by including a broader analysis of coaching philosophy. Most women in this study were able to resist dominant practices and ideologies of coaching. As previously noted, they resisted the notion that the only goal of sport is winning, they resisted the misuse of power and control in their athletes' lives, they resisted the use of negative feedback in terms of berating, demoralizing, and

physically punishing their athletes. And they resisted the notion that athletes should leave their personal lives off the playing field. As noted earlier, these rejections were not absolute and many women felt that some techniques of the dominant model worked. But overall, most women resisted the male model of coaching. I argue that they may have been doing so because it was one area where they had more autonomy. Several women understood that there were traditional coaching practices and philosophies and that they tried to do something different because some of their own experiences with coaches were not affirming. Their understanding also included a belief that they were doing something different from the men they worked with.

Perceptions of Gender Revisited

As Theberge has pointed out, women coaches' experiences of marginalization as a token group provide a context where gender is highlighted and accounts of gender differences are constructed. In Theberge's work, the women stressed the significance of physical differences between men and women and the superiority of men's sporting experiences. The women in this study like those interviewed by Theberge, suggested that overall women were more affiliative, expressive, and nurturing, and that men were more rational. These kinds of differences were described as relating to boys and girls, women and men, and coaches and athletes. They believed that girls and boys participated differently in sport because girls are more "temperamental" and "take things more personally." Several also believed that coaches had to treat girls and boys differently and some believed that men coaches did not understand and could not relate to female athletes because of these differences. While not all women noted these differences, those who did consistently accounted for them in biological terms. Many incorporated the

“Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” rhetoric. What was very clear from their comments on gender is that they themselves were not completely sure how they perceived gender because many would make deterministic statements in one place and contradict or tone down their talk in other places. But the polarization of men and women surfaced regularly.

It is important to note that several women in this study did not categorically differentiate men and women; they suggested that many men coaches could be just as expressive and caring towards their athletes as women. What is clear is that most women did not understand how biological explanations of perceived differences between men and women served to recreate and reinforce the idea that sport is more naturally a masculine pursuit.

Kane (1995) suggests that when people (like some women in this study) imply a gender reductionist logic to perceived differences between men and women, they force a polarization between the sexes. Polarization occurs when differences between men and women are routinely emphasized and similarities are ignored. In addition, reductionist conceptions of what ideas and behaviours constitute masculinity and femininity ignore how gender is constructed as a product of a patriarchal society and gender relations. Many women in this study believed that the differences they described were innate, immutable, and resistant to cultural change. And they did not recognize how their constructions perpetuated an ideology of masculine superiority. In fact, biological determinism continues to reproduce gender relations as hierarchically ordered. In essence, it reproduces hegemonic masculinity and male superiority (Kane 1995; Kimmel 2000). For example, several women would describe the differences between how

differently boys and girls participated in sport, commenting that “girls take way more to the game” or “girls just don’t have that attitude.” These kinds of constructions reinforce the idea that girls’ and women’s experience cannot measure up to men’s because the way that men play sport is more legitimate, more “real.” The underlying assumption is that if girls and women were more like boys and men then their sporting involvement would become “real.”

Kane maintains that if we were to frame characteristics and physical abilities of men and women as existing on a continuum, we would rupture notions of innate gender difference. The continuum forces one to think of gender *comparisons*. Observable gender differences may in fact exist in these women’s coaching world. However, these differences are not derived from inherent biological differences but come from a social construction of gender deriving in part from women’s and men’s different experiences of the world, and the different expectations of women and men that are structurally imposed.

Limitations of the Research

Reflections on limitations of this study need to begin with consideration of the sample. Interview participants were 21 women coaches from the same city in Western Canada. This is a small sample, from a local sporting scene. Since the goal was not to generalize findings, but to generate some theoretical concerns that were meaningful, the sampling strategy was quite appropriate. However, in an attempt to generate diversity with this goal in view, other options were closed down. It might also have been helpful to focus the sample on two or three areas of interest such as the sport coached or the level of the involvement of the coaches. I might have been able to get a better sense of structural

influences if I focused on just university coaches, or just club coaches. In addition, focusing on a few sports instead of the 14 that were included in this study might have provided a better sense of how certain sports influenced the work of coaching. For example, research could single out team sports, or individual sports, or sports traditionally defined as masculine, or sports defined as feminine. A more focused sample may have allowed me to highlight areas of importance and to go into greater depth in terms of discussing those areas.

It is important to note however, that this study was limited by resources and circumstances in that there are not a lot of women coaches working at an elite level and it would have been difficult to get the same number of women to participate if I concentrated on only a few sports or a few levels of sporting involvement. Thus, while a change in the nature of the sample would have been helpful in focusing on different areas, it would have been difficult to create that kind of sample.

My approach to this research was somewhat structured in that the interviews were designed to discuss some general areas of interest that I had established, while leaving open the possibility that new issues and ideas could emerge. And I accomplished this; I feel that I conducted good and interesting interviews. However, I believe that as a newcomer to interviewing, I was more dependent on the structure provided by my interview guide than will be the case in any future work I undertake. I believe that if I conduct interviews in the future, I will do some things differently. This experience will give me the confidence to allow more departures from the interview schedule, to allow interviewees to tell more of their stories than was possible this time.

Many scholars have suggested that making comparisons between the experiences of men and women in research perpetuates the idea that men's experiences are the norm and women's are just a variation. Essentially, it serves to recreate relations that are hierarchically ordered. This could be taken as a criticism of this study too, because this research was based on interviews with women which made men's experiences the implicit topics of comparison. The counter argument is that, in situations where men continue to dominate, providing space for women's views is an important contribution. As Hall (1990) notes, it has been an extremely useful and a productive way to recognize and counter sexist beliefs and practices in sport. It has also added valuable knowledge about women and their lives in sport.

Suggestions for Future Research

As noted earlier, more focus on particular structural influences on the organization of coaching would be interesting. One way this could be accomplished is by targetting the organization of particular sports. This might mean, as I have suggested above, a focus on a few sports. Or it might involve a study of one organization/level of sport such as a university and the sports within that environment, or a comparison of the organization of public and private clubs for various sports. Another way that researchers could examine the organization of sport and its influence on the lives of women coaches would be to talk to individuals who are responsible for that organization, such as athletic directors of colleges/universities, or athletic administrators in provincial and national sports organizations. This is an aspect of sport that directly influences women coaches and it has not been thoroughly examined.

Other research could also investigate coaching education in Canada to determine if and how this education creates certain coaching philosophies and in particular how it informs coaches about gender in sport and coaching. Such research would examine whether coaching education was reproducing or reconstructing notions of “natural” gender differences and in turn notions of male superiority in sport.

There are a few ways that future research could investigate coaches’ philosophies. An obvious follow-up to this thesis project would be an exploration of how men in varied coaching contexts perceive coaching. This would allow for some comparisons between men and women coaches. As it stands now, these comparisons cannot be made because no researcher has really asked male coaches about their philosophy, to determine if they too reject dominant models of coaching. Another approach would involve using different methodology. A study incorporating observation would allow a researcher to see how women’s coaching *practices* conform to their *accounts* of how they approach the job. Observation might also be helpful in determining some of the struggles that women encounter and exploring how they negotiate their way through these struggles.

Researchers could also take seriously the problem of focusing on gender differences, or comparing “the men” with “the women.” Kane’s (1995) notion of a continuum of abilities and talents offers a useful place to start. For example, if “philosophies of coaching” exist on a continuum, with women and men interspersed along it in terms of the approaches they favoured, research would need to explore the continuum itself, and *then* attend to the ways in which the continuum might (or might not) be gendered. This is a radical departure from conventional approaches which *begin* with gender as the independent variable.

Conclusion

It has been suggested that women coaches work in a male-dominated occupation which can be problematic for them. They also work in a masculinist culture of sport, which generates the dominant ideologies, practices, and techniques of sport and coaching. And these influence the way women work in coaching. This is not to suggest that the experiences of women in coaching are totally determined for them; in fact the women coaches in this study were agents who negotiated their entry into a male sporting world in ways that were not pre-determined. What this research shows is that women in sport may offer resistance where they receive least opposition -- they coach with an athlete-centered or holistic approach and they attribute this approach to their being women. This approach does not provide sweeping challenges to the structure or institution of sport.

But on another level they offer resistance to the dominant sporting institutions by doing the job at all. The sporting world may be a stronghold of masculine hegemony, as Dworkin and Messner (1999) have described it. But male dominance is no longer complete. As Birrell and Theberge (1994) noted, the very presence of women in the male preserve of sport provides evidence of "leaky hegemony." Thus, these women are doing what they can, and as this thesis shows they are doing their share of trail blazing. It was my intention to provide a forum for women coaches' stories to be heard because their voices have often been excluded or drowned out. In a small way, this thesis allows them to be heard.

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 CAAWS - Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport and
 Physical Activity:.....www.caaws.ca
 Statistics Canada:.....www.statcan.ca

Appendix A

Written Letter

Dear.....,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary and I am working on my Master's thesis. I am really interested in the kinds of experiences that head and assistant women coaches have in the coaching and sporting community and this interest has led me to explore their experiences for my thesis research.

The best way for me to explore and hopefully understand your experiences as a coach is through directly asking you about your coaching world. Therefore, I am asking you to participate in an audiotaped interview that will last for about one hour. Basically, I want to see what life is like for you in your job of coaching. For example, how you came to be a coach, the rewards and problems of the job, and how you combine coaching with other responsibilities.

You would be one of twenty women coaches participating. Your identity will remain anonymous and your initial agreement to participate does not obligate you in any way because you may refuse to answer any questions and you may terminate the interview at any time.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. I will share the information you provide only with my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson. The interview data will be used strictly for research purposes. All interview tapes and data will be securely stored and locked in my office.

Your time and participation would be greatly appreciated as you would be providing valuable knowledge about coaching.

If you have any questions regarding this research you may contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson:

Tina Moody
Work: 220-3209
Home: 202-3549

Dr. Gillian Ranson
Work: 220-6511

Sincerely,

E-mail Letter for an Organization

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary and I am currently working on my Master's thesis. I am really interested in the kinds of experiences that head and assistant women coaches have in the coaching and sporting community and this interest has led me to explore their experiences for my thesis research.

Basically, I want to see what life is like for women in their job of coaching. For example, how they came to be a coach, the rewards and problems of the job, and how they combine coaching with other responsibilities.

I am searching for head or assistant women coaches who coach in Calgary and do so at an elite level. For example, they coach high performance athletes and/or pursue coaching as a career (not necessarily full-time). I will be conducting about a one hour audiotaped interview with women coaches to see what coaching is like for them. Their participation is anonymous.

I was wondering if you could provide me with any information on how to contact women coaches in your organization who coach in the Calgary area. Any information you could provide would be extremely helpful.

If you have any questions regarding this research you may contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson:

Tina Moody
Work: 220-3209
Home: 202-3549
Email: cmmooddy@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Gillian Ranson
Work: 220-6511
Email: Ranson@ucalgary.ca

Sincerely,

Tina Moody

E-mail Letter to a Coach

Dear Madam,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary and I am currently working on my Master's thesis. I am really interested in the kinds of experiences that head and assistant women coaches have in the coaching and sporting community and this interest has led me to explore their experiences for my thesis research.

Basically, I want to see what life is like for women in their job of coaching. For example, how they came to be a coach, the rewards and problems of the job, and how they combine coaching with other responsibilities.

The best way for me to explore and hopefully understand the experiences of women coaches is through directly asking them about their coaching world. I will be conducting about a one hour audiotaped interview with women coaches to see what coaching is like for them. Their identity will remain anonymous and their initial agreement to participate does not obligate them in any way because they may refuse to answer any questions and they may terminate participation at any time.

I was wondering if you would consider participating in this process or allow me to contact you to provide you with further information on what your participation would involve. I would really like to discuss your coaching experiences with you.

If you have any questions regarding this research you may contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson:

Tina Moody
Home: 202-3549
Email: cmmmoody@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Gillian Ranson
Work: 220-6511

Thank you

Tina Moody

Appendix B

From Their Point of View: Understanding the Experiences of Women Coaches

Tina Moody

Department of Sociology, University of Calgary

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This research is a part of the requirement for my Masters degree in Sociology. It is intended to explore the experiences of head and assistant women coaches. I am interested in the kinds of experiences that you have within the coaching and sporting community. Basically, I want to see what life is like for you in your job of coaching and I want to understand how you manage your work as a coach.

You are one of approximately 25 women coaches participating in this research. I am interviewing elite women coaches of all possible types of sports (team and individual). In addition, I am interviewing women coaches from numerous possible levels of sport involvement: university, college, provincial, and national.

I am asking you to participate in an audiotaped interview that will last for about one hour. I will be asking you questions about your experiences as a coach, for example, how you came to be a coach, the rewards and problems of the job, and how you combine coaching with other responsibilities. I hope that you will feel free to bring up any issues or concerns you may have at any point during or after the interview. Please note that your initial agreement to participate does not obligate you in any way because you may refuse to answer any questions and you may terminate the interview at any time.

Every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. All names mentioned by you including your own will be removed from the interview transcripts and from my thesis. If necessary, identifying details will also be removed or changed. However, I must inform you that these precautions cannot guarantee your anonymity because the coaching community is relatively small. Therefore, individuals in the coaching community may recognize you. In addition, the completed thesis is readily available to members of the university community; they may recognize information or situations and this recognition could lead them to identify you.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. I will share the information you provide only with my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson. The interview data will be used strictly for research purposes. All interview tapes and data will be securely stored and locked in my office.

There is no direct benefit for your participation, but you will be providing valuable knowledge about this kind of work. Your time and the information you provide are greatly appreciated. I will contact you upon completion of this research and provide you with a written summary of the findings.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as you initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Tina Moody
202-3549
220-3209 (work)

Dr. Gillian Ranson
Supervisor
220-6511 (work)

If you have any questions or issues concerning this project that are not related to the specifics of the research, you may also contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Department of Sociology at 220-6501.

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Coaching Career

1. Age
2. Sport coached and the level of sport involvement (college/university/national).
3. Number of years coaching
 - When did you start coaching?
 - Number of years coaching at this job
4. What are the conditions/terms of your employment?
 - Part-time, full-time
 - Contract length/renewal
5. Do you receive an income from coaching?
 - If so, is that your primary source of income?
 - If not, what is your primary source of income?
6. Do you have a significant other?
 - Are you married?
 - Do you have children?
 - how many
 - ages

A. Coaching: General – Becoming a Coach

1. How did you come to be a coach?
2. How did you get this coaching job?

B. Coaching: This Job

1. Tell me about your coaching job?
 - What does it involve?
 - Tell me about your daily routine?
2. What are some of your responsibilities in this job besides actually coaching?
3. Who do you report to?
 - Job title, man/woman
 - Who does he/she report to?
4. How does this work?
5. What would make this job better for you?
 - What would make your job easier?
6. How secure do you feel your job is?
7. Did anything about this job surprise you?
8. Who do you talk to about your job?
 - Who do you talk to if you have a problem on the job?
 - Who do you talk to if you want to fix a problem on the job?
9. Who understands your job?

C. Coaching: The Bigger Picture

Life Outside of Coaching: Family

1. What are some of your other responsibilities outside of coaching?
2. How do you balance your home life and your work life?

Note: If they have children ask this question.

3. How do you handle childcare?

Perceptions of the Coaches role

1. What things do you think make a good coach?
2. What is [your organizations] image of an ideal coach?
 - How do you think you fit in?

Why do they do it?

1. What rewards do you get out of coaching?
 - What makes you most proud as a coach?
 - What's the best part of coaching?
2. What sacrifices have you made to coach?
3. What has kept you coaching?
 - Have you ever thought of quitting—why or why not?
4. Would things be different if you were a man? – how so?
5. Do women coaches offer things that men cannot - how so?
6. Do men coaches offer things that women cannot - how so?

1. Overall, what is the experience of coaching like?
2. Is there anything we have missed or that you would like to talk about?

Themes

A. Becoming a Coach

1. How
2. This job

B. This Job

1. Duties/ daily routine
2. Other responsibilities in job

The Job Structure

1. report to?
2. Make job better/easier
3. Job security

Understanding Job

1. surprise
2. talk to about job (problem/fix a problem)
3. Understands job?

C. Coaching : General

Life Outside

1. other responsibilities
2. balance
3. childcare

Coaches Role

1. good coach?
2. Organizations image (you)

Why they do it?

1. rewards/proud/best part
2. sacrifices
3. quitting

Gender Issues

1. would anything be different if ...
2. women vs. men coaches

1. Overall, what is the experience of coaching like?
2. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?